



**SENATE**  
**Approved Minutes of the Meeting held on**  
**Monday, April 13, 2020 at 3:00pm**  
**Via Microsoft Teams**

The Senate met in regular session on Monday, April 13, 2020 via Microsoft Teams

**Present:** K. Hewitt (Chair), A. Abawajy, G. Adolphe-Nazaire, R. Agu, A. Aiken, F. Annan, M. Aston, T. Balsler, J. Blustein, D. Bourne-Tyson, K. Brooks, M. Campbell-Yeo, B. Davis, C. Diallo, A. Doucette, P. Doyle-Bedwell, Y. El Hiani, H. El Nagggar, B. Foster, M. Fournier, L. Goldberg, D. Gray, D. Grujic, J. Hall, K. Harman, F. Harvey, S. Holmes, V. Howard, I. Joseph, D. Kelley, A. Kermanshahi-Pour, J.S. Kim, S. Kirk, W. Lahey, M. Leonard, L. MacDonald, N. Maymandi, B. Merritt, C. Moore, F. Naghibi, J. Newhook, P. Nnoka, R. Orji, P. Owen, M. Pacurar, J. Penney, J. Phinney, S. Ponomarenko, T. Rajack-Talley, B. Rathgeber, A. Rau-Chaplin, C. Richardson, K. Rosen, D. Saini, G. Scherkoske, S. Seth, A. Siegel, D. Silvio, H. Sinan, L. Spiteri, S. Stackhouse, S. Stone, F. Taheri, P. Tyedmers, D. Tyers, I. Waldron, G. Warner, E. Welsh, D. Westwood, S. Wildeman, E. Wunker, A. Yahia, I. Yakovenko, S. Yurgel

**Regrets:** T. Cyrus, G. Horne, J. Macedo, B. Nassar, D. White

**Absent:** P. Allen, V. Allen, D. Anderson, N. Blinn, C. Cameron, O. Dryden, T. Duck, A. Habib, A. Haiye, N. Isaac-Pictou, V. Nams, L. Perez, H-S. Ro, C. Sandham,

**Guests:** Susan Brousseau (Secretary of Senate), Bob Mann, Ann Pyne, Joseph Behl (Student Minute Taker)

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 **approved** as submitted.

**2. Consent Agenda**

It was requested that the lone item be removed from the consent agenda.

**2.1 Approval of Draft Minutes of March 9, 2020 Senate Meeting**

A senator pointed out that under item 5 of the March 9 Senate meeting minutes, a question was asked to the VP, Finance & Administration about whether a breakdown of the ~6,000 employees at Dalhousie could be provided, which was not captured in the draft minutes. The senator added that the concerns and questions raised regarding the small-group discussion format under item 6 should also be included in the minutes.

The Secretary of Senate advised that this approval of the March 9 minutes can be removed from the meeting agenda and brought back to the next meeting after review.

### **3. Matters Arising from the February 10, 2020 Senate Meeting Minutes**

#### **3.1 Senate recommendations to the Budget Advisory Committee**

Senator Hewitt introduced the item, noting that Senate's response to the BAC report occurred on March 9, prior to the university's response to the ongoing COVID-19 incident. He thanked senators for their participation and also thanked M. Smit and Senator Siegel for their work in organizing the discussion and feedback process.

Senator Hewitt noted that while the small-group approach created an opportunity for more voices to be heard, it did not provide senators the opportunity to present their concerns in a more open format. He added that there had also been several positive comments about the breakout sessions. He advised that there would be room for both types of discussion in future, and that more options for BAC feedback will be discussed during the Senate Officers' retreat. Due to the uncertainty created by the COVID-19 situation, the BAC process is currently suspended.

Senator Balser provided an update on the BAC, which is now looking at where the recommendations will need to be revised in light of COVID-19. The financial impact of the shutdown and the impact on enrolment, among other things, are being considered.

A senator stated their dissatisfaction and concern with how the discussion was carried out, commenting that open discussion was avoided and that this counteracts the checks and balances of the university's bicameral governance system. The senator asked whether this had been a unilateral decision by SPGC. Senator Hewitt noted in response that in future there will be room for both breakout groups and open discussion, and that SPGC tried to find a way for more voices to be heard. Senator Balser added that they are looking for ways to have both constructive feedback and airing of concerns.

A senator asked whether a new opportunity to give feedback and input will be provided when the budget is revised. Senator Balser responded that the process has not yet been mapped out that far.

#### **FOR APPROVAL:**

### **4. Senate Planning and Governance Committee (SPGC)**

#### **4.1 Ratification of motion approved by SPGC at their March 18, 2020 meeting – Changes to Dalhousie Regulations due to COVID-19 pandemic**

Senator Hewitt introduced this item. He explained that due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chair of Senate, in consultation with the Senate Vice-Chairs, invoked section 5.4(J) of the Senate Constitution, to request that the Senate Planning and Governance Committee (SPGC), on behalf of Senate, consider these matters on an urgent basis. The SPGC met on March 18, 2020 and approved the omnibus motion attached to this item. Senators were advised of this action and the approval by SPGC via email on March 20, 2020. According to Section 5.4(j) of the Senate Constitution, the following motion approved by SPGC now requires ratification by Senate:

Moved by Senator Hewitt on behalf of the Senate Planning & Governance Committee:

**THAT Senate, in accordance with Section 5.4(j) of the Senate Constitution, ratifies the following measures, which may be acted upon between March 18, 2020 and August 31, 2020 as a result of circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

1. Suspending sections D7 and F6 of the Syllabus Policy to allow for alteration of the modes of course delivery and evaluation from that originally posted in the course syllabus;
2. Suspending the Academic Calendar Regulation Missed or Late Academic Requirements due to Student Absence to eliminate the need for the production of sick notes by students;
3. Delegating authority to the relevant Dean or their designate, to waive any requirement, regulation, or policy under the authority of Senate pertaining to academic requirements which impacts academic courses and degree progression, provided that the academic integrity of the course and degree is upheld;
4. Permitting any student who wishes to withdraw from a course offered during the Winter 2020 semester and receive a "W" on their transcript at any time up to March 30, 2020 notwithstanding that the published date to do so is March 9, 2020;
5. For all programs that normally require admission interviews and for which interviews have not been held prior to March 18, 2020, where the relevant Dean approves the elimination of the interview requirement, varying the admission requirements for all such programs. Where interviews will no longer form part of the admission process, all applicants to the program will be notified of the change in admission requirements;
6. Notwithstanding the process set out in the Academic Schedule Policy and following consultation with relevant Deans, altering the spring and summer academic timetables, class schedules, and exam schedules to the extent such alterations are necessary; and
7. Notwithstanding anything in the Student Ratings of Instruction Policy, any data gathered and obtained through Student Ratings of Instruction for courses offered in the Winter 2020, Spring 2020, and Summer 2020 semesters will be used to provide feedback only to instructors on their teaching for formative purposes.

Senators discussed the motion, particularly with regard to item 3, which delegates authority to Deans or their designates.

A senator asked whether the waivers done under this item will be reported to Senate, and whether Senate will have to ratify these decisions. Senator Hewitt responded that item (e) in the "For Information" section of the meeting package addresses this, and that Senate can act as it wishes on these actions. Senator Balser commented that reporting to Senate will take place, but ratification would depend on a future motion.

A senator commented that item 3 of the motion could be amended such that decisions are "not final until ratified by Senate." Senator Hewitt suggested subdividing the motion so that this can be considered separately.

Moved by Senator Westwood, seconded by Senator Blustein:

**THAT item 3 be considered separately from the remaining items.**

The motion **CARRIED**.

Senate moved on to voting on the omnibus motion, with item 3 removed:

The omnibus motion, without item 3, **CARRIED**.

Senate then considered item 3:

**Delegating authority to the relevant Dean or their designate, to waive any requirement, regulation, or policy under the authority of Senate pertaining to academic requirements which impacts academic courses and degree progression, provided that the academic integrity of the course and degree is upheld;**

A senator commented that while the reasons for delegating authority to the deans are understandable, it is important that these decisions also be ratified by Senate at a future meeting. Therefore, each of the items or groups of items deans have waived should be brought before Senate to be discussed and ratified. Senator Hewitt clarified that under 5.4(J) of the Senate Constitution, any motions or resolutions passed by SPGC shall be deemed to be passed by the Senate, but shall be subject to ratification, meaning that ratifications will not be retroactive, but looking forward only.

Moved by Senator Westwood, seconded by Senator Diallo:

**THAT item 3 be amended to read as follows:**

Delegating authority to the relevant Dean or their designate, to waive any requirement, regulation, or policy under the authority of Senate pertaining to academic requirements which impacts academic courses and degree progression, provided that the academic integrity of the course and degree is upheld; **and these decisions must be ratified at the next Senate meeting.**

Senators discussed the proposed amendment to item 3. A senator asked what kind of waivers have been made so far. Senator Hewitt noted that waivers have included things such as waiving the requirement for a GMAT score because exam centres are closed, limits on maximum number of courses taken at other institutions, thesis deadlines, practicum requirements, etc. A wide range of actions are being used to manage the impact of the crisis in a way that maximizes students' success. Under normal circumstances, students can request waivers to academic regulation with a form, so this has been existing practice. The motion now being considered pertains to regulations, policies and requirements under the authority of Senate.

A senator expressed support for the amendment, commenting that ratification by Senate would be part of good governance, and that this would not cause undue inconvenience to deans.

A senator noted that timing is an important consideration when it comes to situations such as practicum waivers in the Faculty of Management, as these situations have to be responded to quickly to ensure that the uncertainty does not create additional anxiety for students.

Senator Hewitt noted that this is "active ratification"; under this delegated authority, deans are empowered to act, and do not have to wait for Senate ratification. Deans will be able to act right away and present items for ratification at a future Senate meeting.

In response to a senator's question about what would happen if Senate does not ratify an action, Senator Hewitt advised that depends on the case. In general, the action would have to be curtailed if not ratified. A senator asked whether this means merely suspending the action going forward or retroactively invalidating the action already taken by the dean. Senator Hewitt clarified that this would only impact the action going forward.

After further discussion, it was proposed that the amendment's wording be further modified for clarity, by adding the sentence "Waivers made under this delegated authority will be reported on for ratification at the next Senate meeting." The mover and seconder of the previous motion agreed, and withdrew the amendment in favour of this new wording.

Moved by Senator Westwood, seconded by Senator Diallo:

**THAT item 3 be amended to read as follows:**

**Delegating authority to the relevant Dean or their designate, to waive any requirement, regulation, or policy under the authority of Senate pertaining to academic requirements which impacts academic courses and degree progression, provided that the academic integrity of the course and degree is upheld; Waivers made under this delegated authority will be reported on for ratification at the next Senate meeting.**

The motion **CARRIED**.

Senators then considered item 3 with the amended wording.

Moved by Senator Hewitt on behalf of the Senate Planning & Governance Committee:

**Delegating authority to the relevant Dean or their designate, to waive any requirement, regulation, or policy under the authority of Senate pertaining to academic requirements which impacts academic courses and degree progression, provided that the academic integrity of the course and degree is upheld; Waivers made under this delegated authority will be reported on for ratification at the next Senate meeting.**

The motion as amended **CARRIED**.

## **5. Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC)**

### **5.1 Classroom Recording Protocol**

Senator Bourne-Tyson provided an update on the Classroom Recording Protocol, which deals with intellectual property and student privacy. She advised that this protocol sits beneath all approved university policies. She noted that Dalhousie has a responsibility to erase any identifiable student voices, etc. at the request of students, and that consultation on this with SLTC will be available to faculty for help with best practices. Senator Bourne-Tyson added that consultations with the DFA, Student Affairs, the Senate Discipline Committee, and the Student Council have taken place since the last Senate Meeting.

Senator Hewitt observed that the issues addressed by the CRP are especially important in light of the migration of instruction into the online environment.

Moved by Senator Bourne-Tyson on behalf of the Senate Learning & Teaching Committee:

**THAT Senate approve the Classroom Recording Protocol as presented.**

Senators engaged in robust discussion regarding the wording of certain parts of the CRP document. A senator asked whether it is specified that students must first seek permission to record. Senator Hewitt advised that it is, in the first sentence of the document.

A senator noted that there is a semantic difference between the phrase “students may receive prior written permission...” and “students *must* receive prior written permission...” Another senator commented that the latter wording would give the onus to professors to potentially deny students accommodations which they are entitled to.

A senator commented that whether students have accommodation requirements or not, they must still have permission in order to record, and that the accommodation centre should not be mentioned in the sentence for the sake of clarity. Another senator asked what would happen in situations where a professor refuses a student’s request.

Moved by Senator Joseph, seconded by Senator Seth:

**THAT the Classroom Recording Program be amended so that the first sentence reads:**

Classroom recording can be a valuable teaching and learning tool; instructors may choose to record classroom activities, **or students who have received prior written permission from the instructor or Accommodations Centre.**

Senators discussed the inclusion of the Accommodations Centre in the amended wording. One senator commented that this wording might lead students to bypass consultation with the instructor. Another senator noted that the Student Accommodation Policy already dictates that consultation with the instructor must take place, and suggested the wording “or with an approved Accommodation Plan in place.”

Senator Bourne-Tyson advised that the CRP sits under the Student Accommodation Policy, and that it would usually be students who have not already obtained accommodations through Student Affairs who would be reading this protocol. Therefore, it would not be necessary to reference the policy in this protocol.

Moved by Senator Waldron, seconded by Senator Grujic:

**To amend the Classroom Recording Protocol to insert the phrase (in second line of opening paragraph) from:**

**"instructors may choose to record classroom activities, or students may receive prior written permission from instructors to record classroom activities"**

**to:**

**"instructors may choose to record classroom activities, or students who have received prior written permission from the instructor or with an approved Accommodation Plan in place."**

The motion **CARRIED.**

Moved by Senator Bourne-Tyson on behalf of the Senate Learning & Teaching Committee:

**THAT Senate approve the Classroom Recording Protocol as amended.**

The motion as amended **CARRIED.**

**FOR INFORMATION:**

**6. Senate Planning and Governance Committee (SPGC)**

**6.1 Grading Options re: COVID-19**

Senator Hewitt and Senator Howard referred attendees to the appendix items attached to the meeting package on grading options, and asked if there were any points of discussion.

A senator commented that they were concerned that students may not realize all of the consequences of taking a “PASS” grade, such as not meeting the requirement for a high enough grade to move on to subsequent courses. Senator Howard explained that this is the reason that students will be required to meet with an advisor regarding these decisions.

A senator asked about the existing policies governing student appeals on compassionate grounds, and whether this is normally in Senate’s jurisdiction. Senator Howard explained that students have always had the opportunity to appeal grades on compassionate grounds, but it is not clear whether this is Senate jurisdiction exactly. The intent of this item is to provide students with a wider range of options.

In response to a question about why this is a “For Information” item, rather than having Senate involved, Senator Hewitt advised that he would bring this matter to Senate Officers and report back.

**FOR DISCUSSION:**

**7. Reports**

**7.1 Chair of Senate’s Report**

The Chair’s report was omitted for the sake of time.

**7.2 Provost’s Report**

Senator Balser presented the Provost’s report. She observed that there have been concerns regarding what will happen in the fall term. Senator Balser advised that there are three possible scenarios being considered, all of which involve substantial online delivery of instruction.

The first scenario would be “complete lockdown,” which would mean no face-to-face instruction allowed. This is not necessarily the most likely scenario but must be considered.

The second scenario would be “partial lockdown,” which would mean very minimal face-to-face instruction allowed, and minimal or no international cohort or even out-of-province inbound cohort.

The third scenario would be “mild to moderate restrictions,” which would entail some face-to-face (larger gathering sizes), domestic inbound cohort permitted, and minimal international inbound cohort.

Senator Balser explained that the main priorities are maintaining academic quality and standards and mitigating the possible impacts on enrolment.

Senator Balser added that the work being done currently involves planning to deliver everything possible online, with a shift to face-to-face for critical courses if possible. They are now thinking about which classes can be offered online and developing those as soon as possible, as well as looking at what can be done with those classes that we would prefer not to have online or that truly require face-to-face instruction. Most universities in Canada and Nova Scotia are looking at making final decisions on these matters in late May to early June. Senator Balser advised that she is now working on an enrolment plan with the Registrar's Office, deans, etc. She added that we will also have to think about long-term impacts, bringing back research, and responding to a post COVID-19 economy.

### **7.3 Questions for Reports**

There were no questions.

### **8. Question Period**

There was no question period.

## **PRESENTATION:**

### **9. Profile in Courage Award – Student Senators Presentation**

Senators voted to extend the meeting time by ten minutes.

Senator Yahia and Senator Abawajy introduced the Profile in Courage Award, which was first announced in the February 10, 2020 Senate meeting. The award is named after the book *Profiles in Courage* by John F. Kennedy. It profiled 8 United States Senators who under pressured circumstances risked their political careers, their popularity, and their reputation to stand up for what they believe is right and true. Senator Abawajy added that actualizing an equitable post-secondary institution and carving out space for marginalized groups should be part of this. The presenters noted that EDI is and should continue to be a fundamental part of the university mission and important to everyone. Therefore, this award is intended to celebrate senators doing everything in their power to create an equitable future.

The presenters announced that for the inaugural Profile in Courage award, the Student Senators' Caucus had unanimously nominated two recipients, both of whom will receive the award: Senator Gregory Adolphe-Nazaire and Senator Patricia Doyle-Bedwell. These individuals are being recognized because of their constant and selfless effort to bring about meaningful change for the marginalized, and to bring about social justice.

### **10. Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **11. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.