

Item: Senate Minutes, August 1992

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

MINUTES

OF

SENATE MEETING

Senate met in regular session on Monday, August 10, 1992 at 3:00 p.m. in the Board and Senate Room.

Present with Mr. Dunn in the chair were: A. Andrews, M. Banerjee, J. Bankier, E. Belzer, W.F. Birdsall, R. J. Boyd, M. Bradfield, R. W. Carlson, H. C. Clark, G. Curri, M. Doyle, K. B. Easterbrook, J. Fingard, S. Fullerton, J. S. Grossert, A. I. Ismail, L. Kesebi, W. C. Kimmins, T. L. Maloney, L. McIntyre, B. O'Shea, J. Reudy, A. M. Sampson, T. Sinclair-Falkner,

Invitees: D. Foley, C. Jellett

Regrets: A. C. Allen, B. P. Archibald, A. J. Bowen, W. C. Breckenridge, S. A. M. Burns, S. G. Carruthers, A. D. Cohen, J. D. Gray, D. W. Jones, J. V. Jones, L. C. MacLean, B. Mason, R. A. Purdy, D. Tamlyn, J. M. Walker, R. J. Wassersug, C. N. Williams, K. S. Woods, K. Zakariasen

The meeting was called to order at 3:

92:104

Minutes of the Meeting of July 13, 1992

The minutes of the meeting of July 13, 1992 were approved upon motion (E. Belzer/R. Carlson) with the following changes:

a) 92:092, page 3, paragraph 3, line 5 should read:

"...may have withdrawn from the University, at the time of the alleged offence he/she..."

b) 92:101, paragraph 1, second sentence should read:

"He indicated that it had been reported to him that a more rapid response from the academic community would have served to help prevent the proposed amalgamation."

92:105

Conferral of Certificates in Periodontics - Faculty of Dentistry

It was moved and seconded (A.Ismail/G. Curri)

that the Certificate in Periodontics be awarded to Dr. Mehran Mojgani, Dr. Hughes Pelletier, and Dr. Daniel Price.

The motion was carried.

92:106

Notice of Motion from 13 July, 1992 Senate Meeting - DSU

It was moved and seconded (M. Banerjee/T. Sinclair-Falkner)

WHEREAS: a course evaluation guide is an important means for students to offer their thoughts and ideas regarding courses they have taken; and

WHEREAS: the information contained in a course evaluation guide is useful reference for both students and professors for their respective purposes;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Senate encourages the Dalhousie Student Union's efforts in constructing a course evaluation guide, to be designed and administered by the Dalhousie Student Union.

Mr. Sinclair-Falkner noted his appreciation to the DSU for the manner in which it has consulted members of the academic community on this matter. He took the opportunity to note that approval of the motion must not be interpreted incorrectly. In particular, he emphasized three points.

- 1) Approval of the motion does not require professors to participate, but encourages**

their cooperation.

2) It has not been established that the information collected through the proposed course evaluation system will be useful or appropriate information for use by groups external to the University.

3) Approval of the motion does not imply the data collected is to be used as part of the Tenure and Promotion process at Dalhousie University.

Representatives of the DSU agreed with the above points presented by Mr. Sinclair-Falkner.

Mr. Sinclair-Falkner also noted his approval of the DSU's intention to share written comments with faculty members after the submission of grades. However, he did caution Senate that the members of the faculty are not unanimous in their support for the system - there is significant division among faculty members regarding the usefulness of such a course evaluation system.

Ms. Bankier reminded Senate that the Collective Agreement does address the issue of such evaluations and how they are to be used in the Tenure and Promotion process. The Collective Agreement is quite clear on the use of numeric data and anonymous evaluative comments. Furthermore, Ms. Bankier noted that before numeric data is used, approval for use must be received from the respective Faculty or Senate. Finally, Ms. Bankier suggested there is empirical data that focuses on biases built into evaluation systems and that these biases have been observed in a variety of circumstances.

Ms. Curri asked if it was intended that the results of the evaluations be distributed to first years students by Dalhousie University, or is this aspect to be dealt with by the DSU? Ms. Banerjee said the DSU had not yet come to a decision on this matter. If it was financially feasible, she said it would be useful for first year students to have access to the evaluation results.

Ms. McIntyre spoke of the importance of typing comments from the questionnaires prior to distribution to ensure anonymity. Furthermore, she suggested that appropriate qualitative analyses of the comments was crucial if they were to be of use.

Mr. Sinclair-Falkner informed Senate that in past years, first year advisors had copies of the results of evaluations that could be seen by first year students.

Mr. Ismail suggested comments to open ended questions in such instruments were usually negative in nature and because of this, careful editing was necessary prior to publication.

Mr. Grossert expressed concern about the fact that in some departments class time is already used to administer departmental evaluation questionnaires. He expressed his hope that the new system would be integrated with that already in operation. Ms. Foley indicated it was the hope of the DSU that the

proposed system would become the standardized system for Dalhousie University that would guarantee students access to evaluative information from all academic units.

Mr. Dunn noted that a further discussion on technical problems and administration would have to be carried out.

The motion was carried.

In response to a question by Ms. Bankier, Ms. Foley indicated the DSU hoped to table the final draft of the evaluation questionnaire at the September or October meeting of Senate.

92:107

Appointment of Ombud and Assistant Ombud

It was moved and seconded (G. Curri/L. Kesebi)

that Senate approve the appointment of Mr. Brian Beck as Ombud and Mr. John LeBlanc as Assistant Ombud.

Mr. Andrews suggested the Office of the Ombud has been in existence for 12 - 15 years and predates the DFA, appeals procedures in the University and the Student Advocacy Office. He noted that the report of the Ombud Office last year noted no activity. Mr. McKee noted that the activity of the Ombud's Office had been similar to that of the last two years. He also noted that preliminary data for the next reporting year indicates an increase in activity of approximately 70%. Mr. Andrews also drew attention to the fact that there is a stipend attached to these two positions and in fact, Senate was making decisions about appointments for which Dalhousie is financially responsible. He questioned the value of the Ombud Office and suggested the money might be spent differently and at the same time result in greater benefits for the students. He suggested it may be appropriate to conduct a review of the Ombud Office.

The motion was carried.

It was moved and seconded

that, in light of the discussion, the Senate Committee on Academic Administration conduct a review of the Office of the Ombud.

The motion was carried.

Mr. Clark indicated he would also ask Vice-President McKee to prepare a report on the history of the Ombud Office.

92:108

Critical Issues

Mr. Dunn referred to a document distributed at the meeting (attached for those not present). He indicated that the information contained in that document was a compilation of responses received from the academic community. Issues have been categorized as first or second according to the priority accorded each issue by the respondents.

Mr. Dunn indicated that he would be pleased to receive further suggestions from faculty members as he will be using the information to prepare his presentation to the full Campaign Committee on September 3, 1992.

Upon the suggestion of Mr. Dunn, Senate agreed to discuss the matter in detail at the first meeting of Senate in September, 1992.

92:109

Senate Financial Planning Committee Report, "Deficit Reduction: The Continuing Struggle"

Mr. Carlson introduced the report by noting that the matter was brought to Senate today for discussion only.

Mr. Carlson indicated that in the past number of years the Senate Financial Planning Committee (SFPC) had had a reasonably optimistic outlook. However, recent developments (zero percent increase for two years, likely lifting of the wage freeze) have pointed to an impending financial crisis at Dalhousie University. In spite of actions such as complement reductions and tuition fee increases, it is still anticipated the University will face significant deficits in the next two years.

Mr. Carlson indicated that a year ago SFPC began soliciting proposals for mechanisms to deal with the impending crisis. Extensive discussion has resulted in the SFPC report. He noted specifically that it was a conscious decision on the part of the SFPC not to include the possibility of increasing the debt - the Committee still felt it was important to eliminate the deficit.

Mr. Carlson indicated that the Committee concluded that while there are a number of suggestions in the report, program reductions were viewed as the most important mechanism to solve the financial crisis in the long run. He indicated that the responsibility for program reductions for academic reasons is that of Senate. He noted that the Senate Academic Planning Committee is drafting a document that deals with the ethics of program reductions in light of the fact that such reductions have a significant impact on faculty members.

Finally, Mr. Carlson cautioned that we must look at this problem from a University perspective rather than a self or discipline-protective stance.

Ms. Fingard asked if the SFPC was convinced that program reductions would actually save money and how long it would take to realize such savings. In response, Mr. Carlson indicated the SFPC had tried to prepare estimates but this is closely related to the defining of academic priorities. The extent of the reductions depended on the number of programs deemed to be of lower priority. The length of time was dependent on the number of departures or transfers to other departments from those viewed as lower priority.

Ms. Bankier identified three issues that she saw as important to the process. First faculty are concerned about their job security and in spite of assurance noted in the report, many perceive their jobs as being in jeopardy. Secondly, faculty members are concerned with program security. Finally, Ms. Bankier indicated that the willingness of academic units to accept faculty transfers from other academic units is critical. The "receiving" units and faculty members in those units must be convinced of the benefits from this part of the process in order to secure their participation and cooperation.

Mr. Sinclair-Falkner noted the incongruity in saying action needs to be taken for financial reasons, then searching for academic reasons to justify the decisions. He indicated that the Collective Agreement allows program reduction for financial reasons through financial exigency. In order to do this, the University must present a clear and precise picture of its financial situation.

Mr. Clark indicated that the Collective Agreement (Article 25) says the academic plan must be conducted within the resources available. In light of the projected increases in government allocations over the next three years (0%, 0%, and 3%) Dalhousie University must plan within these resources.

In response to the concern expressed by Mr. Sinclair-Falkner, Mr. Carlson indicated that elimination of the deficit would require reducing faculty costs by about 10%. He suggested part of the problem is the result of inconsistent interpretation of the term "academic planning" - some see it as offering

only those programs that can maintain quality within available resources, while others view it as offering any program that we can justify in any way.

Mr. Kimmins noted that the latest projection from financial services proposed a 25 - 30 million dollar deficit by 1997. He suggested this appears to be a 25% cut and asked Mr. Carlson to clarify his projection of 10%. Mr. Carlson noted that the 25 million dollar deficit was a cumulative one. It reflected annual deficits of about 5% which could be offset by a 10% reduction in faculty costs in the next two years

In response to a question by Mr. Bradfield, Mr. Carlson indicated that it was intended that Faculty envelopes would cover the cost of early retirement packages but this could be accomplished over a three year period. Mr. Sinclair-Falkner suggested Mr. Carlson's interpretation of the voluntary separation rule is incorrect and suggested clarification was needed.

In response to a further question by Mr. Bradfield, Mr. Carlson indicated that the SFPC had considered the notion of "selling seats" as a means of revenue generation in those programs where space was available. However, the Committee did not pursue the idea for ethical and practical reasons. Mr. Ruedy noted that restricted enrolment in the Faculty of Medicine is a result of government restrictions. Mr. Andrews suggested that any attempt to impose higher fees for foreign and out-of-province students would result in a similar action by other provinces - not only would this harm Nova Scotia students, but it would result in the further balkanization of the country.

92:110

New Grading System for the Faculty of Graduate Studies

Ms. Fingard provided a brief background noting that the proposed system reflects current practice and that academic units had been consulted.

It was moved and seconded (J. Fingard/G. Curri)

that Senate approve the new grading system as proposed for use in the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

NOTE: The new grading system will only use the letter grades A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, FM, and F.

In response to a question from Mr. Andrews, Ms. Fingard noted that currently the grades of C, D, and F are recorded on a student's transcript. However, the grades of C and D are interpreted as an F and the student is required to withdraw from the program.

Ms. Bankier noted some concern about whether these comments reflected the current practice in the Faculty of Laws in those courses taken by undergraduate and graduate students. She suggested that if the motion is passed, it would be essential to notify the Dean of the Faculty of Law directly.

The motion was carried with the abstention of J. Bankier.

92:111

Annual Report - Senate Physical Planning Committee

It was moved and seconded (L. Maloney/M. Bradfield)

that Senate accept the report of the Senate Physical Planning Committee.

The motion was carried.

92:112

Annual Report - Senate Library Committee

It was moved and seconded (D. Stinson/W. Kimmins)

that Senate accept the report of the Senate Library Committee.

Mr. Grossert asked what the plans were for hours of operation during the Christmas season. Ms. Stinson indicated that there would be complete day services for the Kellogg and Killam Libraries on December 29/30, 1992.

The motion was carried.

In response to a question by Mr. Andrews, Ms. Stinson indicated that the two recommendations pertaining to the policy on discriminatory harassment were not to be considered by Senate but will be sent to Vice-President McKee's committee for consideration.

92:113

Response to Question Raised at 13 July, 1992 Senate Meeting

With respect to the written response provided by Mr. Mason, Mr. Bradfield expressed interest in the source of the "substantial interest free mortgage". Mr. Mason will be asked to address the question at the next meeting of Senate.

92:114

Request to Rescind a B.Sc. Degree

Mr. Andrews suggested that this item is much more than an information item. In view of the fact that Senate passed a motion approving this degree, it was Senate's responsibility to formally rescind the degree if so justified.

Ms. Curri indicated that the problem has arisen due to a simple credit hour calculation error. She suggested the new degree audit system will be in place next year and will prevent a repetition of such mistakes.

It was moved and seconded (G. Curri/W. Kimmins)

that Senate rescind the Bachelor of Science degree awarded to Kimberley Anne Landry by mistake in May, 1992.

The motion was approved.

92:115

Policy on Mid-Term Exam Schedule

Mr. Kimmins suggested that the Senate Committee on Academic Administration did not have the authority to approve (as opposed to recommend to Senate) such a policy as its implementation has significant pedagogical implications - it is, therefore, an academic rather than administrative issue. Mr. Kimmins used Chemistry 2400 as an example to explain why the implementation of the proposed policy would drastically affect how this course is to be offered. He suggested that multiple joint examinations throughout the term are necessary in order to prevent the occurrence of academic offenses and to

prevent the inequities associated with multiple versions of an exam.

Mr. Kimmins indicated the Faculty of Science had informed the SCAA of a motion of disapproval passed by that Faculty. He suggested that any revisions to the policy by SCAA after that should have been referred again to academic units for consideration.

Mr. Andrews expressed concern about the implications of the discussions as the deadline for response by departments had been reached. In general he also expressed concern about the need for Senate committees to consult thoroughly with academic matters on such issues. Mr. Carlson indicated that the Constitution gives SCAA responsibility and authority for decisions and is not required to seek Senate approval in those matters considered to be primarily administrative in nature.

In response to a question from Mr. Sinclair-Falkner, Mr. Dunn indicated that this is not a policy and the matter should be returned to SCAA for further consideration and report back to Senate.

Mr. Grossert suggested it would be an advancement to have all exams centrally coordinated.

92:116

Report of the President

Mr. Clark highlighted portions of the report distributed with the agenda. With regard to his visit to Malta, he suggested Dalhousie University should consider seriously the potential for exchange programs with the University of Malta because of the common areas of interest and the exceptional archives available at that institution.

In discussing the Capital Campaign, Mr. Clark indicated that the process had been carefully constructed through consultations with the firm of Snelling and Kolb, Inc., the Board of Governors, and senior administrative personnel. Underlying the process was the need to meet four criteria: 1) full consultation within the University; 2) determination of priorities in a relatively short period of time; 3) ensure expectations of the academic community were not raised beyond a reasonable point; and 4) ensure Senate's input into the process was not restricted in any way. With regard to the latter point, Mr. Clark suggested planning documents currently in existence could be submitted to the Campaign Committee and Task Forces for consideration.

Mr. Clark suggested that the process is more than simply developing a list of priorities - the process must concern itself with having people outside of the University buy into the process. As a result, Task Forces include members of the Board of Governors and the community at large.

Mr. Clark informed the meeting that Chancellor Cohen will be donating a significant gift to the University in the near future. The chancellor has collected a large number of Chinese armorial china dated as far back as 1780. The china is embossed with the crest and motto of Dalhousie University. The original collection belonged to the original Lord Dalhousie. Mr. Clark suggested this collection may form part of the furnishings for the new Board and Senate Room.

In response to the President's report, Mr. Andrews emphasized the importance of considering exchange programs in general as a recent survey at another university noted 50% of the respondents said they valued most highly a year of study abroad. He suggested that perhaps SAPC could begin to consider this matter.

92:117

Question Period

There were no questions.

92:118

Other Business

There was no other business.

92:119

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

**Minutes of Senate Meeting
August 10, 1992**

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Secretary

Chair