



## SENATE

### Approved Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, November 23, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. Via Microsoft Teams

The Senate met in regular session on Monday, November 23, 2020 via Microsoft Teams

**Present:** K. Hewitt (Chair), A. Aiken, V. Allen, D. Anderson, F. Annan, R. Barker, P. Bennett, N. Bird, J. Blustein, D. Bourne-Tyson, K. Brooks, T. Cyrus, B. Davis, R. Devlin, C. Diallo, P. Doyle-Bedwell, O. Dryden, H. El Nagggar, N. Ezzedine, M. Farrimond, B. Foster, M. Fournier, L., D. Gray, D. Grujic, A. Habib, B. Hansson, F. Harvey, G. Horne, V. Howard, M. Irwin, S. Jeffrey, Z. Jones, A. Kermanshahi-Pour, J. S. Kim, S. Kirk, M. Leonard, L. MacDonald, B. Merritt, L. Meynell, A. Mohan, C. Moore, F. Naghibi, J. Newhook, R. Orji, M. Pacurar, L. Perez, J. Phinney, T. Rajack-Talley, B. Rathgeber, C. Richardson, H. S. Ro, K. Rosen, D. Saini, B. Schick, E. Seelemann, S. Seth, M. Sharaput, A. Siegel, D. Silvio, A. Sophocleous, S. Sparks, L. Spiteri, S. Stackhouse, M. Stinson, S. Stone, F. Taheri, V. Turpin, P. Tyedmers, D. Tyers, M. A. Ulku, I. Waldron, E. Welsh, D. Westwood, D. White, S. Wildeman, E. Wunker, I. Yakovenko

**Regrets:** J. Hall, A. Rau-Chaplin, G. Warner, S. Yurgel

**Absent:** G. Adolphe-Nazaire, R. Agu, M. Aston, A. Cooper, A. Doucette, T. Duck, Y. El Hiani, K. El Sankary, N. Ezzeddine, L. Goldberg, W. Lahey, B. Nassar, L. Popper, S. Zahoor

**Guests:** T. Bardouille, S. Brousseau, L. Godsoe, B. Mann, J. Ng'ethe, N. Strowbridge, M. Rowlston, J. 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 presented.

#### 2. Consent Agenda:

##### 2.1 Approval of Draft Minutes of September 28, 2020 and October 26, 2020 Senate Meetings

Approved by **CONSENT**.

##### 2.2 Waiver of Presentation of Dal ID for Final Exams for 2020-21

**THAT for the 2020-2021 academic year, the requirement for students to present their Dalhousie identification (Dal card) before a final exam be waived and that any course instructor wanting to verify a student's identity for final exams accept an alternative form of identification, including the online photo class list (through Banner) or another government-issued piece of photo identification.**

Approved by **CONSENT**.

### **3. Matters Arising from September 28, 2020 and October 26, 2020 Senate Meetings:**

#### **3.1 Academic amnesty request for Indigenous students re: Saulnierville action (November 18, 2020 Meeting)**

Senator Hewitt advised that a request had been received from the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) to further extend the motion granting academic amnesty to Indigenous students participating in advocacy efforts in the Saulnierville area. Senator Hewitt confirmed that the Senate Planning and Governance Committee (SPGC) considered the request for extension at its October 21 meeting and recommended it to Senate for approval. Senator Hewitt advised that the motion was identical to that approved by Senate on October 26, 2020, except for the expiry date of the amnesty, which was now December 9, 2020. Senator Stinson added that the amnesty had been used quite widely and had been positively received by students.

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

**THAT all individuals involved in teaching delivery at Dalhousie allow each Indigenous student participating in solidarity, support, and advocacy efforts in Saulnierville, NS to do so without academic penalty at least once per course, with additional requests granted by individual instructors in consultation with the Faculty. Amnesty requests are also subject to the following:**

- **Students are to inform their professors in advance if they plan on missing an assessment or submitting an assessment late in order to attend the action(s).**
- **Make-up assessment(s) will be subject to approval at the Faculty level in consultation with individual instructors as appropriate.**
- **Due to the ongoing nature of the situation, amnesty will be granted to Indigenous students until the next meeting of the Senate Planning and Governance Committee (December 9, 2020), at which time these provisions will be reassessed.**

The motion **CARRIED**.

Senator Howard provided a brief outline of communication received by the Associate Deans' Academic Council (ADAC) from Faculties on processing of amnesty requests. Senator Howard noted that plans all revolved around individual instructors working with students to make up any missed work or assessments and that program chairs, program directors or associate dean academic were involved where appropriate.

#### **3.2 Reporting on Sexualized Violence Policy – Sheila Wildeman**

Senator Hewitt reminded the meeting that following the motion on this item moved by Senator Wildeman and approved at the September 28, 2020 Senate meeting, a written update from the Vice-Provost, Equity & Inclusion was presented at the October 26 Senate meeting. At that meeting, it was agreed that Senator Wildeman would present her response at today's meeting, after having shared it in advance with the Vice-Provost, Equity & Inclusion.

Senator Wildeman advised that they and other Senators had held a meeting with Human Rights & Equity Services (HRES) and the Vice-Provost, Equity & Inclusion. At the meeting, it was clarified that the motion approved at the Senate meeting of September 28, 2020, was seeking an understanding of how the Sexualized Violence Policy was functioning. Senator Wildeman advised that, for instance, not all actions

resulted in the same kind of reporting. The complexity of disaggregating data was also discussed and it was noted that disaggregation remained important in principle and that barriers to reporting such information should be noted. Senator Wildeman noted the significant effort being put in by HRES and the Vice-Provost, Equity & Inclusion, adding that it was anticipated that the next report on the Sexualized Violence Policy would be responsive to the September 28, 2020 motion and highly informative to Senate and the University community. Senator Wildeman noted that they looked forward to engaging with the policy further when it came up for biennial review. Senator Rajack-Talley confirmed that the discussions had been fruitful so far and would be continued.

#### **4. Steps to Make Diversity & Inclusion a Reality**

Senator Hewitt advised that five-minute segments to consider steps that were being or could be taken to make diversity and inclusion a reality at Dalhousie and in the wider community were being continued.

Tim Bardouille, Assistant Professor from the Faculty of Science, presented on a new initiative, the BIPOC Mentorship Program, catering to graduate students. T. Bardouille advised that the motivation for this initiative came from graduate students on the Anti-Racism Action Team at Dalhousie, who identified lack of mentorship as a shortcoming of their educational experience. These students desired to have mentors who had a lived experience as a person of colour at Dalhousie, would not belittle students due to implicit or explicit biases and who could provide students of colour with comparable mentorship to that their non-BIPOC counterparts received. T. Bardouille noted that the initiative hoped to help address the underlying systemic issue of underrepresentation of people of colour at Dalhousie. He added that for graduate students, the effects of this underlying issue included isolation, lack of guidance, tokenism, erasure, misidentification, micro-aggressions and other forms of “othering” and marginalization. T. Bardouille advised that some of the solutions identified were to provide students with a feeling of community, as well as opportunities for leadership and validation of their experience.

T. Bardouille went on to explain the BIPOC mentorship initiative, noting that the goal would be to provide graduate students with professional development opportunities through identity matched mentorship. This initiative would be exclusively for people of colour and operate on a “for us, by us” (FUBU) model, although allies would be welcome to provide resources. T. Bardouille added that this initiative would be consistent with the stated goals of the University, specifically the goal of improving recruitment and retention of BIPOC graduate students. T. Bardouille advised that similar programs existed at other institutions.

T. Bardouille noted that the plan was for the 2021 Summer term to be used to build and learn, with semi-structured mentorship taking place during the 2021 Fall and Winter terms, followed by an annual review, as well as ongoing research and data collection to ensure the program was achieving its goals. T. Bardouille advised that concept feedback was sought on this proposed initiative. It was also intended to conduct a graduate student needs assessment survey. The initiative would also require resources in the form of funding for a pilot program (and ongoing program), space, expertise, and partnerships.

Several senators expressed their interest and support for the initiative.

#### **5. Reports:**

##### **5.1 Chair of Senate’s Report**

Senator Hewitt presented the Chair of Senate’s Report, noting the effort made by faculty, staff and management to facilitate the transition to online learning. Senator Hewitt advised that upcoming issues

at the standing committee level would include consideration of an equitable admissions policy and streamlining approval processes for programs.

Senator Hewitt advised Senators of the recent approval, by SPGC on behalf of Senate, of the terms of reference for the College of Continuing Education new Governance Council. Senator Hewitt also provided a brief update on the work of the Academic Unit Consolidation, Renaming, Establishment, Transfer and Termination (AUCRETT) Taskforce to develop policies, procedures and guidelines for the creation, renaming, establishment, termination and transfer of academic units. Senator Hewitt advised that the draft policy, which was currently in the consultation phase, had come to SPGC for feedback and would be brought to Senate for early feedback as was noted when this item was first brought to the attention of Senate. Senator Hewitt added that the AUCRETT Taskforce had also engaged with the Deans' Council, ADAC, the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA), two of the equity caucuses, Legal Counsel and other groups.

## **5.2 President's Report**

Senator Saini presented the President's Report, beginning by providing an update on the ongoing COVID-19 situation and how this was affecting the University community. Senator Saini noted that recent infections may be foreshadowing of a worsening situation in Nova Scotia in the coming weeks but the University would be prepared.

Senator Saini advised that the postsecondary sector had experienced and would continue to experience significant disruption, adding that resources such as government funding would be constrained. Senator Saini added that with these challenges came potential opportunities and that the ability to rapidly adapt and innovate would be critical to the University's success, particularly with regard to global competitiveness. Senator Saini requested that Senate Officers set aside time in the near future for him to speak to Senate further on this topic.

Senator Saini finished by requesting Senate to join in congratulating Senator Sparks on becoming Dalhousie's 92<sup>nd</sup> Rhodes Scholar.

## **5.3 Questions for Reports**

There were no questions.

## **6. Question Period – Faculty Discipline Process Annual Report**

Senator Hewitt reminded Senate that a query regarding the faculty discipline process annual report circulated for information at the September 28, 2020 had been partly answered at the previous Senate meeting. The second part of the question regarded whether the University was contemplating legal action to prevent the website Chegg from continuing to support cheating and violating the intellectual property rights of Dalhousie professors. Senator Hewitt advised that Consultation was ongoing on how best to resolve this issue.

**FOR APPROVAL  
IN CAMERA:**

**7. Senate Honorary Degrees Committee (SHDC)  
Honorary Degree Nominations**

Senators moved to an *in camera* session to discuss item 7.

Honorary degree nominations were considered. Further time for discussion being required, however, this item was deferred.

Senators returned to open session for the remaining items.

**8. Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC):  
8.1 Credit/No Credit Grade Working Group Recommendations**

Senator Pacurar introduced this item from the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (SLTC). Senator Pacurar advised that at the November 4 meeting of SLTC, a motion was passed recommending that ADAC strike a rapid task force (RTF) to develop a credit/no credit grade option and report back to SLTC by December 2020. This RTF was formed and brought a series of recommendations for SLTC to consider at the special meeting held on November 18, 2020 for this purpose.

Senator Pacurar advised that the task force also prepared proposed terms of reference but these would be considered by SLTC at a later date when the agenda permitted. Senator Pacurar added that an approved Senate motion existed on this issue, passed at the May 11, 2020 meeting of Senate and read:  
*THAT the Provost examine the need for a policy/procedure/guideline in respect to the future introduction of novel grading processes and definitions and report to Senate at its June 8, 2020 meeting.*

Senator Pacurar advised that SLTC considered the recommendations from the RTF and brought forward the following omnibus motion, now before Senate for approval.

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

- 1. THAT:**
  - a. For the 2020-2021 academic year, students have the opportunity to withdraw from courses with a W (Withdraw) until the last day of classes, with the withdrawal date being extended to December 8, 2020 for fall term and April 8, 2021 for the winter term; and**
  - b. Possible changes to the refund schedule will be investigated by the DSU Vice-President Academic and External.**
- 2. THAT Senate temporarily extend sections D7 and F6 of the Syllabus Policy for the fall 2020 term to allow faculty to review their assessments and course guidelines in order to mitigate factors outside of students' control, and implement changes as needed in their syllabi for this academic term. Faculty may want to consider changes that would benefit students such as reducing or eliminating late penalties, dropping the lowest quiz/lab/discussion post grade, agreeing to extensions, and/or re-weighting assessment components. In accordance with section F5 of the Syllabus Policy, changes must be clearly**

communicated to all students, must be compatible with the calendar description of the approved Course, and should not alter the student learning outcomes.

3. **THAT Senate endorse a statement written in consultation with the Dalhousie Student Union encouraging consideration of the challenges faced by students who are taking multiple courses online when designing and delivering online courses for the winter 2021 semester.**

Responding to a query, Senator Hewitt advised that section 1.b. of the proposed motion resulted from a request from the DSU to pursue the possibility of partial (10%) tuition refunds normally associated with course withdrawals. Responding to a further query, Senator Howard advised that section 3 of the proposed motion was intended to address the concerns of students around workload. The statement, once created, could be brought to Senate for consideration. It was suggested that the motion be amended to support the preparation, rather than endorsement, of statement by deleting the word “**endorse**” and replacing it with the words “**consider at its December 14, 2020 meeting**”. This was accepted as a friendly amendment.

The motion as amended now reads:

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

1. **THAT:**
  - a. **For the 2020-2021 academic year, students have the opportunity to withdraw from courses with a W (Withdraw) until the last day of classes, with the withdrawal date being extended to December 8, 2020 for fall term and April 8, 2021 for the winter term; and**
  - b. **Possible changes to the refund schedule will be investigated by the DSU Vice-President Academic and External.**
2. **THAT Senate temporarily extend sections D7 and F6 of the Syllabus Policy for the fall 2020 term to allow faculty to review their assessments and course guidelines in order to mitigate factors outside of students’ control, and implement changes as needed in their syllabi for this academic term. Faculty may want to consider changes that would benefit students such as reducing or eliminating late penalties, dropping the lowest quiz/lab/discussion post grade, agreeing to extensions, and/or re-weighting assessment components. In accordance with section F5 of the Syllabus Policy, changes must be clearly communicated to all students, must be compatible with the calendar description of the approved Course, and should not alter the student learning outcomes.**
3. **THAT Senate consider at its December 14, 2020 meeting a statement written in consultation with the Dalhousie Student Union encouraging consideration of the challenges faced by students who are taking multiple courses online when designing and delivering online courses for the winter 2021 semester.**

The motion as amended **CARRIED**.

## **8.2 DSU Proposed Grading Options**

Senator Pacurar presented this item, informing the meeting that at the November 20 special meeting of the SLTC called for this purpose, the committee considered proposed alternative grading options put forward by DSU and recommended one to Senate for approval.

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

**THAT Senate temporarily suspend section D1 of the Grading Practices Policy to allow for the establishment of alternative grading options. Specifically, to establish Pass/ILL grading option to be administered in the same way as the option given in the winter term of the 2019/20 academic year that would allow students to voluntarily have their grades converted from standard letter grades to a grade of either “Pass” or “Ill.” This option will be offered in both terms of the 2020/21 academic year.**

Senators engaged in robust discussion of the motion, both for and against. Highlights included that:

- The same provision was well received by students when it was put in place for the 2020 Winter term.
- Uncertainty created by this provision could have a negative effect on Faculties and students, as well as possible impacts on accreditation for programs and students’ job and scholarship applications, as many of these relied on grades.
- A number of Faculties may seek to be exempted from this provision, if approved.
- The provision could be used as it has been in the 2020 Winter term, namely on appeal to the Assistant Dean, Student Matters of the Faculty in question (or other key advising bodies) as an option of last resort and only after counselling or discussion.

Senator Hewitt advised that if this motion was approved, all Faculties would be required to comply unless they sought and were granted a waiver by Senate.

In response to a Senator’s question, Senator Hewitt clarified that where the motion called for the grading options to be administered “in the same way” as those options in the 2019/20 Winter term, this referred to the motion passed at the May 11, 2020 Senate meeting, where a requirement for students to consult with a Dean’s Waiver Designate in their School or Faculty was included in the provision.

The motion **CARRIED**.

***FOR DISCUSSION:***

**9. Senate Planning and Governance Committee (SPGC):**

**9.1 BAC Final Operating Budget Recommendations for 2020-21**

This item was deferred due to lack of time.

**10. Senate consultation on candidate profile for the position of Provost and Vice-President Academic**

This item was deferred due to lack of time.

**11. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**12. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.