

Item: Senate Minutes, January 1995

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**DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY**  
**MINUTES**  
**OF**  
**SENATE MEETING**

Senate met in regular session on Monday, 9 January 1995 at 4:00 p.m. in the University Hall, Macdonald Building.

**Present** with Mr. Dunn in the chair were:

Andrews, Archer, Atherton, Bankier, Barrett, Bérard, Birdsall, J. Black, R.J. Boyd, Bradfield, Breckenridge, Butlin, Carlson, Chandler, Clark, Clarke, Conrod, Cross, Curri, Doolittle, Earl, Egan, Farmer, Fentress, Fingard, Gilroy, Hare, Hobson, James, Kussmaul, Landymore, Laurie, R.W. Lee, D.M. Lewis, Lydon, MacKay-Lyons, MacLennan, MacLeod, Mahony, Manchester, Mann, McAllister, McCabe, McIntyre, Melanson, Nestman, O'Shea, Owen, Pacey, Richards, Ruedy, Shafai, A.M. Simpson, Sinclair-Faulkner, K. Smith, Starnes, Stodola, Stolzman, Sullivan, D.A. Sutherland, J.E. Sutherland, Sutow, Taylor, Wallace, Wentzell, Wortman, Wright, Yoon.

**Invitees:** J. Eastman, M. MacDonald.

**Regrets:** B.P. Archibald, Clovis, M. Crowley, DeMéo, Friedrich, Gardin, Ghiz, Haley, Laidlaw, Lane, Moss, Murray, Ritchie, Roald, Schlech, Walker, Wassersug.

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. Mr Dunn welcomed Ms J. Conrod, the new Vice-Chair of Senate.

**95:001**

Senate Forum - *Reinventing Dalhousie* -- Motions from Senate Academic Planning Committee

Mr Dunn reported that the Senate Academic Planning Committee had reviewed the discussions which had taken place during the recent two-day Senate Forum and had prepared a report (previously circulated) on its assessment of the Forum. The report contained two motions, which were to be put to Senate.

On behalf of the Senate Academic Planning Committee, it was moved (R. Bérard/W.F. Doolittle):

**Senate agrees that the following principles should  
form the basis of Dalhousie's rationalization discussion:**

**1) Given the competitive nature of the modern global economy, it is essential that Nova Scotia have a first-class post-secondary education system.**

**2) Given the severe financial constraints which face both the federal and provincial governments and the subsequent pressures placed on the budgets of the Nova Scotia universities, the status quo is neither possible nor acceptable if principle (1) is to be maintained.**

**3) The province must have a comprehensive university which supports both undergraduate and graduate education that includes a diversity of disciplines, professional education, interdisciplinary studies, and research/scholarship. Such an institution must strive for excellence in all areas.**

**4) The above three principles can best be met by a consolidation of the post-secondary institutions in the metropolitan Halifax area.**

Mr Doolittle said that the motions contained in the report represented a consensus of members of the Senate Academic Planning Committee and mirrored majority opinion among contributors to the electronic-mail discussion group on rationalization. He said that he saw the motion as an attempt to preserve in the metropolitan Halifax area what has been valuable about Dalhousie, albeit in a restructured institutional framework. He noted that other universities might not be interested in taking part in discussions about possible consolidation, but he said that he believed that the initiative was a useful one.

Mr Kussmaul said that, while he believed some greater centralization of universities was likely, it should be the role of Senate to attempt to preserve as much institutional autonomy as possible. He said that it was not clear that administrative and academic coordination would be enhanced by institutional consolidation and that the motion would promote the worst type of centralization. He urged that the motion be defeated and asked that his opposition be recorded in the minutes.

Ms Bankier said that a form of federation might be a more viable way of linking institutions than consolidation. Mr Dunn said that SAPC might be open to such a model, but Mr Doolittle said that it would have to be shown that federation could save money. Mr Starnes said that it was premature to call for consolidation and suggested that Dalhousie continue to press its argument for enhanced government support to underwrite its graduate, professional, and research activities. Mr Starnes moved:

**that the following words be added to §4 of the motion:  
"without prejudice to other possible means of meeting  
the goals outlined above."**

The motion failed for lack of a second.

It was then moved (J.P. Atherton/P. Kussmaul):

**that the words "comprehensive university" in §3 be replaced with the words "inter-related university system" and that the word "consolidation" in §4 be replaced by the words "close cooperation".**

Ms Curri pointed out that the words of the motion and the proposed amendments were imprecise. She suggested that the document might have come with a glossary to explain in detail what was meant by such words as "consolidation".

Mr Clark suggested that the use of the term "post-secondary institutions" might be misleading, as it could suggest that SAPC sought to include community colleges. Mr Doolittle said that this was not the intention of SAPC.

Ms Hobson said that passage of the motion might be premature and, if the amendment was adopted, inadvisable. She said that only two courses could preserve a comprehensive university in Nova Scotia, consolidation or differential funding for Dalhousie. She noted that "close cooperation" among universities has been and remains elusive, as well as a very slow and expensive course of action. Ms Bankier said that she believed the motions needed further discussion before being brought to a vote and suggested tabling the main motion. To make this possible, Messrs Atherton and Kussmaul withdrew their amendment, and it was moved (J. Bankier/D. Hobson):

**that the motion be tabled.**

The motion carried.

Mr Taylor said that cooperation and federation were admirable ideas, but they did not save money. Furthermore, most attempts at cooperation to date have had limited success. Mr Clark said that cooperation has realized some major benefits but at a large cost in human resources. Furthermore, the voluntary nature of cooperation to date has hampered long-range planning, as institutions are free to withdraw from the process at any time.

Mr Pacey said that he believed that consolidation would only effect major savings for smaller institutions and that some forms of consolidation would jeopardize programmes at Dalhousie. Furthermore, having a single university in the Halifax area might invite government interference and regulation. Mr Cross pointed out that government already regulates universities and that the current rationalization process indicates the extent to which government is already interfering with the autonomy of institutions. Mr Shafai said that the modern global economy tends to favour smaller, decentralized units rather than large, consolidated ones.

Ms Hobson stated that Dalhousie, as currently constituted and funded, is likely not financially viable over the long term. Some units are already dangerously close to losing critical mass. Mr Taylor added that consolidation would have academic and intellectual benefits in many disciplines and programmes. Mr Cross said that, while there were reasons to fear consolidation, the motions brought by SAPC would involve Senate in a process that was already well underway. Mr Andrews said that he was not certain that the motions would bring Senate fully into the current rationalization process.

Mr Fentress said that the motions provided a useful foundation for further discussion, aimed at

preserving the integrity of higher education in Nova Scotia. Mr McCabe said that the experience of teacher education programmes has shown that failure to consolidate will lead some universities to cooperate selectively, often to the detriment of students and programmes. Ms Curri added that a properly consolidated system could provide students much greater choice in courses and programmes. Ms Conrod pointed out that the Dalhousie administration was already on record as being in favour of consolidation and suggested that Senate needed to decide if it wished to take some role in the debate.

Mr Lewis asked if the second motion in the SAPC report could be considered, despite the tabling of the first. Mr Dunn said that SAPC regarded the two as connected but that Senate could do as it wished. It was moved (D. Lewis/M. Cross):

**In consultation with the Senates of the other local institutions, Senate shall investigate the form that consolidation of Halifax post-secondary institutions should take, the process needed to achieve consolidation and the conditions that should govern it, and report back to Senate by 1 March 1995.**

Both the mover and seconder agreed to add the word "possible" before the word "consolidation" where it occurs in the motion.

The question having been called, the motion carried on a show of hands. (Dissent from YS, PK, JPA)

## **95:002**

### Report of the President

Mr Clark commented on his written report (appended). Mr Andrews asked if it was the case that Dalhousie was to spend up to \$150,000 on a public relations campaign to promote the consolidation of Halifax universities. Mr Clark said that there was no truth to such a rumor, adding that no budget allocation for such a project had been authorized.

Mr Clarke asked why the Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education was restricting admission to some of the sessions at its planned symposium in February or why it was charging a registration fee of \$25.00 for those who wished to attend. Mr Clark said that he could not answer these questions. Mr Taylor asked if we could soon expect the long-promised "full text" of the NSCHE "Green Paper". Mr Clark replied that this document had been promised for last October but that he was not certain when or even if it would be released.

## **95:003**

### Question Period

Ms Owen asked when Senate might be able to consider the Grading Practices Policy, developed by the Undergraduate Affairs Subcommittee of SCAA. Mr Bérard replied that SCAA had referred the policy to the relevant undergraduate Faculties in October for comment. To date, responses have been received from the Faculty of Health Professions, the School of Education, and the School of

Business Administration. When responses were received from the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences and Science and the School of Public Administration, SCAA would make a recommendation to Senate.

**95:004**

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m. upon motion (Y. Shafai/J. Conrod).

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Secretary

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Chair