

Item: Senate Minutes, March 1996

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
MINUTES
OF
SENATE MEETING

SENATE met in regular session on Monday, 11 March 1996 at 4:00 p.m. in the University Hall, Macdonald Building.

96:036

Progress re Revision of Senate Constitution and Terms of Reference for Senate Committees

Mr. Stuttard reported that the Steering Committee had been systematically looking at the Terms of Reference for all Senate Committees and the Senate Constitution. Once the Steering Committee has completed this process, their proposed revisions will be brought to Senate for approval.

96:037

Reminder -- Election of New Senators

Mr. Stuttard reminded Senators that the election of new Senators for 1996-1999 terms should take place this month. Once the new Senators have been elected, then the process of electing Senators to committees will begin.

96:038

Nomination to Senate Academic Appeals Committee

On behalf of the Committee on Committees, Ms. Binkley nominated Jennifer Bankier (Law) for the Senate Academic Appeals Committee. There were no further nominations and Ms. Bankier was declared elected.

96:039

SAPBC Report

Mr. Stuttard stated that this report was one of a series of periodic reports of the work of the Standing Committees of Senate. Over the last few months, SAPBC's business included discussion and response to the Metro Consortium "Business Plan", review of BACIX, and a discussion of other budget matters including the ERBA formula, endowments, and complement reductions. The committee would like more information on the budget practices in Faculties to help its discussions on academic priorities.

SAPBC is currently considering a new response to BACIX since a number of underlying assumptions of the report are no longer valid: there is a possible operating budget surplus for 1995-96, reduction of government funding is projected to be 7 per cent rather than 9.9

per cent and proposed tuition increases are being modified. Today, SAPBC began to look at "Academic Priorities" (circulated to all Senators), and would welcome Senators' comments. SAPBC expects to develop a formal proposal for Senate in the relatively near future. Also, as part of its overall review of the terms of reference of Senate's standing committees, the Steering Committee has proposed the dissolution of the Senate Physical Planning Committee (SPPC) which was established essentially as a sub-committee of SAPC (predecessor of SAPBC) in the 1979 Senate reform. The functions of SPPC would be incorporated into the revised terms of reference which SAPBC is now considering. Finally, the Senate review of the Faculty of Science (deferred from 1994) has stalled pending submission by the Faculty of names of potential external reviewers. Review of the Faculty of Medicine is also scheduled for this year.

In discussion, Mr. Andrews made two points. First, the Academic Priorities document, at item #5 of the Future Action section, suggests that each Faculty should assess and assign priorities to its constituent units or programs in order to assign budget allocations. Mr. Andrews felt that Faculties may set up other mechanisms for assigning budget allocations and more sophisticated language was needed to allow Faculties to do this. Second, a mechanism whereby priorities can change through time was needed. This does not mean a yearly review but it does mean a systematic and periodic review of priorities over time.

Mr. Pereira on behalf of the SAPBC welcomed guidance on the question of whether Senate favours the current decentralized approach to setting academic priorities, or would prefer a more centralized one.

Ms. McIntyre stated that Faculties preferred the decentralized approach. She also pointed out that Health Professions has a well-developed priority setting process. Mr. Stuttard asked her to forward to the Senate office a description of that process. Ms. McIntyre also pointed out that there was a Health Studies Co-ordinating Committee and that Health Studies was still an area of special emphasis in the University. Mr. Stuttard agreed and said that since the current document was written, a copy of the President's 1994 response to the Health Studies Task Force report (1993) had been provided to the Senate Office.

Mr. Andrews thanked the Senate officers for putting the SAPBC minutes on e-mail. He then noted that SAPBC had touched on the question of the Pension Surplus, and he cautioned SAPBC that this item was under negotiation and reminded them that Mr. Mason, a member of SAPBC, was the chief negotiator for the Board of Governors in this matter.

96:040

Pension Negotiations -- Academic Implications?

After Mr. Stuttard reminded the meeting that the pension surplus negotiations were ongoing and that discussion must be restricted to possible academic implications of those negotiations, the meeting agreed to consider this question informally, "as if in the committee of the whole" (Pacey/Cummings).

After forty-five minutes of discussion, the meeting returned to the formal agenda.

96:041

Report of President

Mr. Traves began by congratulating both the men's and women's basketball teams for winning their respective regional championships. The men's team will play in the National finals next week in the Metro Centre. Of our thirteen university teams, eleven teams have won their respective regional titles this year.

After circulating his report, Mr. Traves discussed two items in detail: the acceptance of the Consortium report by government and the expected level of funding reduction -- 7 percent; and the possibility of an agreement in principle of a merger of Dalhousie and TUNS.

Mr. Siddiq asked if the TUNS/Dalhousie merger would represent an expansion of Dalhousie or an institution with a new name? Mr. Traves responded that this had not been a point of negotiations.

Mr. Andrews asked if the merger would include all of TUNS programmes? Mr. Traves replied it would.

Mr. Wainwright stated that any merger would entail additional costs and asked if the President had looked into these costs. Mr. Traves responded that the discussions were focusing on merger "in principle" and once the proposed merger was approved at all levels, then the question of costs would be examined. He felt that costs are important and manageable issues. A committee will be set up to look into these matters once the preliminary details are worked out.

Mr. Hartzman said he understood that there would be organizational changes involved in a merger. He hoped that the nature of these change would not be a prerequisite of the merger. Mr. Traves stated that it was imperative that he be informed of the views of the Departments of Computer Science and Engineering on this subject. He encouraged Mr. Hartzman to write or discuss these concerns with him so he could reflect these concerns.

Mr. Pacey stated that one of the stumbling blocks of the last attempt at merger was the proposed building on the Dalhousie Campus. He asked if there was any projected merger of the campuses. Mr. Traves replied that there were no plans to alter the present campuses; both campuses would be maintained.

Mr. Andrews asked if the rumor heard in Ottawa, that SMU was to get a new building for the business school and Dalhousie would get funds for a new Arts building, was true. Mr. Traves replied that as far as he knew these were long-standing building priorities that had gone to MPHEC, but did not have any other information.

96:042

In Camera Session -- Honorary Degrees

The meeting moved In Camera to discuss the granting of Honorary degrees.

96:043

Adjournment

Upon motion (Doolittle/Traves) the meeting was adjourned at 18:00.

Minutes approved.

Secretary

Chair