

Item: Senate Minutes, March 2010
Call Number: Senate fonds, UA-5

Additional Notes:

This document is a compilation of Senate minutes, staff matters and miscellaneous documents for March 2010. The documents have been ordered chronologically and made OCR for ease of searching. The original documents and additional documents for this year which have not yet been digitized can be found in the Dalhousie University Senate fonds (UA-5) at the Dalhousie University Archives and Special Collections.

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**DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
APPROVED MINUTES
OF
SENATE MEETING**

Senate met in regular session on Monday, March 8, 2010 at 4:00 p.m., in University Hall, Macdonald Building.

Present with Lloyd A. Fraser in the chair were the following: Adshade, Barker, Barkhouse, Bennett, Blake, Campbell, Canning, Ciabattoni, Cochrane, Cox, Crago, Croll, El-Hawary, Evans, Fanning, Frank, Gantar, Garduno, Gilbert, Harman, Hymers, Ibrahim, Leon, Macy, Maes, Marrie, MacLaren, MacLennan, Moore, Pegg, Pinder, Ross, Ryan, Shaver, Shepherd, Shukla, Thornhill, Traves, Watters.

Regrets: Barrett, Boran, Camfield, Couban, Cunningham, Farina, Hughes, Karabanow, Lee, LeForte, McLarney, Mechoulan, Pelot, Robinson, Rutherford, Saunders, Sorge-English, Thomas, Thorburn, Zimmerman.

Sabbatical: McConnell, McLarney, Milson, Singleton.

Absent: Gassmann, Kroeker, Mitchell, Sadek, Simms, Smith, Webster.

2010:024

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was **ADOPTED** as circulated.

2010:025

Draft February 8, 2010 Senate Meeting Minutes

The Draft February 8, 2010 minutes were **APPROVED** with the following correction: 2010:020 Senate Academic Priorities and Budget Committee- Senate Review of the College of Continuing Education – The second sentence in the third paragraph should read: Mr. Cochrane explained that over the course of an academic year, Dalhousie Continuing Education services approximately 18,000 students and the CCE is one third of this number.

2010:026

Chair's Report

Mr. Fraser referenced the memo from Mr. Canning regarding the request for Honorary Degree Nominations, noting that this is a routine item for the Senate and that it is a very important process. The Honorary Degree gives us the opportunity to recognize significant service to the community, research and scholarship excellence, as well as careers and work by individuals that make great impacts on our lives and those in our community. It highlights to the community the values and contributions that are celebrated within Dalhousie University. Mr. Fraser asked that individuals think about nominations within their own Faculties.

On February 3, 2010, Mr. Fraser and the Registrar, on behalf of Senate, approved the awarding of the Bachelor of Engineering in Mineral Resource Engineering to a student in the Faculty of Engineering.

Two Tier II Proposals were received by the Senate Academic Priorities and Budget Committee (SAPBC) for approval on behalf of Senate: Termination of PhD and MSc programs in Pharmacy and Reinstating admission to the Combined MBA/LLB Program. Mr. Fraser explained that in November 2009 the decision making power regarding terminations, reinstatements and changes for Tier II programs was designated to the SAPBC. Given this, the SAPBC has approved the termination of the PhD and MSc programs in Pharmacy. This came following an original suspension of admissions that was put into place in 1995 after some issues with Faculty leaving. Since this original suspension, the programs have still remained on the books, however, now the time and decision has been made to terminate the programs altogether. Regarding the Combined MBA/LLB program, there had been a one-year suspension on admissions to the program. The SAPBC has now approved the lifting following the sufficient completion details for the combined program.

Mr. Fraser noted that changes and instatements at the Tier III level are only required to be reported to the SAPBC, and do not need committee approval. The instatement of the BSc with a Minor in Journalism Studies, and the curriculum change to the MSc and PhD programs and Statistics, have both been sufficiently reported to the SAPBC for official purposes.

Mr. Fraser congratulated Mr. Summerby-Murray on his appointment as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and Mr. Leon on his re-appointment as the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering.

Mr. Fraser highlighted the schedule of upcoming Senate meetings for the spring including the series of important presentations that will take place at the meetings.

April 12 – Regular meeting with a presentation by Bonnie Neuman on the Canadian University Survey Consortium data

May 10 – regular meeting with a presentation by Martha Crago on Dalhousie Research Performance

June 14 – regular meeting with a presentation by Floyd Dyke man on the Capital Campaign

Mr. Fraser welcomed Mr. Carl Canning, Vice Chair Academic Administration, to take over as Interim Chair of the Senate meeting. Mr. Fraser then left the Senate meeting.

2010:027

Senate Nominating Committee: Election of Chair of Senate

Mr. Canning invited Mr. John Hubert, Chair of the Senate Nominating Committee, to come forward to present the nomination for Chair of Senate.

On behalf of the Senate Nominating Committee, Mr. Hubert **MOVED:**

THAT Lloyd Fraser, College of Continuing Education, be appointed as Chair of Senate for the term July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2013.

After the requisite three calls for further nominations and hearing none, Mr. Fraser was declared elected as Chair of Senate for the term July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2013.

Mr. Canning then invited Mr. Fraser back to the Senate meeting and congratulated Mr. Fraser on his re-appointment as Chair of Senate. Mr. Fraser said he was honored to continue serving in the role as Chair of Senate and is continually impressed by the community of research and scholarship that occurs at Dalhousie University. Ms. Campbell expressed thanks, on behalf of Senate, for Mr. Fraser's dedication to Senate in his capacity as Chair.

2010:028

In Camera – Honorary Degree Committee: Honorary Degree Nomination – Nova Scotia Agricultural College

Mr. Fraser announced that the Senate session would now go in camera, and asked that all non-senators please leave the Senate meeting. When Senate returned to open session, Mr. Fraser announced that the nomination had been approved.

2010:029

Suspension of the Requirement for Medical Certificate: Academic Regulation 16.8 (Paragraph 2) – Recommendation to Senate

Mr. Fraser welcomed Ms. Susan Spence Wach, Associate Vice President (Academic Programs), to the Senate meeting to discuss the reinstatement of the Requirement for Medical Certification. Ms. Spence Wach discussed that in the fall, due to the H1N1 pandemic, Senate approved the suspension of the requirement of a medical certificate as outlined in Section 16.8 (paragraph 2):

Section 16.8 - Special Arrangements for Examinations, Tests and Assignments

At the discretion of the instructor, alternate arrangements for examinations, tests or the completion of assignments may be made for students who are ill, or in other exceptional circumstances.

Where illness is involved, a certificate from the student's physician will be required. This certificate should indicate the dates and duration of the illness, when possible should describe the impact it had on the student's ability to fulfil academic requirements, and should include any other information the physician considers relevant and appropriate. To obtain a medical certificate, students who miss examinations, tests or the completion of other assignments should contact the University Health Services or their physician at the time they are ill and should submit a medical certificate to their instructor as soon thereafter as possible. Such certificates will not normally be accepted after a lapse of more than one week from the examination or assignment completion date.

Ms. Spence Wach noted that while the requirement for a medical certificate was suspended, students still had to report their absence. At the time of approval of this suspension, the Senate asked that the suspension be revisited and reconsidered again in November 2009. In November, it was approved that the suspension continue for the winter term, and that the suspension once again be revisited in March 2010. Various individuals have been consulted with respect to lifting the suspension; including the Chief Medical Officer Dr. Robert Strang.

The Academic Continuity Group is now recommended to Senate that the suspension be lifted. Ms. Spence Wach emphasized that the committee has learned a great deal from this process, and they will provide a formal debriefing at the end of the week regarding the successes and challenges faced in the process. Given that there may be another instance similar to this in the future, it is important to highlight areas that need to be improved on and acknowledge what worked well. It is unlikely that if there is a third wave of H1N1 that it will cause as large of an impact as the first two waves given that many people have already been infected and many others have been immunized. At this time, immunity levels are deemed high among the population.

Mr. Gantar MOVED, seconded by Mr. Cochrane:

THAT Senate approve the reinstatement for the requirement for Medical Certification under Academic Regulation 16.8 (Paragraph 2) that was temporarily suspended by Senate on November 23, 2009. The reinstatement will be effective as of March 15, 2010.

The motion **CARRIED**.

Ms. Spence Wach noted that the University community would be informed of the reinstatement. The Academic Continuity Planning Group further recommended that section 16.8 in relation to the general application of a medical certificate be given review. It was agreed that the Senate Steering Committee consider this recommendation at its next meeting. Mr. Fraser thanked Ms. Spence Wach and the committee for their work regarding this matter.

2010:030

President's Report

Mr. Traves introduced the Strategic Plan as one that has been structured around a variety of environmental challenges at the University and beyond. This plan attempts to meet these challenges through a set of designated objectives and goals that are each accompanied by planned steps. The context of the document is to focus on performance. With this as the context, it will be important to use systematic performance measures given that the University will be facing increasing public scrutiny, especially in light of the Provincial Review that is currently underway. Mr. Traves noted that he anticipates the review will recommend that systematic performance reviews take place at the University level for all post secondary institutions.

There is a lack of evidence-based analysis regarding University performance, and this is due to the fact that it is a complex matter; the ability to provide this will evolve over time. At this present time Mr. Traves is asking the Senate for suggestions and feedback with a vision to capture the issues that are addressed within the Strategic Plan and in general on performance measures. There is a need to close the gap between the established goals and the reality.

Mr. Traves described that the Strategic Plan revolves around four core elements, first the need to differentiate academic offerings at Dalhousie in an increasingly competitive environment. Now is the time to think about how we already differentiate ourselves, how this is working well, and what areas need to be improved. We have to ask whether we are content with the image of Dalhousie, or whether we want to make some alterations to our image. The second core element is that Dalhousie needs excellence of execution beyond the philosophical commitment, but implemented as a practical concept. Third, there are not infinite resources available so there needs to be a focus on which special programs receive resources, and what other programs may have to lose some resources. This is not about wiping out entire programs, but reconsidering where finances and resources are allocated given that there is no economic boom anticipated for the immediate future. The fourth and final core element is the need to be flexible. Change has been traditionally a slow process at Dalhousie, which has been beneficial in the sense that we have not got caught up in fads. However, there also needs to be room to take advantage of our capacity to respond to the environments' needs.

Mr. Traves concluded the introduction of the document by saying that he believes this is an exercise and obligation for all academic and administrative units at the University; each needs to look at what they do,

why they do it and how this fits into the larger plans at Dalhousie. Thus each unit needs its own Strategic Plan to ensure they can help foster employee engagement, commitment, and help create an environment where employees see their individual contributions making a difference on the larger scale. Mr. Traves has provided the macro level plan, and now there is need to align these goals, and overall plan, with each unit's goals and plans. When people see these plans fitting, it will improve morale and can make people work with more dedication and passion.

In closing, Mr. Traves noted this is not a final draft, and suggestions are still welcomed. Mr. Traves thanked everyone who has contributed thus far to the Strategic Plan via discussion papers and feedback.

Mr. Fraser then invited Senators to divide into four groups for discussion of the Making Choices: Dalhousie's Strategic Focus, 2010 – 2013.

2010:031

Question Period

There were no questions.

2010:032

Other Business

There was no other business.

2010:033

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:00pm.

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
Approved MINUTES
OF
SENATE MEETING

Senate met in regular session on Monday, March 22, 2010 at 4:00 p.m., in University Hall, Macdonald Building.

Present with Lloyd A. Fraser in the chair were the following: Barkhouse, Barrett, Bennett, Blake, Campbell, Canning, Ciabattoni, Cochrane, Cox, Croll, Cunningham, El-Hawary, Evans, Frank, Gantar, Gassmann, Gilbert, Harman, Hewitt, Hughes, Hymers, Karabanow, Lee, LeForte, Leon, Macy, Maes, Marrie, MacLennan, McClure, McLarney, Mitchell, Moore, Pinder, Robinson, Ross, Rutherford, Ryan, Sadek, Saunders, Shaver, Shepherd, Simms, Smith, Sorge-English, Thomas, Thorburn, Thornhill, Traves, Watters, Webster, Zimmerman.

Regrets: Crago, El-Masry, Fanning, Kroeker, MacLaren, Mechoulan, Pelot, Shukla.

Sabbatical: McConnell, Milson, Singleton.

Absent: Adshade, Barker, Boran, Couban, Farina, Garduno, Ibrahim, Pegg.

Mr. Fraser first welcomed the new Senator from the Faculty of Science, Mr. Kevin Hewitt from the Department of Physics and Atmospheric Science.

2010:034

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was **ADOPTED** as circulated.

Matters Arising

Mr. Fraser reported that Mr. Shaver, Vice President Academic & Provost, had sent a notice to the University community indicating that the requirement for Medical Certification under Academic Regulation 16.8 (paragraph 2), which was temporarily suspended by Senate, had been reinstated as of March 15th, 2010.

Mr. Fraser also noted that he had received the notes from the discussion at the March 8th Senate meeting of *Making Choices: Dalhousie's Strategic Focus, 2010-2013*; these have been passed along to the President.

2010:035

Chair's Report

Mr. Fraser reported, with sadness, that George MacLennan, of Information Technology Services–Administrative Computing, had passed away quietly at home on March 9, 2010. On behalf of the Senate and the Dalhousie community, Mr. Fraser extended condolences to Senator Oriel MacLennan, family and friends.

Mr. Fraser noted that there were two items that accompanied the agenda for information. First, a memo from Mr. Carl Canning dated February 15, 2010 regarding a Call for Honorary Degree Nominations for Fall 2010 and Spring 2011, with nominations to close on March 31, 2010. The second item was the 2008 report

from the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, *Student Course Evaluations: Research, Models and Trends*, which was provided as background for the discussion on student ratings of instruction.

2010:036

President's Report

Mr. Traves reminded the Senate that the Provincial Budget would be released in April. It is anticipated that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be fulfilled providing the agreed funds covering the 2010-2011 fiscal year. The Provincial Budget release will also contain some information regarding research funding and operating grants that will be of interest to the University.

A set of strategic budget plans has been developed for the coming year. Due to the current concerns over pension payments a proposed increase in contributions from the University would result in a large deficit. Consultations have taken place to try to reduce the proposed contribution amount to about half the proposed number. If this new scenario is adopted, the University would be in a more positive position and would not incur a large deficit. Mr. Traves closed by noting that the discussion points from the last Senate meeting regarding the Strategic Plan have resulted in some minor changes to the document and the revised Plan will be brought back to Senate soon.

2010:037

In Camera - Honorary Degree Committee: Honorary Degree Nomination

Mr. Fraser announced that the Senate session would now go in camera, and asked all non-senators to leave the Senate meeting. When Senate returned to open session, Mr. Fraser announced that the nomination of an individual to receive an honorary degree from Dalhousie had been approved.

2010:038

Senate Academic Priorities and Budgeting Committee: Student Rating of Instruction Policy – For Approval

Mr. Fraser proposed that following the presentation by the Chair of the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching (SCOLT) of the proposed Student Rating of Instruction (SRI) Policy, that Senate then go into a quasi-committee of the whole session where a more informal discussion could take place. Following 30 minutes of discussion, the Senate would then return to regular session for more formal discussion and consideration of the motion to approve the proposed policy. The proposed procedure was agreed.

Mr. Fraser then welcomed Grant MacDonald, Chair, Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching and asked him to outline the process followed by SCOLT and the Working Group in developing the policy, and to present the proposed policy. Mr. MacDonald explained that the SRI Policy responded to student requests for access to SRI results and to a more widespread desire for greater accountability. Following an extensive literature review and over 30 consultation meetings involving Faculties, Senate committees, and others, SCOLT had developed the proposed policy—similar to policies currently in place at several other Canadian Universities.

Mr. MacDonald indicated that the essence of the proposed Policy Statement for the Student Rating of Instruction was captured by the following:

Student ratings of instruction are part of a broad strategy for continuous improvement in learning and teaching at Dalhousie University. Student ratings of instruction:

- *Are to be undertaken in applicable undergraduate and graduate courses;*
- *Involve a set of common questions as well as additional customizable questions of value to individual instructors, and to academic units; and*
- *Enable student access to summary results based on the common questions.*

Mr. MacDonald summarized the benefits of the policy being: greater accountability to students, reinforcement of the importance Dalhousie places on teaching quality, consistency across the university with a research-informed process for student feedback, a beacon for the continuous improvement of course evaluation instruments and procedures, administrative efficiency, transparency, and comparability with other G-13 universities.

Mr. MacDonald also noted the following concerns that had been raised: the need for education on the complexity of teaching and learning and the interpretation of SRI results; whether reporting should be of ratings of instruction or of ratings of courses; that publication of results could lead to grade inflation; that women and minority groups may be disadvantaged in instructor ratings; the vulnerability of those in their early years of teaching; and that the consultation period was too short. In responding to these concerns, Mr. MacDonald noted that the proposed policy addressed the concern for providing further education on teaching and learning; he noted that SCOLT had not examined alternatives involving the reporting of other kinds of course rating data beyond the SRI; that the committee had not found evidence in the literature to support the fear concerning grade inflation where appropriate SRI procedures were followed; that the literature does support a concern that biases may be present; that the opt-in provision is seen to protect junior faculty; and that SCOLT agrees there are benefits to further consultation.

Mr. MacDonald then noted the eight elements incorporated into the instrument current administered through the Centre for Learning and Teaching: stimulation of learning, organization, communication, engagement, fairness, feedback, concern for students, and overall teaching effectiveness.

Mr. Fraser thanked Mr. MacDonald for the presentation and announced that the Senate would now enter into a quasi-committee of the whole session for discussion of the SRI Policy. A summary of discussion points raised would be included in the draft minutes.

During the quasi-committee of the whole session, the following points were noted:

- On-line administration of the student ratings is desirable; however, it will take some time to implement the SRI system across the university, so a policy for universal evaluations must be established first.
- There was positive reception to the suggestion of further consultations. Further consultation was proposed following adoption of a policy, with a suggested timeline of 12 months.
- The incentive for faculty members to 'opt in' comes from faculty members' motivation to meet students' needs.
- Concern was expressed over the proposed accessibility of results which may create a ranking of faculty members on the SRI that might undermine collegiality and increase intra-departmental competition.
- Advantages and limitations were discussed of paper-based administration of the SRI instrument compared with on-line administration. It was noted that the Faculty of Medicine currently has a feedback survey which is totally on-line.

- The proposed policy would not make it mandatory for students to complete the survey. It would be important to educate students on the importance of completing the survey.
- Approving the policy and then consulting over the next 12 months on details of implementation would constitute a similar process to that employed in the implementation of the Faculty Discipline Procedures.
- It was noted that the Faculty Council of the Schulich School of Law had sent a letter to the Chair of Senate outlining their concerns regarding the proposed SRI policy and requesting that the School be entitled to maintain its current method of course evaluations.
- The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences had had an opportunity to comment on the proposed policy for only a relatively short period of time and had raised various concerns. Members of the Faculty expressed a desire to have more time to consult and to determine if their concerns could be addressed.
- The use of teaching evaluations is widespread across the university but many different instruments are in use and there is currently no policy which makes teaching evaluations mandatory. Dalhousie also recognizes outstanding teaching through a variety of teaching awards.
- Concerns were expressed about the character of the core questions and their relationship to particular Faculties. It was suggested that the proposed policy addresses this by making provision for Faculties and instructors to add any number of questions they wish to the list of University-wide questions in order to ensure that the instrument is relevant for their purposes.
- It has been demonstrated in comparable universities that the SRI process can work effectively. It was suggested that the heart of the decision before Senate is not that we have an absolutely perfect instrument on day one but rather that certain principles embodied in the proposal are endorsed. The key questions are:
 - Should there be a university-wide SRI process or should Faculties and/or departments each determine how they wish to proceed, independent of other university objectives?
 - Should there be a limited number of core questions that apply to all faculty members with the opportunity to have additional questions which are deemed to be relevant to the Faculty, department or instructor?
 - Should there be disclosure of the results of course and instructor evaluations to students?
- There is some anxiety about the third principle of the policy: disclosure of SRI information to students, yet professional disclosure is now increasingly the norm and there is an increasing public expectation about public accountability.
- Delaying implementation until the Fall of 2011 would provide an opportunity to address many of the implementation concerns. There is a series of implementation questions which will have to be addressed in a proper and responsible manner; this schedule would allow for a mechanism and an appropriate timeframe within which to do so.

Mr. Fraser then announced that the Senate would return to regular session.

On behalf of the Senate Academic Priorities and Budget Committee, Mr. Fraser **MOVED:**

THAT the Senate approve the proposed Policy for Student Ratings of Instruction (the proposed Policy is appended to the Minutes as Appendix A).

Formal discussions of the Student Rating of Instruction Policy followed with the subsequent points noted:

- Some aspects of the proposed Policy are too specific and binding; there should be provision for greater flexibility in developing the implementation plan, based on further consultation.
- Collegiality may be established between students and faculty through this Policy.
- If the Senate does not adopt a Policy what type of message does this send to the students, the University community, and members of the public?
- It is understood that with the provisions for individual faculty members to opt in, and the dissemination of SRI results through a secure on-line site, the proposed policy is in accordance with the existing Collective Agreement.
- Even when the Policy is adopted by Senate, amendments can be made.
- The Faculty of Architecture has concerns regarding the instrument and the common questions but it is quite supportive of mandatory evaluations and student access.
- There is strong support for the proposed SRI policy in the Faculty of Science.

Mr. Gantar **MOVED** an amendment to the motion, seconded by Mr. McClure:

THAT in Section 4.5 of the Student Ratings of Instruction Policy the words “secure online portal” be replaced by the words, “through a means that is.”

Mr. Gantar suggested that the proposed amendment would allow for greater flexibility in determining how the principle of providing student access to SRI results could best be met. In discussion of the amendment, the concern was raised that the proposed wording left it unclear how the information would be made available to students and who would make that determination.

It was suggested that there appeared to be a consensus on the basic principles embodied in the proposed policy and also agreement that more time and consultation was needed in order to determine the details of implementation—which could appropriately take place in the fall of 2011.

Mr. El-Hawary **MOVED**, seconded by Mr. Gantar:

THAT the motion before Senate, including both the main motion and the proposed amendment be laid on the table.

The motion **CARRIED**.

Ms. Thornhill **MOVED**, seconded by Ms. McLarney:

THAT Senate adopt the following policy statement on student ratings of instruction:

Student ratings of instruction are part of a broad strategy for continuous improvement in learning and teaching at Dalhousie University. Student ratings of instruction:

- Are to be undertaken in applicable undergraduate and graduate courses;
- Involve a set of common questions as well as additional customizable questions of value to individual instructors, and to academic units;
- Enable student access to summary results based on the common questions;

and that Senate agrees that the remainder of the draft Policy for Student Ratings of Instruction, presented to Senate on March 22, 2010, serve as a working document for further consultation over the next twelve months.

The motion **CARRIED**.

2010:039

Other Business

There was no other business.

2010:040

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 pm.

Appendix A

Policy for STUDENT RATINGS OF INSTRUCTION

1.0 Policy Statement

Student ratings of instruction are part of a broad strategy for continuous improvement in learning and teaching at Dalhousie University. Student ratings of instruction are undertaken through a systematic process for all applicable courses. A subset of questions will be common to the SRI process and provision will be made for secure student access to the summary results of those questions.

2.0 Guiding Principles

2.1 Student ratings of instruction are part of an overall system to support the improvement of learning and teaching at Dalhousie University.

2.2 Student feedback to instructors is an essential part of the system.

2.3 The effectiveness of the SRI process requires ongoing education of its goals, procedures and on the interpretation and application of results.

2.4 The rights and dignity of students and instructors shall be protected during the rating process, including the processes and practices to collect data and disseminate results.

2.5 The identities of students shall be protected.

2.6 All instructors have the opportunity to choose to participate in making their summary results available to students.

2.6 The process and results should be accessible to both students and instructors, subject to item 4.0 below.

3.0 Policy Goals

3.1. Provide instructors with student feedback data on their teaching performance to assist them with ongoing development of their teaching skills.

3.2. Engage students in the process of continuous improvement of students' educational experience.

3.3. Provide students with data about student perceptions of the quality of teaching.

3.4. Demonstrate accountability through the provision of student access to summary data on student ratings of instruction.

3.5. Provide departments, faculty and the university with data to support instructor evaluation, awards and recognition.

3.6. Provide departments, faculties and the university with data to support evaluation of programs, departments and institutions.

4.0 Dissemination of Results

Student ratings of instruction results shall be disseminated as follows:

4.1 Results of student ratings of instruction shall be made available to instructors for each course taught.

4.2 Results shall be made available to instructors only after they have submitted final marks for the course in which they are being rated.

4.3 Deans, department chairs, program heads or their equivalents, and tenure and promotion committees shall have access to all information contained in student ratings of instruction for the courses they oversee, subject to 4.4, and excepting the questions introduced at the specific request of individual instructors.

4.4 Unsigned qualitative comments are available only to the instructor.

4.5 The results from the common questions asked in the student ratings of instruction process shall be made available to students through a secure online portal in accordance with privacy regulations stipulated by the Office of the University Counsel and related collective agreements. Accordingly, no results that can be attributed to an individual instructor will be released without the consent of that instructor.

4.6 The information in item 4.5 will not be released to students where the results are from classes with ten (10) or fewer responses or from classes with response rates less than forty (40) percent.

4.7 Faculties and Departments shall make the student ratings of instruction available to the Vice-President Academic and Provost upon request.

5.0 Responsibilities

Students:

Dalhousie students are expected to provide feedback to instructors that is constructive, honest, and intended to improve the quality of instruction of an instructor in future years. Students are also expected to be aware of the complexities of teaching and learning. The summary results from the common SRI questions, although valuable, provides only a partial picture of teaching and learning effectiveness.

Instructors:

Individuals teaching at Dalhousie are responsible to familiarize themselves with the SRI process and to ensure that student feedback mechanisms, of which the SRI is one, are built into their courses. Instructors have a responsibility to convey to students the importance of their participation in the SRI process.

Faculties and Departments:

Deans, academic directors, and department heads are to ensure the student ratings of instruction process is administered consistently in all relevant courses. They are also expected to counsel and mentor instructors about their participation in the SRI process especially those in their early years of teaching or those without tenure. Identifying support and access to teaching development resources is part of mentoring.

Senate:

The Dalhousie University Senate will ensure that the SRI tools and processes are regularly reviewed. The Senate will periodically assess the intended outcome of the policy which is to contribute to continual improvement of learning and teaching at the University.

University Administration:

The Vice-President Academic and Provost shall report annually to Senate on teaching quality, effectiveness, and evaluation, and on the extent to which the University is meeting its learning and teaching goals. The Vice-President Academic and Provost will also support education and communications to the Dalhousie community on the policy and procedures.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions shall be utilized:

Instructor: includes all faculty members, including part time and sessional faculty, instructors, and teaching assistants where they take on substantial responsibility for teaching a course.

Student Ratings of Instruction (SRI): refers to the systematic collection of student feedback on the quality of learning and teaching in credit courses including a set of common questions used across all teaching units.

Student: an individual registered at Dalhousie University in credit course(s).

Course: shall be defined at the Faculty level and may include any unit of instruction for which academic credit is assigned.

Note: *Dalhousie acknowledges the value of the University of British Columbia's A Policy on Student Evaluation of Teaching (May 16, 2007) in providing a useful example and framework template for this policy.*