

Office of the Senate Secretariat

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Dear Member of Senate:

I advise you that a meeting of the Senate of Acadia University will occur from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, 16th June 2015 in BAC 132.

The agenda follows:

- 1) Approval of Agenda
- 2) Minutes of the Meeting of 6 May, 2015
- 3) Announcements
- 4) Senate Committee Annual Reports (*attached*)
 - i. Senate Research Committee Report (2014-2015)
 - ii. Academic Technologies Committee Report (2014-2015)
- 5) New Business
 - a) Report from the IDST Ad hoc Committee of Senate (*attached*)
 - b) Motion from the IDST Ad hoc Committee of Senate (*attached*)
- 6) Carried over from Senate Meeting of May 6th, 2015
 - a) Senate Executive White Paper (*attached*)

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED
Rosie Hare
Recording Secretary to Senate

**Senate Research Committee
Annual Report to Senate
May 2015**

Committee members:

Abramson, Z. (Arts)	MacKinnon, D. (R&GS; Chair)
Brackney, W. (Theology)	Redden, A. (Research centre director)
Colton, J. (Professional Studies)	Robicheau, W. (Library)
Fuller, C. (Undergraduate student)	Silver, D. (Pure & Applied Science)
Klapstein, S. (Graduate student)	Trofanenko, B. (Canada Research Chair)

The Senate Research Committee met on four occasions: October 21, November 18, November 28, and May 19. The work of the Committee this year has continued to focus on the development of Acadia's Strategic Research Plan (SRP). The Committee also "met" online on numerous occasions throughout the year.

Strategic Research Plan

As stated above, the work of the Senate Research Committee was again this year focused on preparation of the revised Strategic Research Plan. That document was finished in draft form in December, 2014. As I was on administrative leave from January through April, Dr. Perrins instructed that the campus consultations on the Plan should wait until my return in May.

Those consultations are now underway. A meeting was held with members of the Faculty of Theology on April 27th. The outline of the Plan's strategic focus and theme/capacity areas was presented and discussed. Further meetings are being planned for June and July, starting in the week of June 8th. As agreed in a 2014 submission to Senate, the consultations will include the Canada Research Chairs, the directors of formal research centres on campus, focus groups within each of Arts, Professional Studies, and Pure & Applied Science, IDST coordinators, and senior administration. This will be followed by an open campus forum. Feedback from all of these groups will be discussed by the Senate Research Committee. The draft Plan, including any changes resulting from these meetings and discussions, will be presented to Senate in the fall (likely September).

Mentoring Workshops

Research & Graduate Studies and the Senate Research Committee will once again be offering Tri-Council grant writing workshops, tentatively planned for June and July. In addition, we have invited Dr. Dawn McArthur to conduct a one-day generic workshop on grant writing. Dr.

McArthur was at Acadia two years ago for a very successful one-day workshop, jointly sponsored by Acadia and Mount Saint Vincent University.

Respectfully submitted,

David MacKinnon
Chair, Senate Research Committee

Academic Technologies Committee Report

**Academic Technologies Committee
Annual Report to Senate for 2014-2015**

April 30, 2015

Members for 2014-2015:

Robert Perrins, Acting Vice-President Academic, Chair
Jeff Banks, Director of Open Acadia
Gary Doucette, Executive Director of Academic technologies
Duane Currie, Coordinator , Academic Technologies
John Savklovski, Faculty of Arts
Robert Pitter, Faculty of Professional Studies
Darcy Benoit, Faculty of Pure and Applied Science
Mike Beazly, Library
C. Thompson, Student Rep, FA
H. Rode, Student Rep, FPS
R. Densmore, Student Rep, FPAS

The ATC met 3 times over the 2014/15 academic year; Nov. 3, Nov 24 and May 4.

The committee discussed the possibility of licensing a common Student Response System (SRS). Presently faculty members are using numerous systems from various vendors. Licensing agreements are possible but difficult to compare. As well, some new vendors have recently entered the market. For the time being no system has been licensed but this will be monitored over the course of the upcoming year.

A consortium of Atlantic Universities recently went through a Request for Proposal process for a cloud based LMS system. Acadia took part in the evaluations process. The consortium chose D2L (by Brightspace) as the vendor. Acadia can obtain the license for this LMS as part of the consortium but it was decided to remain with Moodle (Acorn) for the time being.

Cloud computing was also discussed and there is potential for Acadia faculty and students to obtain licenses for Microsoft Office 365. There are some concerns amongst faculty and students regarding privacy. It is not thought that these will be prohibitive and TS is looking into the specifics.

The ATC and the FDC were merged and this will take place in the upcoming year.

INTERIM REPORT OF THE IDST AD HOC INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES
COMMITTEE OF SENATE

The Mandate and task of this committee is as outlined in the authorizing motion passed by Senate at the April 2014:

“BE IT MOVED THAT Senate establish an Interdisciplinary Program Committee that will make proposals for:

- (a) the rationalized governance and administration of IDST programs;
- (b) the representation of IDST faculty on major decision-making committees, including hiring committees to ensure that IDST programs are supported when hiring is done;
- (c) the support of IDST programs through curriculum visibility, flexibility, and procedures such as systematic cross-listing and cross-coding; and
- (d) mechanisms by which departments will be advantaged by supporting interdisciplinary studies and programs.

BE IT FURTHER MOVED THAT the proposed committee be composed of a representative from each of the IDST programs chosen by the respective IDST program, as well as a faculty representative from each of the faculties, elected via the appropriate faculty elections officer and a student preferably from an IDST program and chosen by the SRC.¹

It is significant to remember that in the report of the Academic Program Review Committee to Women’s & Gender Studies, it was suggested that recommendations regarding governance of IDST programs should be referred to the APC, which identifies this as a priority area for attention. The Coordinators of interdisciplinary programs on campus met several times in order to discuss shared challenges and opportunities for collaboration. They identified numerous issues affecting IDST programs, submitting them to the APC and requesting the APC look at the range of issues identified and ask Senate to strike an interdisciplinary committee to make specific recommendations on these issues. The APC recommended that the coordinators make this request of Senate expressing the APC’s support. The scope of the concerns raised and contours of these deliberations are embodied in the authorizing motion passed by Senate.

¹ http://senate.acadiau.ca/tl_files/sites/senate/Minutes/2013-2014/Senate%20Minutes%20April%2014%202014%20final.pdf

The Ad Hoc IDST committee was constituted over the summer months and began its work in September 2014.

Members of the committee are as follows:

Clare Kellock	Acadia Student's Union Representative
Alice Cohen	Elected Rep Fac. Pure & Applied Science
Vernon Provencal	Elected Rep Fac. of Arts
Alan Warner	Elected Rep Fac. of Professional Studies
David Duke	Environmental and Sustainability Studies
Stephen Henderson	Canadian Studies
Gillian Poulter	Women's and Gender Studies
Donna Seamone	Comparative Religion
Ian Spooner	Environmental Science
Geoffrey Whitehall	Social and Political Thought

It was agreed at the outset of meetings that the committee would work to maintain difference between program histories of emergence and needs and would strive recommend changes that would respect those differences while establishing common structures promoting the flourishing of existing IDST programs and the interdisciplinary environment at Acadia. The committee met extensively toward the goal of formulating recommendations to Senate, including meetings with the VPA academic and the Deans for consultation, to seek input, and to discuss potential changes at the administrative level to provide for support of IDST programs. The outcome of those meetings is represented in the motion before Senate at the June 2015 meeting concerning a trial period for delegation of responsibility for IDST, at the diaconal level, to the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies as well as the subsequent creation of an IDST Steering Committee.

Rather than proceed with an omnibus motion that addresses all issues at once the committee will continue deliberation and make recommendations in the future concerning the range of issues identified as concern by this committee that are clearly within Senate's purview and which will need to be taken up by Senate in due course. These areas of concern currently include: establishing a process for consultation with Department heads to ensure offering of courses that sustain IDST programs, representation on Senate and relevant committees where needed, representation of IDST on APC, cross-coding of courses, and the need for adjustments in the institutional financial support environment to provide interdisciplinary students with access to financial support.

We intend to remain active, as a committee, for at least the next 12 months. Depending on the action taken on the motions before senate at the June meeting we will report more fully on the R&GS "experiment", together with motions emanating from that "experiment", and with other motions as it sees as essential to IDST programming.

Respectfully submitted.
Donna Seamone
Chair, Ad Hoc Senate IDST Committee

WHEREAS Senate established an Ad Hoc Interdisciplinary Program Committee, at the April 2014 meeting,² mandating this committee to make proposals for the rationalization, representation, and support of interdisciplinary studies and programs,

BE IT MOVED THAT the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies (R&GS) shall on a trial, one-year basis assume an administrative oversight role over Interdisciplinary Studies (IDST) programs not formally embedded in another academic unit. The Dean of R&GS will hold responsibilities for advocacy, administration, communication and facilitation of IDST programs within the academic administrative structure. The Dean of R&GS will convene an IDST Committee, chaired by the Dean, and comprised of IDST Program Coordinators.

Rationale / Background:

- Creation of this position gives IDST a clear place in the administrative structure and enables the routine flow of information and governance between senior administration and the units.
- Administrative responsibility at the decanal level provides for a person who can envision and work broadly for the values of interdisciplinarity in the university.
- IDST programs cross faculties and hence are not well represented by any of the roles of the existing three deans. The Dean of R&GS is already functioning in a cross-faculty, interdisciplinary way for research and grad studies. At present IDST programs directly report to the VPA but the VPA has many things to balance structurally and cannot necessarily fully attend to this area when needing to balance concerns of the Deans of existing faculties. There are not the resources to create a new Dean solely for IDST and the current size of programs does not warrant it.
- The IDST Committee is an important element as an administrative body overseeing interdisciplinary academic programs and supporting them to ensure their viability. It also allows for the effective flow of information back and forth between senior administration and IDST program coordinators and committees.
- The Senate Ad Hoc Interdisciplinary Program Committee will monitor the administrative structure through the trial period, will report to Senate concerning its suitability, and will make recommendations to Senate regarding its continuation, termination, or permanent establishment as an administrative structure for Interdisciplinary Studies.
- In the absence of any action from Senate, the trial period of this administrative arrangement will expire on June 30, 2016.

Moved by Donna Seamone, Chair, Senate IDST Ad Hoc Committee

² http://senate.acadiau.ca/tl_files/sites/senate/Minutes/2013-2014/Senate%20Minutes%20April%2014%202014%20final.pdf

Senate Discussion Paper

At the October 9, 2012 meeting of Senate the following motion was passed

D. Holmberg stated that the last time the standing committees of Senate were reviewed was in the early 1990's. Based on an informal vote of members present, it was agreed that there was a need for a new review now. H. Kitchen suggested striking a committee to undertake the work. D. Holmberg suggested that the Bylaws Committee has this task as part of its mandate, so it would be the logical choice (i.e., By-laws committee's mandate includes "To monitor the evolution of the academic committees and to recommend changes to the committee structure of Faculty Councils and other bodies at the University for which it is responsible"). It was moved by S. Major, that the matter be referred to the Bylaws Committee.

D. Holmberg indicated that Robert's Rules of Orders suggests that adding a date for committees to report back to the full body is generally helpful. S. Major suggested that a preliminary report be ready for the January 2013 meeting. T. Herman seconded the motion.

S. Henderson requested that formal opportunities for input from faculty members be provided by the Committee. K. Powers requested that some preliminary information be provided by the committee before input was sought. A. Quéma suggested that there might even be an appetite for new committees.

MOTION CARRIED.

Recently, some of the members of the Bylaws Committee, at the request of the Bylaws Committee, met with Senate executive to discuss their recommendations and experience with this review.

The Committee members pointed to the limitations of the process they had gone through and indicated that they felt their mandate did not enable them to make more substantive recommendations for change.

This prompted a somewhat larger discussion at the Executive meeting about how Senate was functioning and whether Senate, as the senior academic decision making body, was grappling with some of the larger academic issues

that the university faces. A straw poll of the Senate executive revealed that no one felt Senate was focused on big picture issues that are clearly important to the academic core and future of the University.

One example that was raised is the Strategic Mandate Agreement process. On several occasions the President has briefed Senate on the Strategic Mandate Agreement process that has been underway in Ontario and indicated he felt it was quite likely that some version of that process would come to Nova Scotia sooner or later.

Another example cited was the national enrolment trends that are placing significant strain on universities across the country. Some of these are related simply to a decline in the number of traditional university students – the 18-22 demographic. Strains are also being experienced as a result of significant shifts in the types of programs that students are enrolling in.

The Senate Executive felt this warranted further discussion and held a special meeting for the purpose of framing the questions in the form of a discussion paper for Senate to consider.

The questions we settled on are:

1. Why do Senate Committees feel so restricted/defensive/hampered in doing their work? A common theme in meetings of Senate Committees is related to the likelihood of things getting approved by Senate and we typically present “safe” options.
2. Why do some of the big questions never seem to get debated at Senate?
 1. Strategic Mandate Agreements
 2. What is our academic mission/vision? We have heard calls for “leadership” and “vision” in various forms and yet Senate does not seem to respond.
 3. How will we respond to the various external pressures?
3. How do we get these bigger questions onto the Agenda so that they get addressed?
4. Is there a role that Senate Executive could be playing in ensuring some of these items get onto the agenda? Is some other Committee more appropriately tasked with this job?