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Minutes of the Senate Meeting of Monday June 1st, 2020.

A special meeting of the Senate of Acadia University occurred on Monday June 1st, 2020 beginning at 10:00 a.m. with Chair A. Kiefte presiding and 48 present. This was a virtual meeting of Senate as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and was conducted using Microsoft Teams.

1) Information from the Chair regarding the special meeting of Senate:

The Chair informed Senators that she had placed a voting poll on Microsoft Teams late last week asking whether Senators were comfortable with holding a special meeting of Senate at short notice. There were not sufficient votes on the poll to reach quorum. As a result, in order to proceed with the meeting Robert's Rules required that a suspension of the rules be voted upon. This would require a two-thirds majority of Senators to vote in favour to allow for the meeting to proceed. This would require two-thirds of 53 members.

The Chair apologised for not providing the full five days of notice when calling the meeting.

G. Whitehall asked whether Senate was discussing the motion and if the motion failed, could Senators still have a meeting and discussion of items, but not have any voting.

The Chair agreed that if the motion failed Senate could still discuss the items if they wished to do so.

G. Whitehall requested that a secret ballot be conducted.

M. Adam had questions about the meeting itself and noted that these were serious agenda items and motions that he would prefer to have time and opportunity to discuss with his colleagues.

M. Adam stated that some of the motions seemed at odds with one another and he asked what the expectations were and what it was hoped would be achieved.

The Chair noted that the first three motions, items 2-4 on the agenda, had been agreed upon at a Senate Executive meeting two weeks prior to the meeting. Procedures had been discussed around how Senate would engage with decision making for temporary changes to University operations that were academically oriented. This would ensure that Senate would have the opportunity to debate matters that deviated from what was printed in the academic calendar and what Senate had previously passed.

The Chair noted that the fourth motion, item 5 on the agenda, was separate and had been brought forward late last week by a group including the Provost and Vice-President Academic and some members of the Planning Task Force.

C. Mutlu asked why the Senate meeting was being held prior to receiving the results of the staff and faculty survey, and prior to the Town Hall meeting scheduled for the following day.

S. Duguay discussed item 5, the delayed start date of term, and stated that parents, students, and prospective students had many questions about the Fall term. It was impossible to plan the transition into the Fall term until a start date was known.

H. Teismann preferred to delay the Senate meeting and was receiving input from faculty members who preferred to wait until after the Town Hall meeting.

P. Abela was concerned about the timing and felt there had not been an opportunity to discuss these motions with colleagues.

L. Aylward asked whether item 5 had been drafted by the Deans.

The Chair confirmed that the Deans had been consulted on item 5.

L. Aylward was also receiving feedback from her colleagues and noted that a late start to term would not work for the School of Education.

The Chair stated that the School of Education had been discussed as being excluded from the late start date to term.

L. Aylward asked why the motion did not detail that exclusion.

D. Seamone was also not in favour of Senate meeting prior to the survey results being released and the Town Hall taking place.

A. Vibert confirmed that the late start to the Fall term would not apply to the School of Education.

V. Provencal asked D. Keefe whether he was comfortable with having a discussion if the motions were not being voted upon.

D. Keefe pointed out that discussion could be held and motions could be tabled if desired. He felt that the first three motions were procedural and allowed the Senate Executive to act on certain things that would need to be dealt with. The final motion covered the Fall term start date and he felt that a discussion of this would be helpful. One benefit of a delayed start was that term could still start on the usual date but more time would be available for planning content and operational details.

The Chair agreed that any of these motions could be tabled if necessary if the meeting was determined to be properly constituted.

A. Vibert stated that Senate Executive had felt it important to hold the Senate meeting prior to the Town Hall meeting so that the first motion regarding any

changes to academic planning had been debated at Senate and approved. This would allow a clear message to be given at the Town Hall meeting.

G. Whitehall reminded Senators that Senate was responsible for all academic policy and that these matters would always come before Senate. He suggested that this motion might have the effect of limiting the power of Senate. He preferred holding an informal meeting of Senate so that these motions could be discussed.

Motion to hold this special meeting with only 4 days' notice rather than the 5 days' notice required in the Senate Constitution and Bylaws. Moved by Barb Anderson, seconded by Laura Robinson.

MOTION APPROVED.

The Chair noted that the favourable vote was above the two-thirds majority requirement and that the meeting would proceed as a properly constituted meeting.

2) Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda for today's meeting. Moved by Michael Robertson, seconded by Darcy Benoit.

H. Teismann asked that the motion in item 5 be changed to be a discussion of the term start date.

Motion to amend that item 5 of the agenda to be changed to "Discussion of term start date". Moved by H. Teismann and seconded by M. Adam.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA CARRIED.

Motion to approve the agenda for today's meeting. Moved by M. Robertson, seconded by D. Benoit.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE REVISED AGENDA CARRIED.

3) Motion from the Senate Executive: Senate will receive recommendations from groups and individuals on campus and will vote on any recommendations of temporary changes to the 2020-2021 academic policies and structures associated with the Covid-19 response, including but not limited to the timing of the start and end of academic terms, changes in the prevalent mode of delivery of academic

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B. Anderson pointed out that the intention of the motion was to make clear where the authority lies with respect to academic policies and structures. This would allow for clarity.

programs, timetable structural changes, final examination procedures, and academic integrity related procedures.

H. Teismann found the wording to be vague and asked whether this was in line with the Constitution of Senate and whether it had any legal standing beyond what Senate was already charged to do and entitled to do.

The Chair stated that the intent was to make it clear that Senate would remain part of the decision-making process.

C. Mutlu felt that the Senate Constitution already provided a clear mandate for these issues. He also felt that wording in item 3 clashed with the wording in this motion, in that it stated that curriculum changes would be overseen by Senate Executive.

P. Abela felt that Senate powers were not ambiguous. He drew attention to the wording “*Senate will receive recommendations from groups and individuals on campus...*” and noted that Senate already had this authority and often did invite non-Senators into the meeting to present.

The Chair explained that some institutions had been making announcements about academic changes with relation to the COVID situation and had not been consulting their Senate when doing this. The motion was one of affirmation to remind everyone that Senate wished to be consulted as normal. The Chair described this as an affirmative motion.

P. Abela suggested an amendment to the motion and G. Whitehall agreed. He pointed out that when a body had a general power and then started setting out specific things to be approved by that body, there was a risk of focussing on the specific and silencing the other functioning elements of Senate. He was concerned that Senate could become a receiving body for information and that the deliberative work of Senate could be put aside and carried out by the Senate Executive or elsewhere.

G. Whitehall appreciated the intent but felt it sufficient to shorten the wording of the motion to point out that nothing during COVID times should interfere with the normal workings of Senate.

D. Seamone supported reinforcing the power of Senate. She proposed that a Senator bring forward a substitute motion.

D. Benoit pointed out that this motion recognized that there would be changes to the normal timelines that Senate worked with. For example, the Senate Curriculum committee would normally be looking at changes for the 2021-22 year rather than changes occurring in the current 2020-21 year. Senate would be asked to consider temporary changes to curriculum in September and also consider other actions that would normally occur in a longer timeline.

D. Benoit saw the motion as a reaffirmation of Senate and also as a directive to state that Senate will change the otherwise normal timelines in order to receive recommendations for curriculum changes or September 2020.

The Chair agreed that Senate may be called upon more regularly during the coming months, the idea of which was included in the spirit of the motion. This would allow items to go through Senate in an expedited and appropriate manner.

A. Vibert noted that the spirit of the motion was also to allow unusual temporary changes around delivery and structure of programs to come to Senate. She pointed out that in other institutions in the Province those changes were not coming through Senate.

M. Adam agreed with the spirit of clarity but pointed out that the Constitution of Senate stated “*to determine, regulate and control the educational policy of the University*” which was extremely clear and broad in its description. He appreciated the intent of the motion but felt that nothing in the Constitution stated that timelines could not be altered if needed.

V. Provencal asked about Senate Executive bringing this motion forward and asked whether this was examining the relationship between Senate Executive and Senate.

The Chair stated that Senate Executive had developed the motion and had brought the motion forward to Senate for its consideration, but that this motion did not mention Senate Executive.

V. Provencal suggested that the motion was therefore self-referential.

The Chair referred to the fact that other institutions had not involved their Senates in academic decision making. This motion was an affirmation of Senate’s desire to retain its authority by making the statement to other bodies on campus.

V. Provencal did not agree with the idea that Senate was affirming its own power to itself. He pointed out that affirmation of power needed to be to another body.

The Chair stated that this affirmation could be used to communicate to other bodies as needed.

P. Callaghan appreciated the idea that Senate not be passed by and noted that Senate could not anticipate what temporary changes might need to be made. Some might need to be made expeditiously at Senate.

G. Whitehall suggested possible wording for a substitute motion “*nothing during the COVID-19 pandemic shall bypass the authority of Senate as established in its Constitution and By-laws.*”

G. Whitehall was concerned that it was felt that there be the need to state this.

The Chair placed this proposed wording in the Team Chat and invited Senators to add their views.

L. Robinson noted that the language could be too strong because Provincial Health Authorities and Provincial Laws could bypass the authority of Acadia’s Senate.

D. Benoit stated that the substitute wording created a motion that said something quite different from the original motion. The substitute motion did not require Senate to do anything outside of the normal timelines whereas the

first motion required Senate to meet and change timelines to assist with the upcoming fall semester.

P. Callaghan noted that temporary changes might come from unusual sources and that there was a need for expeditious action which the original motion addressed.

President Ricketts pointed out that at several institutions Senate had not been involved because Senate itself had been reluctant to adapt its typical meeting calendar, since it often did not meet over the summer.

President Ricketts felt it important that the motion signal the intent of Senate to work under the unusual circumstances that COVID-19 had produced, and to do what was necessary to get the University to the fall term.

A. Pash provided additional wording around the original motion and brought forward an amendment.

Motion that in accordance with Senate's power to determine, regulate and control the educational policy of the University, Senate must receive recommendations from groups and individuals on campus and will vote on any recommendations of temporary changes to the 2020-2021 academic policies and structures associated with the Covid-19 response, including but not limited to the timing of the start and end of academic terms, changes in the prevalent mode of delivery of academic programs, timetable structural changes, final examination procedures, and academic integrity related procedures. The authority of Senate shall remain undiminished during the Covid-19 pandemic. Moved by Laura Robinson, seconded by Barb Anderson.

President Ricketts asked whether the original mover and seconder of the original motion were prepared to move this amended motion.

Both L. Robinson and B. Anderson were happy to accept this wording as an amendment.

AMENDED MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- 4) **Motion from the Senate Executive: Senate Executive will act as an interim curriculum review committee for an expedited curriculum review process for any new limited-term programs and/or courses associated with the Covid-19 response during the June 2020-June 2021 period. Senate Executive will directly receive curriculum proposals for these new programs and/or courses only, and proposals**

Motion from the Senate Executive: Senate Executive will act as an interim curriculum review committee for an expedited curriculum review process for any new limited-term programs and/or courses associated with the Covid-19 response during the June 2020-June 2021 period. Senate Executive will directly receive curriculum proposals for these new programs and/or courses only, and proposals approved by Senate Executive will be brought to Senate for a vote. Moved by Barb Anderson and seconded by J. Richard.

B. Anderson stated that this would enable Senate to be nimble and ensure that an alternative space would be available for decision making during the summer when other sub-committees might not be meeting.

V. Provençal asked what was meant by "*limited term programs*".

approved by Senate Executive will be brought to Senate for a vote.

The Chair stated one possible example was the University 101 programming that was being proposed for 1st year students as a transition course to University. There had been some indication that this could be developed as a credit course.

V. Provencal asked what the program would be in this instance noting that what the Chair was describing was a course and not a program.

B. Anderson stated that University 101 could be a program or an individual course.

V. Provencal pointed out that a program was a much bigger collection of courses and the motion needed to specify whether this referred to a course, or a program.

The Chair asked for feedback from members of the Senate Executive as to whether the words "*programs and/or*" could be removed from the motion.

D. Keefe pointed out that the motion only said that if there were new limited term programs they needed to go through Senate Executive. He noted that he knew of no plans for any new limited term programs but it was always a possibility.

V. Provencal moved the following amendment to the motion:

Motion to amend to strike the words "programs and/or" from the main motion. Moved by Vernon Provencal, seconded by Donna Seamone.

AMENDMENT TO THE MAIN MOTION CARRIED.

G. Whitehall thanked the Chair for her work and asked the Chair to refrain from answering questions from Senators and to instead refer questions to the movers of the motions, for example the Senior Administration Team who could provide a broader context on some of these matters.

The Chair agreed to do so for most motions at Senate but responded that she had been involved with the creation of these three motions as Chair of Senate Executive, which was the reason she had been answering some questions for these particular motions.

D. Keefe clarified that these motions were coming from the Senate Executive and not the Senior Administration Team.

P. Abela pointed out that the Curriculum Committee could certainly meet over the summer at this time and he felt that they were the right committee to handle proposed curriculum changes, partly because the committee included two faculty members from each Faculty and a student representative. Senate Executive in contrast only had three designated faculty members out of fifteen members in total.

P. Abela felt that if a course was to be designed to be offered to students during the late start to classes, this should be overseen by the Curriculum committee which was where the expertise lay.

P. Callaghan suggested an amendment to the motion which would result in the Senate Executive acting in consultation with the Curriculum committee. This would just include limited term provisional changes rather than permanent changes to the course offerings. Changes to curriculum would normally pass through the academic units and Faculty Councils before going to the Curriculum committee and finally to Senate.

Motion to amend the main motion that Senate Executive will act in consultation with the Senate Curriculum Committees (Policy & Administration) as an interim curriculum review committee for an expedited curriculum review process for any new limited-term courses associated with the Covid-19 response during the June 2020-June 2021 period. Senate Executive will directly receive curriculum proposals for these new courses only, and proposals approved by Senate Executive will be brought to Senate for a vote. Moved by Paul Callaghan, seconded by Andrew Mitchell.

S. Currie pointed out that the wording in the original motion was designed to allow for nimbleness during the summer since it was often slow to pass through academic units and their Planning Committees, Faculty Councils and the Curriculum committee. She asked whether something could be included to state that there would be Faculty consultation.

P. Callaghan pointed out that as he mentioned earlier any curriculum change normally came through these three bodies before arriving at Senate. Although this might not be viable at the present there would at least be faculty representation on the Curriculum committee.

P. Callaghan stated that the source was important. Changes coming directly to the Senate Executive without consultation at the academic unit level would be likely to be rejected at Senate.

Motion to extend the Senate meeting to 12:30 p.m. Moved by M. Adam and seconded by B. Anderson.

MOTION TO EXTEND THE MEETING CARRIED.

A. Vibert commented that the original idea of Senate Executive overseeing any curriculum changes that came forward over the summer was to expedite the process. If approval was to return instead to the Curriculum committee there seemed no need to have Senate Executive involvement.

P. Callaghan felt that 'in consultation' would be sufficient from the point of view of the Curriculum committee.

A. Vibert explained that she was not questioning the involvement of the Curriculum committee in the process; she was suggesting that Senate Executive did not need to be involved with the process.

D. Seamone was in favour of the amendment. She appreciated the broader membership of the Curriculum committee.

M. Robertson had received an email from the Chair of the Curriculum committee (Policy) to say that they had not been consulted on this idea at all.

It was felt that Senate Executive would be engaged in other work and this change would not be in the spirit of a ground up approach that was normally taken with curriculum changes.

MOTION TO AMEND THE MAIN MOTION CARRIED. THREE ABSTENTIONS.

The Chair now returned to the main motion.

L. Aylward stated that she had discussed University 101 with S. Duguay, a course to close the gap between Grade 12 and university studies commencing. She noted that Education students could be involved with this initiative.

L. Aylward commented that Senate was discussing procedural elements but not discussing the substance of changes and what the implications might be for the academic body. L. Aylward did not feel that there had been enough information about why this motion was needed at all, what the potential programs or courses were, and whether they actually changed anything in the academic sector if they were to be offered.

H. Teismann reported that faculty members had contacted him and suggested that Senate ask the Curriculum committee to meet regularly during the next few months if there were changes or proposals.

The Chair discussed the mechanics of bringing forward a substitution motion to that effect and asked P. Callaghan (Chair of the SCC (Administration)) if he was interested in making a substitution motion.

P. Callaghan noted that he would be leaving the committee in July 2020 so not the best person to ask. He reiterated his previous rationale for some Curriculum committee involvement.

No other Senators made a substitution motion.

MAIN MOTION CARRIED AS AMENDED.

- 5) **Motion from Senate Executive: Senate must receive a written report from each Faculty in December 2020 and again in June 2021 outlining all substantive limited-term curriculum changes that apply to groups of students within units or programs, as a result of the Covid-19 response during the 2020-2021 period, that differ from those published in the Academic Calendar.**

Motion from Senate Executive: Senate must receive a written report from each Faculty in December 2020 and again in June 2021 outlining all substantive limited-term curriculum changes that apply to groups of students within units or programs, as a result of the Covid-19 response during the 2020-2021 period, that differ from those published in the Academic Calendar. Moved by D. Seamone and seconded by L. Robinson.

The Chair provided context to the motion. This would provide an opportunity for the University to have a public record of changes that were outside of the norm for one year only.

L. Aylward was in favour of the motion and stated that from the School of Education perspective, fundamental changes had to be made almost weekly to their program delivery with respect to courses, accreditation expectations and practicums. It would be beneficial to document these changes.

MOTION CARRIED. ONE ABSTENTION.

Motion to extend the Senate meeting to 1:00 p.m. Moved by M. Bishop and seconded by P. Callaghan.

MOTION TO EXTEND THE MEETING CARRIED.

6) Discussion of Term Start Date.

The term start date was discussed.

P. Callaghan pointed out that this really needed to be a motion because the decision needed to be made soon to remove the uncertainty that students and faculty were facing. He stated that the wording of the motion referred to class dates rather than start dates for courses. He expected that pre-assignments and recommended readings could be given out in advance of that date.

M. Adam understood the pressures to make decisions and let parents and students know but he felt that moving material forward based on a shortened notice of a meeting was not optimal. He requested that actions be considered, thought about and discussed carefully with colleagues.

M. Adam felt that the staff and faculty survey should have been released before any decision is made on a date for classes to start. Working in this reverse order called into question how important the survey was. He was looking for detail to take to colleagues so that he could come back to vote on the issue and be better informed. He asked whether members of Senate Executive could speak to the item.

The Chair pointed out that this motion did not come from Senate Executive.

M. Adam asked that conversations and transparency not be bypassed because it was important to have faculty consultation.

K. Bleile had heard no negative comments regarding the adjusted start time for undergraduate programs but she noted that the Psychology graduate program required students to have a lot of skills training prior to going out on practicums, and that in order to meet with clients the students needed to have a certain skill set developed. This was difficult to achieve even in a full semester. She suggested that the Master's program in Psychology have some sort of exemption.

President Ricketts needed to leave the meeting but acknowledged that this was an important discussion.

H. Teismann had received positive responses from faculty members regarding the delay but there were questions about the details. 11 weeks of class instruction were shown in the proposal with a three-week delay to the start. He questioned whether students would feel that they were receiving a weakened product for the same price, and also asked what they might do during the three-week period before class commenced. He was especially concerned about senior students.

H. Teismann asked whether classes could begin on-line prior to classes actually starting. He felt that a two-week delay would be more in line with the required quarantine period.

C. Rushton noted similar themes across different disciplines. Regarding the Music program she stated that students were required to be out for a certain number of hours in their practicums. Reducing the number of weeks would make it impossible to make up the shortfall for the students.

C. Rushton was also concerned that the Fall Break would need to be taken away which would not be good for the mental health of the students or faculty.

C. Mutlu asked how the University expected that the shortened term but longer presence on campus would impact the COVID-19 pandemic. He felt that having students in dorms but not in class would cause an increase in partying and other non-academic activities that brought students together.

S. Duguay responded that one of the reasons to use a later start date was for the reason above. If there were few or no cases of COVID locally by September and the University was accepting students from areas that might still have a COVID presence, it was essential that these students quarantine in a staged manner. Students from the Valley or from Nova Scotia might not be arriving until close to the class start date. S. Duguay stated that the University would follow the Public Health Authority rules and regulations around how it would accept students into the Province, rather than bringing everyone in on day one.

S. Duguay noted that students could be asked to arrive in mid-August but that for most students that was not a possibility because they did not have accommodations with leases beginning in September. He also noted that for international students their study visas were timed to coincide with their study date.

S. Duguay stated that the results of the student survey would be shared the following day at the Town Hall meeting. He was also looking forward to the staff and faculty survey results. Even upper year students largely supported a late start to classes.

C. Mutlu remained convinced that the late start would result in three weeks of partying. He asked whether Acadia's reputation would suffer if there was an outbreak of COVID as a result of a party by students. However, he understood the financial risk of not allowing students to come to campus.

D. Seamone taught experiential fieldwork courses and noted that a reduced semester would gut those courses. She was converting these courses to a virtual mode of delivery. She was not in favour of removing the Fall Break and noted that everyone would need more time, not less.

D. Seamone preferred to have upper level students start classes at the normal date. She felt that students might react badly to reduced hours of classes with fees remaining the same.

D. Seamone also noted that there had been no discussion at Senate about what sort of teaching format would be employed and whether faculty would be on campus teaching in a hybrid manner or teaching completely on-line.

D. Seamone was also concerned that students could be dropping and adding courses well into October if the term start date was not until late September.

M. Bishop noted that this was a draft proposal and agreed that there were details still to be worked out.

P. Abela pointed out that unit heads were concerned that CLT positions and Per Course Appointments were not being filled. This could not be done in mid-August.

L. Houck was concerned at the loss of the Fall Break. She noted that this was beneficial for student mental health and urged the University to consider a few short breaks instead.

C. Shields reported from Kinesiology and asked why 21st September could not be considered for a class start date. No one knew yet what University 101 might be comprised of. C. Shields noted that others had discussed the mental health of students and the quality of programming in a condensed term. Kinesiology had a number of streams that would be adversely affected with a reduction to the number of classes provided. He felt that compressing the term, moving it on-line, and removing the Fall Break would all be detrimental to the mental health of faculty and students.

C. Shields referred to the cost of getting an on-line education and whether there might be a drop in the tuition at Acadia.

L. Aylward stated that the School of Education had its own timetable and operated differently from other parts of the University. She expected that different arrangements would be made for Education.

L. Aylward reported that some colleagues were concerned about any idea of a return to campus at all. Their concerns were safety for themselves, their co-workers, their families, and their students. She asked that Senators consider the big picture. Changes could occur over the next two months depending on Public Safety requirements.

G. Whitehall had also received comments. It was felt that there would be pedagogical challenges to teaching the courses and that a shortened term would undermine work that had already been done. He also asked about CLT and per course appointments and highlighted that staff had been asked to take voluntary layoffs and possible furloughs. G. Whitehall felt that it was difficult to evaluate this proposal effectively. He noted that students were gathering each night and not observing physical distancing and expected this to be a huge challenge once more students arrived on campus.

G. Whitehall noted that there was uncertainty about whether classes started or courses started on the 28th of September.

G. Whitehall felt that there had been an absence of context and that a proper rationale had not been provided for these motions. Senate may have

unearthed them by asking questions but he felt that no framework had been provided to assist with making these decisions.

G. Whitehall noted that Senate had not decided whether the university would be using a virtual, hybrid, or completely in-person option yet so it was difficult to evaluate the start date proposal. G. Whitehall requested that a much more robust rationale be provided for these sorts of decisions.

A. Pash was also concerned about the delay to hiring of CLTs and per course appointments. This made it difficult to plan for departments. A. Pash was concerned with the language of the motion which assumed that a hybrid model would be the approach. He noted that this had not been determined at Senate. Each program had different needs and he did not feel that a blanket delay would work for all.

7) **Adjournment:**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:00 p.m. Moved by M. Adam.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

R. Hare, Recording Secretary