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Minutes of the Senate Meeting of Wednesday October 6th, 2021.

A meeting of the Senate of Acadia University occurred on Wednesday October 6th, 2021 beginning at 4:00 p.m., with Chair A. Kiefe presiding and 41 Senators present and 1 guest. This was a hybrid meeting and took place in the Langley Classroom, Divinity College with some Senators attending on Zoom.

1) Approval of Agenda

The Chair called the meeting to order, noting that there was quorum at present and discussed the approach to be taken for the hybrid meeting. Voting would be conducted as normal and those on Zoom would use the 'hands up' approach. The Chair would be maintaining a speaker's list.

The Chair asked Senators to provide feedback after the meeting and noted that about half of the Senators were in person and half were on Zoom.

A. Quema thanked J. Campbell and A. Robbins for providing the facility and technology in the School of Divinity.

The Chair echoed A. Quema's comments.

Motion to approve the agenda. Moved by M. Robertson and seconded by J. Dymont.

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA CARRIED.

2) Minutes of the Meeting of Senate – Monday September 13th, 2021

Motion to approve the Minutes of Monday September 13th, 2021. Moved by A. Quema and seconded by L. Robinson.

The Chair noted that a couple of changes had been made to the minutes and that they had been recirculated to Senators.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES CARRIED.

3) Announcements:

a) From the President

President Ricketts had no further additions to his written announcements.

b) From the Provost and VPA

D. Keefe had no further additions to his written announcements.

**c) From the Associate VP
Research, and Dean of
Graduate Studies**

A. Redden noted that an outstanding researcher and scholar was being nominated for membership as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, but she also asked Senators to consider nominating a faculty member for the College membership on the Royal Society of Canada. She noted that this would be a big application and could be prepared during the next year.

A. Redden elaborated upon the written announcements from the Maple League Research Committee which was working on cost-saving initiatives with respect to Consortium membership with Research Impact Canada and membership with the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies.

D. Looker asked how Acadia could highlight its research achievements. She noted that there was a perception that Universities were post-secondary institutions and that they were seen to be primarily for undergraduate studies, especially Acadia. D. Looker stressed that research filled an important role at all universities. She felt that this view was also held by the Board of Governors and pointed out that it was important to change the public view.

A. Redden agreed that this had been discussed with the Deans and stated that a proposal was coming to establish a communications person to address these concerns. Promotion and celebration of research was insufficient at Acadia.

L. Robinson stated that this had been identified in the Faculty of Arts as a priority and she commented that a newsletter called Arts at Acadia would be published once each term and circulated widely both internally and externally.

A. Quema pointed out that this issue had been discussed for many years and that having served on SSHRC committees she had noticed this sort of behaviour amongst her own colleagues in that assumptions were made when reviewing applications. Celebrating research internally was not the same as getting the word out across the country and to SSHRC. A. Quema did not feel that SSHRC was doing sufficient work to train committee members.

H. Saunders pointed out that the Institutional repository at Acadia did have international reach and that they needed to have participation from those scholars that were generating research.

D. Keefe thanked D. Looker for raising these concerns. He noted that Acadia participated in the Association of Canadian Comprehensive Research Universities (ACCRU). This was started to counteract the U-15 group of universities who were lobbying hard for research funding. This association was quite active and as a result the granting councils were recognizing the research that was taking place in all universities, but D. Keefe agreed that there was still a lot to do.

D. Keefe noted that the Academic Plan would be coming forward shortly and was being reviewed by the Academic Planning Committee.

D. Keefe stated that during the last year all four of the Deans had made presentations to the Board of Governors to provide updates of activities that were taking place within the Faculties in order to keep Board members fully informed.

D. Keefe stated that the Provost and VPA Report to the Board would once again be prepared annually.

D. Looker was on the SSHRC Council and recent data had shown that it was still the case that the smaller Universities got less funding by percentage compared to the larger universities. She intended to work on the Council to try to have this addressed and agreed that it was essential to raise the profile of research activities at Acadia University.

C. Mutlu stated that the overall success rate for SSHRC grants was 48-52%. He noted that there was a success bias towards institutions that had dedicated research officers that helped with individual grant writing. This made a difference to the quality of grant applications.

R. Murphy had noted the same at NSERC and CIHR.

M. Adam pointed out that public messaging by the University was not good at this time and there did not seem to be avenues for communication.

R. Murphy had regularly forwarded good news updates to the Deans and Senior Administration during his 12-year term as Director and he noted that these communications often ended there. There needed to be something in place to enable external communication.

A. Quema stated that SSHRC was made up of experts but that Acadia was not being seen by the experts. Communication to the larger public was one thing but there was a need to reach the experts and get them to pay attention.

R. Newman commented that two schools that she graduated from did a remarkable job both on social media and in alumni magazines to share the research successes and the teaching successes of the students and faculty. This included podcasts and were very detailed communications.

A. Redden agreed that some universities that were smaller than Acadia did a much better job at communication. Many of these had a Communications Office but R&GS did not have the human resources to do this.

A. Redden suggested a workshop be offered to develop a strategy.

R. Newman suggested hiring a Coop student which was often very effective. She also noted how well D. Hemming had done this several years previous.

V. Provencal did not feel that publicizing what research was being carried out was linked to the successful obtaining of grants. Reviews were carried out by experts when research was published. He saw this rather as an opportunity for Acadia to publicise itself and perhaps increase recruitment.

A. Redden stated that Coop students worked with Research and Graduate Studies during the summer. Some work was being carried out to spotlight early career researchers.

D. Looker felt that large universities shared a perception that small universities were primarily undergraduate and did not do research.

D. Benoit agreed and noted that it was possible to raise the profile of faculty members on committees when others understood that undergraduate students at Acadia were carrying out research. As word got around the papers coming from Acadia would be treated with more respect. When undergraduate students from Acadia went to larger universities like McGill they did very well because they were used to doing research.

D. Benoit noted that Mt. Allison and other small universities had people working full-time to assist faculty in preparing applications for the Distinguished Teaching Awards for the AAU. There was nothing like that in place at Acadia.

M. Adam noted that there were many different types of research taking place on campus and he felt it was important to have a strong peer review process but there was also the linking of faculty research with undergraduate students which was fairly unique. M. Adam believed that the Maple League had been formed partly to provide support to small universities for research and recognition of the research that was taking place.

d) From the President of the ASU

M. Stanbrook stated that orientation week and other programming had been completed. The ASU was now preparing for the Fall by-elections. He noted that consultation had begun on the Strategic Plan, and that the Tenant Rights and Responsibilities Guide was almost complete. Posters were being created to highlight the Wolfville By-laws prior to the Homecoming weekend.

e) From the College of Divinity and Faculty of Theology

Written announcements had been received. There were no questions or comments.

f) From the Chair of Senate

The Chair noted regrets from A. Robbins, S. Thomas, T. Surette, J. Banks and S. Currie. The Chair noted that J. Stanley had now completed his term on Senate and she thanked him for his many years of serving on Senate. The Chair reported that S. McMullen was attending as a guest from Theology.

g) Other Announcements

A. Quema extended thanks to the President Ricketts for making statements to the students on student behaviour regarding sexual violence. A. Quema noted that this was the first time such a statement had been directed to students.

4) Question Period for the President and/or Provost and VPA

President Ricketts was asked whether there was a plan for the University to improve internal and external communication in view of the reduced staffing in that area.

President Ricketts agreed that communication had been concentrated towards promotion of the Capital Campaign. He had been centralising institutional research and communication into the President's Office but resources remained limited. In 2020 it had not been possible to add an additional position but I. Murray was working to improve the situation. He noted that coop students had been hired in the past but provided little continuity.

M. Adam felt that the cost of an additional staff member would be small when compared to the benefits of improved communication.

President Ricketts pointed out that resources had been put into marketing for student recruitment and communication that was required in that area. He recognized that additional resources were needed.

C. Mutlu asked whether the University would be moving to a COVID vaccine mandate noting that there was a Provincial mandate for individuals to be vaccinated.

President Ricketts responded that in the future an audit of the vaccination status of staff, faculty and students could be conducted; but not at present. It was not felt that a mandate was the way to get to a high level of vaccination. He pointed out that the University was five weeks into the term, there had been no cases of COVID and that there was no Provincial vaccine mandate for Universities.

N. D'Amato noted the poor behaviour of students within the Wolfville community and asked what the University planned to do about the behaviour and to rebuild trust in the local community.

President Ricketts agreed that behaviour had been particularly bad this year since 1st and 2nd year students had been isolated for the last 18 months. This was typical across the country. He stated that Acadia representatives met every week with the Town of Wolfville, the RCMP and a community representative. A landlord was also now included in the group.

President Ricketts noted that certain rental houses tended to be problem ones and repeatedly suffered bad behaviour from the student renters and it was reflective of the way in which certain landlords managed their properties. He noted that the University worked constantly with the town to build good relations but that good work in rebuilding trust could be destroyed very quickly.

President Ricketts referred to the Student Code of Conduct that now allowed for off campus behaviour to be disciplined by the judicial process. The University worked with the RCMP on this and had also hired a Code of Conduct Officer to liaise between the various parties.

On campus the 1st year students were often underage, so events with alcohol could not be offered on campus, so the students often go off campus. Limited events were being offered because of COVID and the University was now trying to offer more events to try to keep the students on campus, but the situation was complex. It was important that Acadia did not lose its liquor licence. President Ricketts felt that getting the landlords to the table was an important piece of this.

D. Keefe recognised that during the last two years the ASU had worked very hard in the community, and he pointed out that these disruptive students were a very small subset of the total student population.

President Ricketts noted that the ASU also now had an off-campus student association which led to off-campus students feeling more engaged.

A. Quema felt that there was a systemic aspect to this problematic behaviour and that it was necessary to discuss wider societal problems rather than blaming the Institution.

5) Time Sensitive Items:

a) Approval of Graduates

Motion to approve the list of Graduates. Moved by D. Keefe and seconded by L. Robinson.

H. Teismann believed that one student from Math needed to be added to the list of Graduates.

M. Bishop asked him to forward details.

D. Seamone asked why the B.Ed. students who had completed their degrees during the summer were not listed on the Fall list of Graduates.

M. Bishop confirmed that the B.Ed. students received their diplomas during the summer in order to be able to accept job offers, but that they did not appear on the Fall list of graduates.

The Chair asked for the B.Ed. student names to be added to the Fall list of Graduates, or to come to Senate as a communicated list in September as per the Enabling Motion if they are conferred their degrees in the summer.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

b) Enabling Motion

D. Keefe read the Enabling Motion:

Any candidate for an Acadia degree, diploma or certificate who should receive a grade or otherwise qualify or be disqualified between this Senate meeting and the Senate meeting in April, may, if circumstances require, be considered by the Chair of the Admissions and Academic Standing (Policy) Committee, the appropriate Dean, the appropriate Head/Director, and the Registrar, acting as an ad hoc committee of Senate, they having the power to make consequential amendments to the graduation list. Any such amendments to the list shall be reported to Senate at the next Senate meeting. Moved by D. Keefe and seconded by L. Robinson.

MOTION CARRIED.

6) New Business

a) Report from the Academic Planning Committee

i) **Academic Planning Committee Report and Prioritization of the permanent position requests from**

D. Keefe recognized and acknowledged the amount of time that academic units had spent on developing their academic plans. The first task of the APC was to prioritize the faculty requests for permanent positions and all members of the committee found this to be very difficult, due to the urgency and relevance of all position requests.

the Faculties

(circulated separately)

D. Keefe stated that later in the month the APC would meet to finalize the Academic Plan which would be based on input received from the individual unit plans, and also to develop the pre-budget report that would highlight items from the Academic Plan. He noted the discussion earlier about research and teaching and learning communication along with supports that were necessary for those areas.

D. Keefe expected that the finalised report would come to Senate in November.

J. Dymment found the new process for requesting permanent positions was much more evidence based and she asked whether this helped the APC in carrying out the ranking of the positions.

D. Keefe agreed that this was the case and noted that some areas lined up with strategic directions for the Institution and the Academic Plan.

D. Looker noted that in the Faculty of Professional Studies attention was drawn to the fact that there was no formal mechanism to track student graduation outcomes. She pointed out that Statistics Canada had a post-secondary student information in addition to the Census data, both of which could be accessed securely. Statistics Canada had been perfecting the security of access to data. D. Looker suggested that the Provost and VPA explore access to this data which would provide formal mechanisms for tracking student outcomes for student graduates.

R. Murphy asked when units would be provided approval for hiring permanent positions that had been approved.

D. Keefe expected that this would occur in October. He wished to look at joint position postings in order to create interest from possible applicants, in particular amongst indigenous scholars or Canadian or African Nova Scotian scholars.

B. Wilson appreciated the long-term planning but asked to what extent need had been factored into the APC decisions. He noted that Acadia's reputation was dropping partly because of the shortfall of faculty numbers. Student numbers were increasing especially in certain large programs.

D. Keefe stated that this had been discussed by the APC and with the Deans of the Faculties. Complement of each unit and student numbers were all considered in order to get a longer-term view. The top positions to be approved were all in units that had experienced enrolment growth for several years.

A. Quema noted concerns in the Faculty of Arts with respect to the process. She felt that the forms that units had been asked to complete were very quantitative and replaced the original process that was much more qualitative.

D. Keefe stated that the process was iterative and that the committee would welcome feedback. Unit plans had fed into the Faculty Plans and he felt that units had been given leeway to take a quantitative or qualitative approach. He agreed that it could be useful for faculty to see the different reports that were provided to the APC and noted that they were all available.

A. Quema pointed out that when requesting a position for an Indigenous Scholar it was important to be able to describe the reasons for the request.

D. Keefe agreed that this was perfectly acceptable.

V. Provencal asked whether the Provost would depart from the APC ranking list or provide approvals based on the order of the ranking list.

D. Keefe stated that if after consulting with the Deans of the Faculties there was to be any deviation from the list, he would come back to Senate to explain the circumstances. This would be quite unusual but had occurred once in the last two years when an unexpected resignation had occurred. This was the process defined in the terms of reference for the Academic Planning Committee.

V. Provencal suggested that the Deans and Senior administrators could disregard what the APC had decided upon. He was also concerned about the Academic Plan that would come forward in November and felt that Senate authority was being undermined.

D. Keefe stated that this was not the practice and that what the APC brought forward in terms of rankings was being followed. He pointed out that the Board of Governors authorized positions, not Senate. He did not expect that there would be deviation from the ranked list.

J. Fowles liked the idea of cluster hires creating momentum but asked how this would actually work in practice. J. Fowles also asked how the fact that three positions were all ranked at number eight would be approached.

D. Keefe pointed out that generally a number of positions were all authorized at the same time. With respect to Indigenous or Canadian or African Nova Scotians the point was to encourage these scholars to apply for positions in general.

D. Keefe stated that in the case of a tie with the rankings he would discuss with the Deans in order to make a decision.

A. Pash was disappointed that Research Services were not featured in the ranked list. He did not feel that Research Services was a support unit and its members were in fact faculty members.

D. Keefe stated that the Library and Research unit plans along with Research and Graduate Studies and Teaching and Learning were only received recently and would be looked at by the Academic Planning Committee and become part of the pre-budget report.

H. Teismann asked how Instructors were ranked compared to other permanent faculty members and asked why they were part of the same process.

D. Keefe felt that this was essential because Instructors were integral to the academic units being able to deliver their programs. In the past the Instructor positions were ranked independently without the APC knowing what the academic unit really needed.

R. Murphy asked again for the timelines for hiring to occur earlier and requested that the process be moved to an earlier date. He noted that many great candidates were missed because they had accepted positions elsewhere by the time position advertisements were posted by Acadia.

The Chair pointed out that it was five minutes to six o'clock.

R. Newman noted that her unit had a mixed response to the academic planning process. While curriculum development and renewal and incorporating EDI into all that they did was important; the unit felt that they were drowning because of the imbalance between students and faculty complement. As their programs took more students, all those students needed to have 24 credit hours of an ARTS Core and they were not able to find electives and labs.

R. Newman pointed out that the smaller units needed resources in order to provide for the students in the larger units. It was always beneficial for students to take courses in other disciplines.

M. Adam pointed out that Instructors played very different roles in different units. He felt that units were forced to strategize whether to request a tenure track professor position or an Instructor position.

The Chair noted that some units did not have large numbers of majors but delivered several service courses and asked whether service course enrolments were considered in the APC rankings.

D. Keefe stated that units' submissions highlighted two aspects: the program enrolment and also the course enrolment. This showed the total number of students being taught.

A. Quema understood the rationalization for the form but felt that in the Faculty of Arts there was a sense of discouragement and a feeling that there was a need for positions and that there should be no need to complete the forms when the needs were obvious.

The Chair asked that item 6) b) Transition Reports be held over to the November meeting of Senate.

7) Other Business

There was no other business.

8) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 6.04 p.m. Moved by L. Robinson.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

R. Hare, Recording Secretary