

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 at **4:00 p.m.** on Monday 9th March, 2015 in **BAC 132**.

The agenda follows:

- 1) Approval of Agenda
- 2) Minutes of the Meeting of 9th February, 2015
- 3) Announcements (*normally 10 minutes per speaker*)
- 4) New Business
 - a) Report and Nominations from the Awards Committee (*previously circulated*)
 - b) Election to replace vacancies on the Nominating Committee (*Registrar*)
 - c) Notice of Motions from the By-laws committee (*attached*)

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED
Rosie Hare
Recording Secretary to Senate

Notice of Motions (4) to Senate from the By-Laws Committee related to modifications to Senate Committee Structure

March 2015

By-law Motions:

1. That the Academic Technologies Committee and the Faculty Development Committee be merged to form a Faculty Support Committee, retaining the membership structure of the former.
2. That the Admission and Academic Standing Committee (Appeals) be changed from a standing committee to an ad hoc committee, to be constituted as needed from a pool of eligible and willing members, including some Senators.
3. That the Academic Discipline Appeals Committee be changed from a standing committee to an ad hoc committee, to be constituted as needed from a pool of eligible and willing members, including some Senators.
4. That the Curriculum Committee be divided into two standing committees:
Curriculum Committee (Administrative), which would be responsible for duty one of the present mandate; and Curriculum Committee (Policy), which would be responsible for duties two to five of the present mandate.

Background:

These motions stem from a review of the structure, mandates, and operations of Senate committees, a task that the By-laws Committee was requested to undertake by Senate late in 2012. The process was in part the result of several concerns:

- That there were too many Senate committees,
- That there were Senate committees needing to do little work and/or meeting very rarely, and,
- Furthermore, there was a strong sense that the Senate Committees were too compartmentalized, too reactive rather than proactive, and their work did not always align with the mandate of Senate, but were in fact the mandate of professional staff.

The notice-of motion is the result of wide consultation with Senators and members of Senate Committees. The By-laws Committee invited input on the state of Senate committees on a series of occasions:

- Through inviting committee chairs in the spring and summer of 2013 to provide their input;

- By holding consultative meetings throughout the fall of 2014 with members of Senate committees, clustered together for purposes of the review, and;
- By soliciting feedback from committees subsequent to those consultative meetings.

The general observations and specific motions reflect both the feedback received, the By-laws committee members' deliberations on how Senate might best be reshaped to make it more active, more efficient, and more constructively deliberative, as well as feedback from the Senate Executive, received in January 2015.

General Observations:

An important point with which to preface the motions is that while some problems or concerns may be resolved with changes to some Committees and/or mandates, there are equally important considerations that are better addressed through changes in Senate culture and practices. These considerations include:

- The need for greater communication between committees with mutual interests and complementary mandates;
- The need for a greater emphasis on policy and proactivity;
- The need for greater oversight of and accountability for Senate committee work.

The process of consulting members of the various Committees about the possibility of reconfiguring Senate Committees also led to the raising of a number of concerns that were not readily addressed at the level of change to Senate By-laws but that nonetheless may need to be addressed by Senate in some fashion:

- Tension between the work of Senate committees and that of paid staff;
- Committees with overlapping mandates;
- Inconsistency between Senate committee mandates and the work the committees actually do;
- Discrepancies between the mandates of Senate committees and the descriptions of the roles and duties of the committees posted on other Acadia information sources.

While some of these considerations could potentially be addressed at the level of by-law change, the By-laws Committee restricted its proposals to those that clearly align with the task we were assigned by Senate.

By-law modifications summarized:

1. That the Academic Technologies Committee and the Faculty Development Committee be merged to form a Faculty Support Committee, retaining the membership structure of the former.

Rationale: *These committees see their duties as complementary and overlapping and there is general support for the idea of combining them.*

Other considerations: *The Committees require that the VPA or a delegate needs to be on the committee to ensure their support. It was also noted that it is important that the overall objectives of both committees be incorporated into a Faculty Support Committee.*

2. That the Admission and Academic Standing Committee (Appeals) be changed from a standing committee to an ad hoc committee, to be constituted as needed from a pool of eligible and willing members, including some Senators.

Rationale: *This committee does its work as needed; therefore it isn't required to be a standing committee, and constituting it on an ad hoc basis from a pool of available members will help it to be more timely and efficient, something that was felt to be lacking with the current approach.*

3. That the Academic Discipline Appeals Committee be changed from a standing committee to an ad hoc committee, to be constituted as needed from a pool of eligible and willing members, including some Senators.

Rationale: *This committee does its work as needed; therefore it isn't required to be a standing committee, and constituting it on an ad hoc basis from a pool of available members will help it to be more timely and efficient, something that was felt to be lacking with the current approach.*

4. That the Curriculum Committee be divided into two standing committees:

Curriculum Committee (Administrative), which would be responsible for duty one of the present mandate; and Curriculum Committee (Policy), which would be responsible for duties two to five of the present mandate.

Rationale: *Members of the Curriculum Committee have long contended that the heavy burden of the committee's administrative work prevents it from engaging with important considerations beyond that central task of the committee. Dividing the committee into two will allow members of the Curriculum Committee (Policy) to engage in long-term planning and other policy matters. There would need to be a process to ensure effective sharing and communication between these two curriculum-focused committees.*

Other considerations: *It was noted by the Chair of the Curriculum Committee that, "all curriculum committee members have responded in favour of the proposed changes to this committee. The only thing raised ... is the importance of ensuring the 2 committees are closely connected." There needs to be care that a Policy Committee that is focused on curriculum has meetings and is proactive. There was also support from some of the Committee reinforcing that attention needs to be paid to changes in Senate culture and practices.*

Two additional proposals for Committee modifications were made by the By-Laws Committee, and although there seemed to be openness to considering changes during discussions held with groups of Committee members in the fall, they were not supported in a summary document sent to Committees in December 2014, so are not being proposed at this time.

Senate By-Laws Committee

Barb Anderson, Chair

William Brackney

Jim MacLeod

Herb Wyle, Recorder