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A meeting of the Senate of Acadia University was held on Monday, January 11, 2010 beginning at 4:07pm with Chair Ian Wilks presiding and 44 present.

- 1) Minutes of the meeting of December 14, 2009

It was moved by R. Raeside, seconded by R. Perrins to approve the minutes of Monday December 14, 2009 as distributed.

The following amendment was made:

Page 5 Item 4a) – ‘*As eluded to earlier...*’ should read ‘*as alluded to earlier...*’

MOTION AS AMENDED WAS CARRIED.

- 2) Announcements and Communications
a) From the Chair

Re regrets -

Regrets were received from B. Anderson, P. Corkum, T. Hergett, A. Irving, R. McIntyre, M. Trask, A. Vogels, and R. Wehrell.

Re agenda -

Information has been provided related to item 3a. Additional information was circulated electronically related to item 3b. The necessary information for item 3b from the physics review is not yet available. However, information related to the review of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics is ready and has been included. The reviews will be dealt with in the following order: Sociology, Engineering then Nutrition. Program reviews are a complex process. The information provided for Senate is a combination of the report of the review committee and the departmental responses to the reviews. The material has been compiled by the Vice President Academic as Chair of the Academic Program Review Committee.

Concerning item 4a) R. Raeside’s name is being put forward to fill the vacancy on the Nominating Committee.

Re Academic Technology Committee -
(910-16-LAW)

The elections for the Academic Technology Committee are underway. The minutes of the November meeting contain a small but strategic omission. When the committee structure for the Academic Technology Committee was debated at the June meeting students were added to the membership. However this was not mentioned at the November meeting where the committee structure was approved. Therefore the November

minutes need to be updated to insert this important information so that the committee structure will be accurately reflected.

Re Honourary Degree
Committee -

The report from the Honourary Degree Committee is expected for the February meeting of Senate.

Re Letter to the
President related to
accessibility of campus
buildings -
(910-32-SLD)

I. Wilks read excerpts from the letter that he prepared at the request of Senate related to physical access to campus buildings for those with mobility challenges. He then presented the letter to R. Ivany. (appendix A)

Re Senate representation
on the University Budget
Advisory Committee -
(910-40-UBA)

This Committee met for the first time on Friday January 8 and will be meeting weekly. More information has been requested by the committee and the information is being made available for their next meeting. The committee considers it an important part of its role to communicate financial information to the university community as well as to provide input to the budget process.

Re food service at Senate
meetings -
(910-36-GEN)

Beginning with this meeting food service has been cut to beverage service only. Additional cuts could be made if the membership requests it.

b) From the Vice President
Academic -

Nothing to report at this time.

c) From the President and
Vice Chancellor -

The process of creating a MOU between the province and the universities has begun with preliminary discussions at CONSUP. At this time no formal meetings have been scheduled with the province. Cape Breton University, Dalhousie, Saint Mary's University and Acadia have been chosen to represent the universities in the discussions. The province has launched a campaign as part of the 'Come to Life' initiative promoting Nova Scotia as Canada's University

Capital. It is hoped that this campaign will strengthen the marketing position for all the universities within the province both nationally and in the international community. The federal government has not renewed funding for the Canadian Council on Learning; this is a loss for Canada. The CCL is a pan Canadian organization that could look at learning issues on a national level. With jurisdictional issues a frequent problem when discussing educational matters, this is an organization that has a national focus. The work of the Council was often hampered by the lack of support from some provinces making it difficult if not impossible to conduct national research. This lack of cooperation made it easier for the federal government to cut the funding.

In response to a question from the floor he stated that the representatives from the province who would negotiate the MOU would likely be led by the Deputy Minister of Education. There will probably be representation from Finance and possibly Economic Development. The primary involvement from Acadia would be through the President but also T. Herman and M. MacVicar. The Budget Advisory Committee and the Planning Committee would also have a role. Senate would become involved if the area of academic programming was discussed.

3. Business Arising from
the Minutes
a) Financial Envelope
Access -
(910-37-FIN)

M. MacVicar presented the information that was requested at the last Senate meeting regarding budgets and actual spending by each academic unit. She explained that the majority of the spending in each unit is related to salaries and benefits. Non salary budgets and spending is minimal. In some cases the year over year spending can be dramatically different within a unit, but spending is fairly consistent over time. Growth in budgets is largely due to changes in salaries and benefits. She confirmed that she would be happy to answer questions at a subsequent meeting once Senators had the opportunity to absorb the information.

The budget for the library was not requested for this meeting but will be provided for the next meeting.

When asked about the reason for the budget difference between the Faculty of Professional Studies and the other faculties, she explained that demographics within departments was significant for salaries. Also the total number of positions and the number of part time positions could also have an impact.

b) Academic Program

Review Committee – T. Herman spoke to the report.

(910-30-APR)

The Sociology Department developed its response to the review around the six questions posed by the review team. Concern was expressed that Mary MacLeod (the librarian assigned to the unit and a very valuable resource) was being replaced initially by a 6 month CLT appointment. T Herman confirmed that this will be revisited when the 6 month term ends July 1.

The issue of faculty doing courses as overload was discussed. This practice is widespread at Acadia and is often the case for upper level courses with small enrolments and courses at the graduate level. These courses may be reading courses that provide students with the opportunity to explore a topic and the faculty member with a sense of the student's interest and ability before committing to supervising them as a candidate for an honours' program. T. Herman pointed out that unless the reviewers in other departments were made aware of this situation where courses were being taught as an overload it would not necessarily be mentioned in their reports. A number of Senators were troubled by the issue of complement and unremunerated work. D. MacKinnon noted that although not a justification for such practices without faculty teaching overloads it would be impossible to offer many of our graduate programs.

T. Herman assured Senators that the issues raised in the reviews are discussed by the Deans at their weekly meetings as well as by the Academic Program Review Committee. The new terms of reference for reviews require a follow up report from the department to the APRC two years after the review has taken place. This is an opportunity to report progress and to highlight any remaining issues that still need to be addressed. T. Herman acknowledged that the review showed the strengths of the

department while pointing out areas where there are resource challenges. Clearly there are issues that need to be addressed but there are significant restraints to addressing them immediately.

T. Herman commented on the School of Engineering report. Some of the challenges faced by the School are the result of the small number of students who remain at Acadia for their third year of study because of the opportunity to continue elsewhere after the completion of Acadia's Certificate of Applied Science. The Foulis Chair and endowment received attention by both the review team and the department. There have been considerable challenges with the value of the income from the endowment to assure that it is great enough to adequately support a Chair. It is hoped that there will be sufficient funds for this so that the Chair can be filled for the 2011/2012 academic year. He also reported that the university was changing investment managers.

A. Mitchell expressed his concern over the performance and management of the endowment. He was concerned that there is no report available showing the investment strategy. He asked if it was acceptable to distribute to Senators the self study report that the School of Engineering completed for their review. This report contains specific information about the endowment. T. Herman confirmed that the document was public. The Chair suggested that concerns about the management and terms of the endowment might be directed to the Board through the faculty representatives.

P. Williams asked about the unique relationship of the School of Engineering as an affiliated school. A. Mitchell explained that while there were challenges with curriculum at times there were also advantages in that the engineering faculty at Acadia are voting members of the faculty of engineering at Dalhousie due to the terms of the original agreement with the Province that was established over 100 years ago. However, this relationship adds a layer of bureaucracy that other units on campus do not experience. He confirmed that accreditation reviews were more critical to the School than internal ones.

T. Herman spoke to the review of the School of Nutrition and Dietetics. The program was seen by the reviewers to be very rigorous. In fact, the suggestion was made that some of the requirements be relaxed and the School moved quickly last spring to introduce changes through Senate that allowed more flexibility in the program.

Senators questioned the desirability of doing an accreditation review and a program review simultaneously as was the case with Nutrition and Dietetics. M. Snyder and R. Raeside spoke to this. They agreed that the accreditation reviewers had a depth of knowledge of the national scene that was helpful when evaluating the programs. They affirmed that when possible this could work very well and provide efficiencies by saving time and resources.

4 New Business

a) Nominating Committee -
(910-38-NOM)

R. Raeside agreed to fill the vacancy on the Nominating Committee created by L. Lusby's leave. As there were no further nominations, he was declared elected to the position.

b) Graduate Studies
Committee -
(910-39-GRD)

It was moved by D. MacKinnon, seconded by R. Murphy that the proposed changes to the Master of Education program be approved as distributed.

There was discussion related to the current funding models and the viability of graduate programs at Acadia where many programs are offered with faculty teaching an overload.

R. Ivany agreed that an institution like Acadia with a strong focus on personalized education has been disadvantaged by the funding models for the past 10 to 15 years. This is a time when we must ask fundamental questions of how we will support our programs going forward.

The vote on the motion was taken and the
MOTION WAS CARRIED.

5. Other Business –

a) Notice of Motion
re minors
(910-41-CCT)

J. Eustace gave notice of motion to have minors recorded on the academic transcript.

b) Freeze on spending
in the library
(910-42-FIN)

J. Eustace questioned the timing of the spending freeze on library books that occurred in late November, a week earlier than normal.

S. Lochhead replied that the freeze began a week early this year to conserve funds to pay for electronic databases. Due to the increases in the cost of many of the databases not all could be renewed even with the freeze. She invited faculty members to submit their requests that they were unable to do in November so that they can be considered when purchasing begins again in April.

c) Notice of Motion
re financial
planning-
(910-43-FIN)

A. Mitchell gave notice that he will be presenting a motion related to financial planning.

6. Adjournment

J. Banks moved this meeting be adjourned at 5:45 pm.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

R. Jotcham, Recording Secretary (Acting)

January 11, 2010

Dear Mr. Ivany:

I am writing as Chair of Acadia University's Senate to express Senate's deep concern regarding issues of building accessibility on campus. This matter came to Senate's attention during the November meeting, when the Chair of the Senate Committee on Students with Disabilities that Affect Learning gave the committee's annual report. This report included concerns expressed by a student in Kinesiology, who complained that the building housing the Kinesiology department is not wheelchair accessible. As the student pointed out, "The building focusing on human health and specializing in topics such as adapted physical activity should not be inaccessible". The committee went on to note that many buildings on campus remain inaccessible to those with mobility impairments, or only partially accessible (e.g., although students may be able to get into the building, they may not be able to reach all classrooms, may not have wheelchair accessible washrooms, etc.). Even worse, new buildings on campus also display accessibility issues. For example, the new Biology building is not accessible to those with mobility impairments through its front door. Although these individuals can enter into the building through a back door, that door is located in a rather cramped parking lot, with no handicapped parking spaces available. Senators were troubled by this report, and asked that action be taken. Accordingly, Senate unanimously passed the following motion at its December meeting:

"Many buildings on Acadia's campus remain partially or wholly inaccessible, either in terms of building entryways or internal building infrastructure, to individuals with mobility impairments. This situation has serious academic consequences: it hinders recruitment efforts, poses challenges in terms of scheduling classes, and is fundamentally inequitable.

Therefore, be it resolved that Senate strongly recommends that the President and the Chair of the Board of Governors make efforts to improve the accessibility of existing buildings on campus, and urges that future buildings on campus should adhere to design principles which encourage safe and accessible buildings for everyone, including those with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. Further, we request the development of a plan and priorities for such improvements as soon as possible.

Furthermore, be it resolved that Senate asks its Chair to communicate its concerns in writing to the President, the Vice President Administration, the Chair of the Board of Governors, the Director of Facilities, and any other relevant individuals."

Thus, Senate would strongly urge that any ongoing or future building construction or renovation on campus (e.g., Patterson Hall) should incorporate principles to make it maximally accessible to all. Senate would also encourage an investigation as to whether provincial or federal grants or other funding might be available to aid in retrofitting older buildings on campus to improve accessibility.

One Senator pointed out that students in Environmental Studies have been instrumental in researching and spearheading various environmental initiatives on campus. It is possible that students in Kinesiology or other programs might be able to perform useful services, by surveying existing accessibility needs on campus and exploring options for improvements, at a very minimal cost. We encourage you to explore such creative solutions. Dr. Diane Holmberg, Chair of the Senate Committee on Students with Disabilities that Affect Learning, has also asked me to communicate that her committee is most happy to be contacted if they can be of assistance in this matter.

I thank you for your attention to this important issue, and Senate awaits a report on progress in this area at your earliest possible convenience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ian Wilks
Chair, Acadia University Senate