



Minutes of the Senate meeting of Monday 18th November, 2013

A meeting of the Senate of Acadia University occurred on Monday 18th November 2013 beginning at 4:00 p.m. with Chair Diane Holmberg presiding and 40 present and 1 guest.

- 1) Approval of Agenda **Motion to approve the agenda as revised. Moved by B. Anderson, seconded by P. Doerr.**

MOTION CARRIED.

- 2) Minutes of the Meeting of 15th October, 2013 **Motion to approve the Minutes of Tuesday 15th October, 2013 as distributed. Moved by W. Brackney, seconded by H. Wyile.**

H. Wyile requested that at the top of page 7, *Article 2.56* be corrected to read *Article 25.56*.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED CARRIED.

Announcements

a) From the Chair of Senate

Regrets were received from H. Gardner, C. Stanley, J. Banks, H. Hemming and D. Shea. B. Ells would be leaving early.

The Chair welcomed J. Whidden and G. Phillips, in addition to A. Robbins who was attending as a guest in H. Gardner's place.

There were no objections to A. Robbins attending and participating in discussions.

The Chair reported that she would be attending two Budget Advisory Committee meetings during November and December, and that she would shortly be meeting with the By Laws committee, at their request.

The Chair met recently with P. Jewer, Chair of the Board of Governors and three items were discussed.

First, P. Jewer confirmed that the Academic Resources Committee (ARC) of the Board is now fully staffed and so the Chair of Senate will contact the Chair of the ARC and encourage a discussion of the mandate, with the intention that in the future the APC can meet with the ARC.

Second, P. Jewer had confirmed that the Board would like Senate to confirm its current membership, which the Board will then affirm. The Chair stated that she will bring a 'Notice of Motion' to Senate in December, since this item had to do with the membership of Senate and therefore requires 30 days' Notice of Motion.

Third, as was requested through the APRC review of the School of Music last month, the Chair spoke to P. Jewer about the School of Music's concerns about part time appointments. The Chair pointed out to P. Jewer that she felt some discomfort with the conversation, as it strayed into Collective Agreement territory, but that she would CC the President of AUFA on her letter to P. Jewer. Both agreed that it was important for Senate not to be perceived to be taking sides, but also both felt that Senate was responsible for academic issues, so that if there were issues that were causing academic problems, it was appropriate for Senate to bring the matter to the attention of the relevant parties.

b) From the President

There were no announcements.

**c) From the Vice-President
Academic**

T. Herman announced that C. Evans from the Divinity College was an invited speaker at an Ecumenical Symposium at the Vatican recently, with a small group of internationally recognized biblical scholars from around the world. T. Herman noted that J. Richards, an M.A. student from the Divinity College, also attended the Symposium.

T. Herman stated that R. Brickner had informed him that the works that emerged from a Symposium held at Acadia in 2010, and funded by SSHRC, had now been published as an edited collection. The workshop was entitled *Migration, Citizenship and Transnational Identities* and attracted a number of scholars from around the world.

T. Herman also noted that the Community and Business Toolkit for Tidal Energy Development was now available both on-line and in hard copy. This initiative was headed up by S. MacDougall and J. Colton for the Acadia Tidal Energy Institute. It will assist businesses and communities, but the modules will also be used by universities.

T. Herman acknowledged the passing of Dr. G. Baker, who was the former head of the Nova Scotia Tidal Power Corporation and instrumental in the development of the pilot tidal power project in Annapolis Royal. T. Herman noted that G. Baker was a long-time friend of Acadia, and that before his death he funded scholarships for students working on tidal energy at Acadia. T. Herman noted that the first four scholarships were awarded to students last week, and that he was able to let the family know that.

T. Herman stated that the recent U4 Symposium on campus had proved very successful, and he drew attention to two more U4 events that will be happening in the future. On Jan 24/25th a forum on leadership will be held at St. F.X., and on Jan 31/Feb 1st a second 'Up for Debate' series has been scheduled at Bishop's University. Details will follow.

T. Herman noted that Homecoming Week included another important academic initiative: the announcement of a very generous \$1 million donation from Dr. T. Raddall to the Biology department, which will provide support for student and faculty research initiatives.

T. Herman discussed the second annual Shaw Group Case Competition that was held recently in the School of Business. T. Herman explained that six teams of students work intensely to analyse a complicated business case and

are given 24 hours to come up with their solutions, before making their presentations to a panel of business experts.

3) Nominations from the Nominating Committee

Andy Mitchell sent greetings from A. Parsons, the Chair of the Nominating Committee, and asked Senate to approve the following two nominations:

Arts Senator to join the By Laws committee: H. Wylie
Lay Person from the community to join Senate: P. Connelly

The Chair called three times for additional nominations, following which those nominated were declared elected by acclamation.

4) Priority Items

a) Report from the T.I.E. Committee.

The Chair reminded Senators that in September, Senate had approved four priority issues to work on through the course of the year, with two committees reporting each month. The Chair commented that as the agenda was light, this month would provide a good opportunity for Senators to speak up and discuss the reporting from the TIE and the Curriculum committees.

Since the discussion was expected to be free ranging and open-ended, the Chair requested that it be more lightly minuted than usual; reflecting the major themes and any decisions that were reached.

There were no objections.

D. Serafini discussed possible timetabling reform and noted that the TIE committee had met frequently, mainly dealing with finalizing the Calendar dates for 2014-15. D. Serafini noted that the TIE community would be bringing forward a number of proposals:

- Fall reading week
- Extension of enrolment period by a week in the fall
- Extension of the Add/Drop deadlines
- Accounting of all lost hours in a course due to holidays
- Impact on the Examination period and a Senate Exam policy

D. Serafini agreed that the Calendar dates needed to be set much earlier than they have been in the past. With regard to a policy for examinations, D. Serafini noted that everything was open to discussion, but that a particular concern was the current length of the examination period, partly as a result of faculty forcing exam times. Taking a more holistic approach, which would address student needs as well as faculty research needs, but at the same time reduce the overall length of the examination period, seemed desirable.

D. Serafini was questioned on the possible pedagogical implications of extending the add/drop date. He noted it was an issue that would need to be considered; however, even the extended add/drop period would still be shorter than the add/drop period at many other institutions.

It was noted that faculty may require some control over their course scheduling to leave suitable blocks of time for research. D. Serafini noted that

he was a non- voting member of the TIE Committee and that this issue had not yet been discussed.

The 'Acadia Experience' was discussed, and A. Quema pointed out that a higher level of advising could be provided to the students so that they would be clear about the expectations of them.

D. Serafini was asked to explain the inefficiencies in current examination scheduling practices that he saw causing problems for the students and the University. D. Serafini responded that older software limited the ability to plot more than 20 exams at any given time, and also that a third of all exams were forced into particular timeslots by faculty requests. Also, during the examination period, back up rooms were always booked so that in the event of an emergency the exam could be moved mid-way through. This practice meant that no more than half the classes on campus could ever be used during a particular examination slot. D. Serafini questioned what the academic integrity of an exam would be if it had to be moved while in progress; perhaps there are solutions other than back-up rooms that might be preferable. .

D. Serafini pointed out that any assessment of timetabling needed to fully consider the following:

- Faculty needs
- Student needs
- Space needs
- Curriculum needs

b) Report from the Curriculum Committee

A. Quema noted that the committee was large, but they had met twice so far to discuss larger issues; they will now be meeting to review curriculum proposals, after which they will meet one more time to continue discussion of the following larger issues:

- What is a liberal education
- How do we make sure that we can implement a liberal education
- What is a minor
- Why are there discrepancies in program requirements from one unit to another and one program to another

A. Quema noted that a comparative table of requirements of various programs revealed that there were in some cases significant discrepancies and differences across units, for example in terms of the number of hours required for a minor or a major.

A. Quema highlighted the difficulties for both faculty and students to navigate through the Calendar. The need to facilitate development of inter-disciplinary programs, and make them feasible from a timetabling and curriculum point of view, provided an ongoing challenge. Timetabling issues were highlighted; especially with respect to the difficulty for science students to achieve a broad liberal education, because of all of their labs being scheduled in the afternoons, thereby significantly reducing opportunities to select any electives offered in the afternoon.

A. Quema mentioned consideration of how resources were allocated to programs, and in what way did that affect the delivery or shape of the

curricula. It had been suggested that the committee engage in an exercise that would lead to the development of a conceptual mapping of the current curriculum, so that they could be in a position to identify discrepancies and overlapping between programs or courses.

A. Quema noted that consultation with the whole university would be needed at some point.

T. Herman stated that the Academic Planning Committee would be meeting shortly with the representatives of the various inter-disciplinary programs. A number of questions would be discussed with those representatives, and then a report made to Senate.

A. Quema was asked about the background that led to curriculum reform being considered. A. Quema noted that this initiative was one of a list of priorities that were identified by the Senate Executive and brought to Senate in the form of a motion at the September meeting. Four key areas were identified and the motion was approved.

The Chair explained that a Senate survey had revealed the fact that, amongst other issues, Senate was felt to be too reactive rather than proactive. The Senate Executive felt that establishing goals or priorities to work towards might be one way for Senate to become more proactive. Issues surrounding inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary programs have come up repeatedly at Senate over the last few years, and were therefore discussed by Senate Executive as one possible priority item for the year. Discussion at Senate Executive quickly identified a number of other possible issues in the general area of curriculum reform, however, so the priority item was broadened to encompass possible curriculum reform, broadly defined.

R. Worvill pointed out that there was tremendous variability across the campus in what was required for a minor. Because other departments were deciding what would constitute, e.g., a French minor and fitting it into their other program requirements, the number of hours required varied greatly. R. Worvill noted the tension between the desire to help students to become highly specialised in the area of their majors, and the desire that they also acquire the diverse background of a liberal arts degree.

J. Wood stated that he would welcome some definitions of the terminology that was being applied when looking at what was a liberal arts education. He was also seeking clarification about whether the discussion was about students trying to take minors in addition to their programs, or about Arts or Science students having to do additional work above and beyond students in another degree, which could deprive them of other opportunities.

D. Serafini explained that in the Faculty of Arts a 24 credit hour minor was required, in the Faculty of Pure and Applied Science a 12, 15 or 18 credit hour minor was required, and in the Faculty of Professional Studies minors were not offered. D. Serafini noted that in the BBA program it was possible to take a major/specialization with as few as 12 unique credit hours. This could be compared to a major in the Music program, which required 108 credit hours. D. Serafini noted the inconsistencies and wide variations in the definitions of majors and minors.

S. Bethune noted a recent conversation with a student who was concerned that education might become highly standardized at Acadia, which was not why the student chose to come to Acadia.

G. Whitehall asked whether the VP Academic Office would be surveying a broad range of opinions to determine what it was that made an Acadia education special, and also some direction on how that distinctiveness should then be marketed and maintained.

It was agreed that there was a need to have a collective discussion in the future, and felt that the curriculum committee was a good place to start this discussion.

T. Herman noted that this subject – defining what an Acadia education really was – had sparked intense conversation on the Academic Planning Committee, and agreed that there was a need to have a broader community wide conversation. T. Herman noted positively that several Senate committees had expressed interest in some aspect of this subject. T. Herman also expected that the APC would be bringing recommendations and mechanisms to the floor of Senate for having those sorts of conversations.

5) Brought forward from October 15 meeting

a) Report from the President
(*attached*)

President Ivany presented Senators with an extensive summary from the introduction of the President's Report and noted that the document was being reinstated after a lengthy break in years, as it was last offered to Senate in the 1990s.

President Ivany described the dynamic between the Federal Government and the Provinces and the way in which the Federal/Provincial transfers were driven by a per capita basis. Nova Scotia Universities found themselves in a difficult position, as Nova Scotia received the lowest funding per student, while shouldering the highest per capita cost per taxpayer.

President Ivany noted a tendency of policy setters to believe that 'bigger is better'. Although many institutions in the US still existed in a similar shape and form to Acadia, the same could not be said in Canada, because institutions had been encouraged to increase their scale, as a result of funding formulas and/or policy decisions.

President Ivany stated that few small universities of a similar size to Acadia existed today in Canada. The ability to succeed as an outlier was difficult, and it was necessary to identify what was different about an institution of this size, and what it was that made the institution so special; hence the recent U4 initiative.

President Ivany noted that all of the 13 jurisdictions in Canada were capable of making independent changes that could negatively affect institutions in other Provinces. He also highlighted the 'perfect storm' that beset Acadia in the recent past, and noted that although the reality and the seriousness of this needed to be recognized, it was important on a going forward basis for everyone to accept the challenges and work towards meeting future objectives and making Acadia sustainable.

President Ivany asked for the Acadia community to come to some agreement and understanding with regard to what Acadia was trying to achieve. Questions such as what constituted an Acadia education, and how the merits

of such an education could be measured, were of importance.

President Ivany discussed the linkage between the Board of Governors and the Senate, and the way in which Senate had the sole purview around the academic and educational policy of the university. These two bodies receive substantial consultation from other entities, but Senate has a special responsibility regarding the decision-making process in the academic domain. He stressed the importance of this work needing to be undertaken in a coherent manner.

President Ivany thanked faculty members for rising to the challenge, and for protecting the culture and quality of Acadia.

President Ivany was asked about building capacity for maintaining an effective leadership structure after he left Acadia. He responded that much of the work of the university was done by others, noting that the Leadership Forum met once a month to discuss and solve problems collectively. He felt Acadia would be well-positioned to go forward, regardless of who was at the helm.

President Ivany discussed the way in which the Administration brings ideas to the Board, where they are discussed fully before being approved, rejected, or modified. The Board considers recommendations brought forward by the Administration, but recognizes that they ultimately have final say in financial matters. President Ivany pointed out that Senate likewise had the final say on academic matters, and expected that Senate would consider ideas or recommendations that come forward from the Administration in the same manner. He noted that in times of crisis it was essential for people to work together.

G. Whitehall asked that Senate consider how it would like to direct the Administration in terms of shaping the question of academic integrity, and making sure that this remained front and central in conversations that went to both the Board of Governors and to AUFA.

A. Quema felt that conflict could be productive, and that Senate had a responsibility to fully debate issues. A certain amount of disagreement was to be expected, as different perspectives were brought forward, but democracy allowed room for conflict. Senate needed to recognize its differences, but also to try to find ways of working together, not at the expense of one side or another.

Motion to adjourn at 6:00 p.m., moved by D. Benoit.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

R. Hare, Recording Secretary