

**DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**OF**  
**SENATE MEETING**

Senate met in regular session on Monday, April 13, 2009, at 4:00 p.m., in University Hall, Macdonald Building.

Present with Mr. Lloyd Fraser in the chair were the following: Butler, Camfield, Campbell, Cochrane, Coffin, Cook, Couban, El-Hawary, El-Masry, Frank, Fraser, K., Garduno, Harman, Helland, Hughes, Jon, Leonard, MacLaren, McClure, McConnell, McLarney, Nowakowski, Pegg, Persaud, Rutherford, Ryan, Saunders, Scrimger, Shaver, Singleton, Thornhill, Tindall, Watters.

Regrets: Barker, Binkley, Boran, Canning, Cox, Crago, Fanning, Gassmann, Karabanow, Larkin, Maes, Moukdad, Robinson, Shukla, Show, Thomas, Traves, Webster, Wheeler.

Absent: Adshade, Barkhouse, Croll, Farina, Gantar, Haslam, Hughes, Jean, Johnston, Kroeker, Leon, Macy, Milson, Plug, Sadek, Schellinck, Scherkoske, Shepherd, Smith, Tremblay.

Guests: S. Brousseau, K. Burt, D. Fischer, A. Power, K. Sheehan

The Chair called the meeting to order.

**2009:39**

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was APPROVED with one revision - the President's Report was removed.

**2009:40**

Draft February 9, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Approval - The minutes of the February 9, 2009 Senate meeting were unavailable for review.

Matters Arising – there were no matters arising.

**2009:41**

Draft March 9, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Approval - The minutes of the March 9, 2009 meeting were unavailable for review.

Matters Arising - Mr. Fraser was pleased to report that the Senate Academic Priorities & Budget Committee had appointed Mr. Blye Frank as the chair of the review committee for the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences. He noted that Mr. Butler, Senate Vice-Chair, Academic Programs, in consultation with the chair of the committee, and others, would bring forward to SAPBC a list of proposed members for that committee in due course.

**2009:42**

Chair's Report

Mr. Fraser extended thanks and appreciation to the outgoing DSU Senators for their participation in Senate and extensive involvement in other processes. The outgoing DSU Senators are: Ms. Courtney Larkin, President; Mr. Mark Coffin, DSU Vice-President, Education; Ms. Kaylyn Fraser, Mr. Eric Snow, and Mr. Jonathan Hughes, DSU Representatives; and Mr. Yannick Tremblay, DSU Graduate student representative. He extended congratulations to Ms. Martha Crago, Vice-President Research, who was named Distinguished Alumni for Research Leadership in the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders in the Faculty of Medicine at McGill. He offered congratulations, on behalf of Senate, to Mr. Pemberton Cyrus from Industrial Engineering, who is the current chair of the Senate Computing and Information Technology Planning Committee, who was recently made a Fellow of Engineers Canada.

Mr. Fraser drew Senators attention to the Call for Nominations for the Senate Vice-Chair, Academic Programs and the Senate Vice-Chair, Academic Administration. These are the roles that were formerly the Vice-Chair of Senate and the Secretary of Senate, respectfully. He noted that these positions provide opportunities to participate, not only in the Dalhousie of today, but to help to shape the Dalhousie of tomorrow and provide leadership in a variety of roles and encouraged anyone interested in either position to speak to Mr. John Hubert, Chair, Senate Nominating Committee, or with the Chair of Senate.

Mr. Fraser noted that the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission has approved the following proposals: modification to the Bachelor of Informatics program to include an option to complete the degree without a named major; the addition to the Bachelor of Informatics program of a major in Environment, Sustainability, and Society; modifications to the Bachelor of Social Work program; and termination of the Masters Degree in International Health Services Administration.

**2009:43**

Question Period

There were no questions.

**2009:44**

Senate Nominating Committee: University and Senate Standing Committee Nominations

On behalf of the Senate Nominating Committee, Mr. Fraser **MOVED:**

**THAT Ms. Claire Campbell, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences/History, and Mr. Mo El-Hawary, Engineering/Electrical & Computer Engineering be nominated to the Senate Steering Committee for the term July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2011;**

**THAT Mr. Blye Frank, Medicine/Medical Education, Mr. John Rutherford, Medicine/Anatomy & Neurobiology, and Ms. Jennifer Smith, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences/Political Science, be nominated to the Senate Academic Priorities & Budget Committee for the term July 1, 2009 to June 20, 2011;**

**THAT Ron Bannerman, Dentistry/Dental Clinical Sciences, be nominated to the Senate Committee on Academic Administration for the term July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2012;**

**THAT Ms. Patricia Manuel, Architecture & Planning/Planning, Mr. John Newhook, Engineering/Civil & Resource Engineering, and Ms. Mary Anne White, Science/Chemistry,**

**be nominated to the Honorary Degrees Committee for the term July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2012;**

**THAT Timothy Little, Engineering/Electrical & Computer Engineering, be nominated to the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching for the term July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2012;**

**THAT Peggy Maillet, Dentistry/Dental Hygiene, be nominated to the Ombudsperson's Advisory Committee for the term July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2012;**

**THAT Kathleen Spurr, Health Professions/Health Sciences Program, be nominated to the Advisory Council on Athletics for the term July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2011;**

**THAT Mr. Robbie Jamieson be nominated to the NS Agricultural College Faculty Council for the term July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2011.**

After the requisite three calls for further nominations, the candidates were declared elected to their respective Committees.

#### **2009:45**

Senate Committee on Academic Administration:

Name Change Request: Department of Spanish to Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies

Mr. Shaver noted that the rationale for the proposed name change request from the Department of Spanish was briefly described in the documentation circulated with the Senate agenda. This item was submitted only for information.

Mature Admission Policy

Mr. Shaver explained that the rationale for extending or lowering the age of mature matriculation from 23 years old to 21 years old is described in the accompanying material for Senate, which was very carefully considered by the Senate Committee on Academic Administration (SCAA). It was noted that this was a more inclusive and inviting approach taken by Dalhousie. It was clarified that the policy was specific to only Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

#### **2009:46**

Faculty Discipline Process:

Academic Integrity Officer Ratifications

Mr. Singleton **MOVED** and Mr. El-Hawary seconded:

**THAT the Academic Integrity Officer agreed penalties, as listed in the April 6, 2009 memo from the Vice-Chair (Academic Administration), be ratified.**

The motion **CARRIED**.

Academic Integrity Officer Ratification Process

This item is a recommendation from the Senate Steering Committee for adoption of a procedure over the summer months to deal with ratifications and would be the same process that Senate adopted last year.

On behalf of the Senate Steering Committee, Mr. Fraser **MOVED**:

**THAT** the Senate approve, effective immediately, until August 31, 2009, that Paragraph 12 of the *Faculty Discipline Procedures Concerning Academic Dishonesty* be replaced with the following:  
12. Upon being advised of the finding and agreed penalty under paragraph 11, the Vice-Chair (Academic Administration), or designated alternate of the Chair or Vice-Chair (Academic Programs), shall review the assessment and agreed penalty to determine whether the process is consistent with the Faculty Discipline Procedures Concerning Academic Dishonesty. If so, the Vice-Chair (Academic Administration) shall ratify the matter on behalf of Senate and shall notify the student and the Academic Integrity Officer of such ratification. The Vice-Chair (Academic Administration) shall ensure that the offence is recorded on the Senate Discipline database and that the Registrar and any others are notified of the finding and penalty for immediate implementation. If the Vice-Chair (Academic Administration) has any material concerns about the process followed, the Vice-Chair (Academic Administration) shall consult with the Academic Integrity Officer to determine whether the concerns can be resolved. If the Vice-Chair (Academic Administration) and the Academic Integrity Officer are unable to resolve any concerns, the case will be referred to the Senate Discipline Committee.

Mr. Coffin **MOVED** an amended motion and Mr. Snow seconded:

**THAT** upon being advised of the finding and agreed penalty under paragraph 11, the Vice-Chair, Academic Administration, or designated alternate of the Chair or Vice-Chair, Academic Programs and a student senator appointed by the DSU shall review of the assessment and agreed penalty to determine whether the process is consistent with the Faculty Discipline Procedures Concerning Academic Dishonesty. If so, the Vice-Chair, Academic Administration, and the student senator shall ratify the matter on behalf of Senate and shall notify the student and the Academic Integrity Officer of such ratification. For ratification to occur the decision must be unanimous. The Vice-Chair, Academic Administration shall ensure that the offence is recorded on the Senate Discipline database and that the Registrar and any others are notified of the finding and penalty for immediate implementation. If the Vice-Chair, Academic Administration, and/or the student senator have any material concerns about the process followed, the Vice-Chair, Academic Administration, shall consult with the Academic Integrity Officer to determine whether the concerns can be resolved. If the Vice-Chair, Academic Administration, and the Academic Integrity Officer are unable to resolve any concerns the case will be referred to the Senate Discipline Committee.

Mr. Snow noted that the main reason why the amendment was brought forward was because there have been general concerns on accountability and the student perspective being lost in attempts to expedite the ratification and the student discipline process.

Mr. Fraser confirmed that there was going to be a discussion of the ratification process at the next Senate meeting in May. He further explained that, subject to the discussion at SSC on April 16, the intention was to bring forward the report at the May Senate meeting for consideration. After considerable discussion on the amended motion, the vote was called.

The amendment was **DEFEATED**.

Mr. Snow **MOVED** and Mr. Coffin **SECONDED**:

**THAT** consideration of the original motion be postponed until the next meeting of Senate.

The motion **CARRIED**.

**2009:47**

Dalhousie Web Site Project - Approach Document

The Chair welcomed Dwight Fischer, Assistant Vice-President, Chief Information Officer, Technology Services, to the Senate meeting to give a presentation on the new web environment that will be implemented at the university. Mr. Fisher noted that his team has also been working on replacing Dalhousie's content management system. A governance structure will be prepared to look at how decisions are made during the projects duration of 18 months and the maintenance of the website. He hoped to develop a new home page, with a look and feel like the "Discover.Dal.Ca", which is targeted at traditional age undergraduates. He asked that anybody interested in providing daily communications on the web should let him know, noting that otherwise the campus community will be kept informed with periodic updates.

Discussion on the presentation followed and it was suggested that a representative from graduate studies be a member of the committee that is undertaking the review. In response to the question about how much support departments would receive to switch their web pages to the new format, Mr Fischer responded that this was part of the central project since each department had its content in the central content management system. Consistency for the web pages will be paramount for external pages; however, internal web pages were entirely upon faculty.

**2009:48**

Budget Advisory Committee Report Update

Mr. Shaver, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, provided a brief update on the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) Report. He addressed the news item where the government announced that it was increasing its contribution to the budget. The earlier notice that had been circulated in regard to the funding was perhaps not an accurate description of that cash flow and he explained that this was part of the funding that was included in the MOU that the government had signed with the universities but was in no way an extra investment in education.

He informed Senators that the government has been discussing the possibility of a funding cut but a clear decision has not been made. He noted that the BAC is going to proceed with the budget model that was very similar to the one that was originally described in the report published in December. They will keep the budget cut around the same as was speculated at in December, when there was a little bit of a deficit of about \$3.7 million, equal to a 2% cut across the board. He noted that the BAC is trying to keep the shortfall at the same amount and allow any variance to accumulate in the strategic investment fund. He further clarified that the BAC was trying to build the strategic fund to be as large as possible for two main reasons - Dalhousie is waiting for information from the Knowledge Infrastructure Program that require matching funds which the strategic fund would provide and the possibility of budget cuts in the 2010-11 budget year if the government is not able to honor the MOU as a result of the economic situation in Nova Scotia. He noted that one of the ways the BAC is trying to increase the strategic fund is through a \$800,000 decrease in the budget as a result of the relatively low energy prices now compared to the 2008-09 budget year. The BAC was also looking at the possibility of changing the way in which Dalhousie allows students to pay their tuition and residence fees which is currently done by credit charge, and costs the university about \$1 million a year. Therefore, removing the ability for students to pay for tuition and residency fees through credit cards would save the University \$1 million.

## **2009:49**

### Dalhousie University Staff Pension Plan Review

Mr. Burt, Vice President, Finance and Administration, and Ms. Katherine Sheehan, Assistant Vice President, Human Resources provided a presentation to Senate on the pension plan review and highlighting key issues surrounding the structure of the pension plan and contributions to the plan. Dalhousie does not have a jointly sponsored pension plan, although there are features within the plan like vetoes within the collective agreements for two of Dalhousie's staff groups that are somewhat like a jointly sponsored pension plan.

With regard to contribution, contributions for members of the pension plan are capped at 6.4% while the University is currently contributing just over 10% and does not have a cap. Therefore as pension costs rise, the University has to contribute more to the pension plan as employees are not contributing more to the pension plan. Pension amounts for staff are calculated as 2% of the average salary during the best three years within the plan multiplied by the number of years of employment.

The Board, in 2006-07 when they had completed the long-term financial plan for the University, had identified the pension as having a number of issues that it wanted looked at. First, it wanted the University to continue lobbying the provincial government to receive an exemption under the solvency rules of the Nova Scotia Pension Act. The Board had also asked the Finance & Administration office to look at and talk to employees about the Pension Plan looking at opportunities to share risk and exposure of the plan.

The last actuarial evaluation for the Pension Plan was completed on June 30, 2007 and at that time was in a surplus position. Throughout 2008, an extrapolation had been done as is the practice for each year and the going concern had a positive surplus of \$2.6 million, but the solvency deficit had begun to fall and had dropped down to \$71 million. Mr. Burt did a further extrapolation to October 31 and at this point, the going concern deficit had fallen to \$81 million and the solvency deficit had dropped to \$143 million. While an extrapolation has not been done since then, following the market crashes throughout November, December and again in January, Dalhousie's liabilities for the Pension Plan have increased, and continue to increase by about 2% and the asset values have continued to dwindle, and as of January 30<sup>th</sup> they were closer to \$200 million in solvency deficit. Mr. Burt noted that the pension issue is Dalhousie's greatest challenge, since under the current rules Dalhousie would be required to make that payment up in 5 years, or at the rate of \$40 million a year. A five year amortization of the solvency deficits would equate to a 50% raise in student tuition fees or a 25% reduction in faculty budgets.

Staff do not have to worry about their personal pensions and reiterated that the bigger issue was the University's Operating Budget. The goal is to sit down with the employee groups and talk about plan design and to bring an external expert to advise on their options around plan design, and continue to lobby the government while hoping that the markets turn around.

Mr. Fraser invited questions and comments on the presentation. Mr. Cochrane wondered whether there was anything in the discussions with the Federal government that would provide for some kind of rainy day fund of more than 10% since market fluctuations exceeded 10%. The Dalhousie Pension Plan had fully recovered from the last solvency review in 2007 and this is a Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) issue as the pension review panel came up with a strategy they thought would address the 10% cap on the CRA guidelines. The Nova Scotia panel reviews scheme, provides some relief for that under their new valuation method.

Mr. Fraser then invited comments from the gallery and several of those in attendance spoke to concerns in relation to the status of the pension plan and the report that had been presented. Mr. Fraser thanked Mr. Burt and Ms. Sheehan for their presentation and looked forward to continued pension discussions.

**2009:50**

National Survey of Student Engagement Presentation

This presentation was deferred to the next meeting on April 27, 2009.

**2009:51**

Other Business

Mr. Fraser drew Senators attention to the 2009 Feedback Form. The form was first initiated last year and has proven to be a valuable tool.

**2009:52**

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.