

Item: Senate Minutes, April 2000

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

APPROVED MINUTES

OF

SENATE MEETING

SENATE met in regular session on Monday, April 17, 2000, at 4:00 p.m. in University Hall, Macdonald Building.

Present with Mr. C. Stuttard in the chair were the following:

Alexander, Benoit, Binkley, Bleasdale, Carlson, Coffin, Crocker, Emodi, Flagel, Flood, Furrow, Galley, Giacomantonio, Gupta, Johnston, Kipouros, Lee, Lohmann, MacAulay, B. MacDonald, MacInnis, MacKenzie, Maes, Maloney, McConnell, McIntyre, Pacey, Phillips, H. Powell, Rathwell, J. Rutherford (for P. Ricketts), Sastri, Scully, Slonim, Traves, Treves, Ugursal, Wainwright, Wallace, White, Whyte.

Regrets: Barnes, Bell, Bradfield, Cunningham, Girard, Jalilvand, C. Powell, Russell, Shafai, Starnes, Tindall.

Invitees: B. Christie, J. Conrod, B. Mason, G. Winham.

2000:28.

Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted as circulated.

2000:29.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

At page 3, para 4, at line 5, "and" was deleted, at line 11 "mil" was inserted after \$71, at line 12 "mil" became "bil". The minutes of the meeting of March 13, 2000 were then adopted as amended.

2000:30.

Median Grades

Mr. Scully reported that with the assistance of the Dean of Computer Science, Mr. Slonim, a mechanism had been devised by which median grades could be made available for the fall and winter terms of the year 1999/2000. However, it would be necessary to attach to the information a disclaimer concerning the accuracy of the data, since we could not be certain that the medians calculated would be those which would ultimately go on the transcripts once the Banner solution had been implemented. In particular, it would be difficult to provide an accurate median for the whole class for those classes which were not simply a single class with a single enrolment, but were in effect combined classes, such as those that were cross-listed and

those that were "held with". Secondly, Senators might wish to consider the implications of making median grades available on the Web, a process which would identify publicly those classes which might be considered "Mickey Mouse" classes. Mr. Scully suggested this latter problem could be overcome by making the information available only to Faculty members or Deans through a mechanism such as web for faculty, but this would involve a significant increase in work. He had not yet raised this issue with the Deans. The Vice President thought it might be some consolation to members to know that other institutions were confronting similar problems. Because of their new computer system, the University of New Brunswick, for example, was issuing transcripts which had no grade point average calculations.

Mr. Wainwright asked for clarification as to why the grades would be inaccurate. Was it because they would not be calculated by a computer? Mr. Scully responded that they would be inaccurate for combined classes; once Banner was up and running, the transcript would include a median based on all students taking a combined class. Mr. Slonim added that the disclaimer would also be necessary because the calculations would be based on copies of the data, not the original data. Ms. Bleasdale thanked Dean Slonim for his help with this problem. She shared Mr. Scully's concerns about publicizing to the world for the first time the median grades for classes, without having had time to think through the implications. She wondered if we could explore an option other than the two proposed by Vice-President Scully, one of which seemed cumbersome, and one of which seemed undesirable for the institution. Mr. Scully thought the least unacceptable way of proceeding would be to identify a small number of offices at which the information would be available; however, that would put an enormous strain on those offices. None of the options were attractive.

Ms. Bleasdale moved:

That median grades be excluded from publication on the Web.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

2000:31.

Costs Related to Banner

Mr. Stuttard drew members' attention to the memorandum prepared by Mr. Mason in answer to Mr. Wainwright's question at an earlier meeting concerning the costs related to the implementation of Banner.

2000:32.

Question Period

Mr. Gupta understood that the two large classrooms in the A&A were to be converted into office space. This would place a strain on the Department of Mathematics & Statistics which regularly made use of those rooms to teach large classes. What plans were being made to accommodate those classes that would be displaced? Mr. Mason responded that the two large classrooms should have been closed years ago because they did not have a second fire exit, and the cost of constructing external fire escapes would be prohibitive. The Fire Marshall had agreed to the continued use of the classrooms, pending completion of the new Arts and Social Sciences building. No decision had been made concerning the future use of the rooms. The units which went in there would probably be academic units. Mr. Mason anticipated considerable rethinking of classrooms and offerings over the next few months, and hopefully the needs of Mathematics & Statistics would be addressed satisfactorily.

Mr. Scully reported that during the past month he had initiated two actions relating to Henson College. One concerned a possible revised relationship involving Henson College, the Office of Instructional Development & Technology (OIDT), and the instructional group in Academic Computing in the University Computing and Information Service (UCIS). The second involved a review of possible alternative locations or arrangements for delivery of the programs currently delivered by Henson College, with the exception of the Transition Year Program. This was not a review of the quality of the programs, but an attempt to see whether new arrangements could enhance the existing Henson programs. Mr. Scully and Dean MacInnis had met with the program managers and many of their teams, and intended to meet with the Henson staff on the coming Wednesday. The discussions were based on the sense that continuing education worked best at Dalhousie when it was located close to, and even within, the Faculty or Faculties which had the academic and professional expertise in the relevant area. The objectives were continuity of employment and of program, where there was a demand for the program. Mr. Scully would report to Senate monthly on developments concerning Henson College.

Mr. Wainwright noted that as a DFA representative he had met with the Vice President concerning Henson College because the Faculty Association felt that Senate needed to be involved in the process, under Article 25.01, given that Senate had approved the formation of Henson. Any planning for variations in the Henson program fell under 25.02, which also involved Senate. Mr. Wainwright had spoken to the Chair of Senate concerning this, and representatives of Senate had been invited to participate in this process. The DFA awaited word from the Vice President as to whether Article 25 had been invoked with regard to this process.

2000:33.

Nominations to the University Tenure & Promotions Panel

Ms. Bleasdale moved:

That the following nominations to the University Tenure and Promotions Panel be approved: Pauline Gardiner Barber (FASS), for the term April 2000-June 30, 2002; Ieva Vitins (FASS), for the term April 2000-June 30, 2002; and Barry Ruddick (Science) for the term April 2000-June 30, 2000.

Ms. Bleasdale noted that the nominees had received the approval of the President and the Executive of the DFA.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

2000.34.

Ph.D. in Experimental Pathology

On behalf of SAPBC, Mr. Stuttard moved:

That the proposed Ph.D. in Experimental Pathology be approved.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

2000.35.

Undergraduate Program in Health Information Management

On behalf of SAPBC, Mr. Stuttard moved:

That subject to clarification regarding the eligibility of students to receive student loans, the proposed Bachelor of Health Information Management be approved with the condition that the School of Health Services Administration shall make a one-time transfer of \$2,363 and a base budget transfer of \$1,245 to the Kellogg Library.

Ms. McIntyre pointed out that this program represented new partnerships not only with institutions across the country but with the Canadian Health Records Association. It also represented a unique way of participating with many other Faculties and other Schools in the Faculty of Health Professions, in the program's delivery.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

2000:36.

Report of BAC XVII

Mr. Stuttard reminded members that the Report had been delayed until the Provincial budget had been brought down last Tuesday. The Budget Advisory Committee had produced a Report in time to meet with SAPBC. A long discussion had ensued, the outcome of which was the two motions circulated to Senators. Mr. Stuttard invited Mr. Winham, the Chair of the BAC, to outline the recommendations within the Report.

Mr. Winham identified members of the BAC in attendance at the meeting: Ms. Joan Conrod, Mr. Brian Christie, Mr. Mason, and Mr. Scully. Mr. Winham noted that over the last decade government funding to Dalhousie had peaked in 1992-93 at \$107 mil. In 1999/2000, government funding was only \$97 mil. Dalhousie had adjusted to this \$10 mil. drop in annual revenue from our major source through increasing alternative revenues, largely through tuition, and through decreasing the envelopes for budget units by approximately 18% over the decade. The BAC had attempted to maintain a balance between the increases in tuition and the decreases to Faculties and other cost centres. The situation had improved a little over the past three years. In 1998, a review by the NSCHE had recommended greater expenditures on Universities, and the provincial government had sought to restore funding over three years. For the first two of those years Dalhousie had received increases totalling \$5.5 mil. With the change in the provincial government and the budgetary environment within which the new government was working, it had appeared unlikely that we would receive the \$3.1 mil. which had been anticipated for this year under the funding projections of the previous government. Despite decreases for other sectors, the University had received an increase in funding under the recent provincial budget. The increase amounted to approximately \$1.5 mil., which was better than feared.

In order to produce a balanced budget, the BAC was recommending a combination of revenue generation through tuition fee increases and expenditure reduction through cuts to units. Mr. Winham reminded members that in the previous year we had moved to a per-class fee system, and that in order to balance the cost to the University of that transition, tuition was increased 1.5% in 1999/2000 and a further increase of 1.5% had been projected for the year 2000/2001. This increase was revenue neutral. In addition to this, the BAC was recommending an across-the-board increase of 4.75%, as set out in Recommendation 1, page 5. Recommendation 2 was for a \$1000 increase for students in the MD, DDS, and MD/MSc (Oral and Maxillofacial) programs, instead of the 4.75% increase across the board. Recommendation 3 was for an increase in international student fees. The BAC was also recommending an increase in the scholarship

program by \$150,000 in recognition of the impact of the increase in tuition and the cut-back in the loan remission program by the provincial government.

In the area of expenditure reduction, Recommendation 5 proposed a 1.5% decrease to Faculty and unit budgets. Recommendation 6 was for an increased return of ERBA-exempt tuition revenue, in the interests of fairness to all Faculties. Recommendation 7 called for a 2% inflationary increase for non-salary budgets, for student assistance and for library acquisitions. Recommendation 8 introduced a new line item, a base budget allocation of \$347,000 for deferred maintenance, an important first step in dealing with a significant problem. Finally, Recommendation 9 spoke to the uncertainty concerning the precise amount of the government grant. If the grant was less than estimated, the allocation for deferred maintenance would be reduced accordingly.

Mr. Stuttard invited members to consider the first motion from SAPBC:

That the elimination of the provincial student loan remission program in the recent Nova

Scotia budget is of concern to this Senate.

In response to Ms. Furrow's request for information, Mr. Galley explained that the loan remission program was built on the concept that those students who were in high need, receiving a loan over \$7,000, had the opportunity to apply to the Province of Nova Scotia to have a portion of their loan forgiven, provided they had completed all their credits and received a certain GPA. The Millennium Scholarship Program offered some relief in this area to students, but not to the extent that the provincial loan remission program had. The Millennium Scholarship Program also only offset funds for those students who were in the \$9,000 and 10,000 loan bracket, not those in the \$7,000 and \$8,000 bracket. Mr. Galley noted that the combined affect of the increase in tuition and the end of the provincial loan remission program would create considerable hardship for many students.

Mr. Wainwright asked whether we would write a letter to the Provincial Government were the motion to pass.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

On behalf of SAPBC, Mr. Stuttard moved:

That the Board of Governors be asked to reconsider its policy whereby the Budget Advisory Committee's mandate extends only to recommending a balanced budget, and that a revised policy be applicable to the budget for 2000/2001.

Mr. Scully had not supported this motion at SAPBC, and he considered it important that members hear arguments before voting on it. In response to Ms. McKenzie's request for clarification, Mr. Stuttard explained that the position of SAPBC, though by no means of all members, had been that the BAC's recommendations for a 1.5% budget cut and, in particular, the proposed tuition increases, were intolerable, and that it would be preferable to have a temporary deficit for one year at least. We had been told that the BAC's mandate was to produce only a balanced budget. It was within the capacity of the Board, and perhaps the President, to vary that mandate; that was the import of what the majority had been thinking in passing this motion. Ms. McIntyre spoke against the motion. She thought the BAC had created a balanced budget that seemed reasonable. She personally congratulated the President and Mr. Mason for their work on behalf of all the Universities of Nova Scotia to see that this provincial budget increased revenue to Universities, at a time when other sectors had seen their budgets decreased. The message that we could work within our envelope was very important.

Although she would not normally recommend a deficit as a means of financing the University's operations, Ms. McConnell considered it important to put a few issues on the table for debate in the Senate. BAC was to be commended for producing a reasonably evenhanded Budget within fairly conservative parameters and constraints. She noted, though, that the cuts to departments also represented an attack on the services available to students. In comparison to other sectors, we had been treated relatively well, and she too congratulated the President and other members of the Administration for their work. However, she thought that we needed to encourage the Board of Governors to review its instructions to BAC, and perhaps encourage it to be more creative. Ms. McConnell found the proposed cuts to units particularly unsettling because they represented an attack on both the integrity of programs and on the services available to students. We had had many years of such incremental cuts, and each year more talk about our inability to take further cuts. But each year we absorbed another cut. The Board of Governors and the government probably looked to see what we did as opposed to what we said, and the clear message was that there was still fat in the system if we could keep cutting. Ms. McConnell urged the Senate to ask the Board of Governors to review our overall process of examining the University's finances. We were looking at the Operating Budget, but not at other parts of the budget, specifically, capital funding, which was perhaps properly treated as distinct, and endowment funds, some of which might be tied and some of which might not be tied money. With respect to tuition, unit envelopes, and contributions to overall administration, we appeared to operate within a relatively holistic University-wide system. But in some respects, our financing was fragmented. BAC was not looking at possible trade-offs and whether in fact it was time to move money from some areas or to ask the Board of Governors to perhaps increase the spendable percentage of endowment funds. With specific reference to the endowment funds, it was sensible to have money in the bank for a rainy day, but we all knew of people who lived in increasing hardship, waiting for the rainy day, and ultimately died and left the money in the bank. They never got to the rainy day because their condition only deteriorated incrementally each day. Ms. McConnell was not suggesting that we should complain to the provincial government, nor did she think that BAC was doing a poor job. She wished Senate to urge the Board of Governors to review some of our decision-making processes.

Mr. Crocker had voted against this motion at SAPBC because he believed Dalhousie had to give the impression that it was living within its budget, particularly when we were receiving increased grants. He was concerned that Medicine and Dentistry were taking a large "hit" in this budget. Still, we had to act

responsibly in trying to live within our budgets. Ms. Furrow agreed the President was to be congratulated for getting an important message across at a difficult time. We also needed to congratulate the Vice-President (Administration & Finance) for the fact that we had entered this year not in debt. She would not wish to see the University begin to dig itself back into debt.

Mr. Traves did not see the motion as speaking explicitly to or having any impact on this year's budget. The University had approached the budget in the context of predictions of cuts in provincial funding of as much as 10 to 15%. The BAC and Board members had concluded that we would not be able to balance the budget if faced with a 10% cut. In such circumstances we would have had to make adjustments through cuts and tuition increases, but in addition recommend a modest deficit. At the same time, the Board would have expected us to explain how we intended to work off the deficit over some reasonable period of time. He thought there would be no sympathy at the Board for running a deficit and implicitly saying that we did not care about how it would be dealt with in the future. With respect to the endowment funds, a recent paper from Vice-President Mason, positioning our spending practices within the context of North American endowment spending, had revealed we were in the top one-third of aggressive spenders. We could not assume that endowment earnings would always go up, as the recent sharp drop in the markets had indicated. We had to live within our means, and if we were going to go into deficit we had to have a plan to deal with that. The President would give the Board his opinion that this motion, if passed, was imprudent.

Ms. Bleasdale thought we needed to consider balancing budgets from the point of view of students. A primary reason SAPBC thought this might be the appropriate time to ask the Board to reconsider its policy on deficit budgets was because the students were taking a triple hit when the provincial and University budgets were combined. The loan remission program had been discontinued at the same time that most students attending Dalhousie full-time would be facing tuition increases of 6.25%. Also, the 1.5% cut to departments directly affected the quality of programs we were able to offer students. She understood what the President was saying and she appreciated everything that Mr. Winham had done for Dalhousie as Chair of the BAC. She congratulated Mr. Traves on the success of his lobbying, but thought he probably had not foreseen that part of the way Dalhousie would get its increase in funding would be through the provincial government's decision to back out of its loan remission program. As a faculty member she would feel extraordinarily uncomfortable next year walking into classrooms knowing that Dalhousie was doing relatively well, while its students were being pushed into increasing debt. From her experience with Honours students in her Department, she knew that even first class students who received some scholarship funding were pressured to work an unacceptable number of hours during the school year to try to finance their studies. Ms. Bleasdale increasingly wondered why we all talked about the need to balance budgets --- in the University, in the press, and in the provincial and federal legislatures -- and yet we asked students to bury themselves under unbalanced budgets from which many of them would have difficulty recovering. She could not reconcile the rhetoric of balanced budgets with the reality of student debt. Probably other Senators, like herself, would never have had the opportunity to go to University and ultimately come to Dalhousie had the federal government not brought in a very generous bursary and loan program in the 1960s. That made it all the more difficult to face the future generation, knowing that we had not only eroded the bursary program, but were systematically chipping away at the loan program, and the provincial loan remission program had been abolished.

Mr. Slonim would not support a deficit budget, but he had serious problems with the fact that the students were carrying most of the load. The differential between Dalhousie and the Universities that he considered our competition was getting larger and larger. Within the Nova Scotian environment he did not believe that in future we could hope to accomplish what the President had accomplished for this year's budget. We had to recognize the need to generate more revenue from other sources. Mr. Slonim was most concerned about the quality of the students that we would be able to attract this year. He believed the impact of the budget

would be to discourage good students from coming to Dalhousie. Prospective students in his Faculty, at least, would go where it was cheaper and where they could study in a better environment. The University might be getting itself into a position in which the market would not bear the prices we were asking students to pay.

Ms. McKenzie directed her question to the President. Whereas Dalhousie tuition was already among the highest in the country; and whereas the average arts student at Dalhousie, at the lowest tuition rate, paid approximately \$14,000 per year in study expenses; and whereas during the academic year 1999/2000, the cost of books, instruments, and tuition to a first year student in DDS 1 at Dalhousie was \$13,481, not including living expenses; and whereas Dalhousie maintained approximately the highest tuition in the country in programmes like Arts, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Social Work; and whereas with tuition costs factored in the average Dalhousie student lived \$3,874 below the poverty line; and whereas when Dalhousie graduates financed their student loans over a period of ten years they would end up paying well over \$40,000 for a \$25,000 loan to pay for a four-year Dalhousie degree, did the President feel that the tuition increase proposed by the President's Budget Advisory Committee acted as a further barrier to accessing an education at Dalhousie University.

Mr. Traves attempted to contextualize the question. With the cost of studying at Dalhousie at \$14,000, the proposed tuition increase was approximately \$200, or 1.5% of the total costs. Would \$200 make the difference between someone coming or not coming to Dalhousie? He did not know. It had not in the past, in that our enrolments had been going up steadily. Secondly, tuition fees were only one item in the cost of a university education. Dalhousie did not control the cost of the other items, which frequently went up at higher rates than 1.5%. Half of the students at Dalhousie had no student debt when they graduated, so subsidizing them by constraining tuition fees struck him as poor policy. Another 25% of Dalhousie students went through with relatively modest student debt loads. So 25% of our students graduated with debt loads approximating the numbers Ms. McKenzie had quoted. For those students it was a matter of serious concern. The debt load Ms. McKenzie was describing was a significant burden for students to carry away from University, and circumscribed their personal and social choices. The problem described was a problem of social policy, and not a problem that the University could resolve directly. The place to alter the funding arrangements for low-income students was through government social programs. The University might feel it could make a gesture, but the cost of doing that would be to reduce the quality of education, and would compound our budget problems for the future. We needed to find a balance between the quality we were prepared to offer and the price we were prepared to charge. The BAC had walked a fine line and had attempted to find that balance. Mr. Traves also noted that their Report offered a total 5% increase in aid to students.

Ms. MacAulay pointed out that many Dalhousie students took out personal loans rather than provincial student loans, and many had parents who were making difficult cuts in order to help their children attend university. Consequently the figures the President was citing were misleading. She realised that it was not the University's role to bankroll students. Education was in part a privilege and in part a right, but we were reaching the point at which only the privileged would have the right to a post-secondary education. She agreed that the University was not responsible for resolving the problem, but there was a huge difference between trying to resolve the problem student debt and contributing to it. She saw this motion as Senators' best opportunity to voice to the Board of Governors their concerns about financial matters, and, in particular, student debt and the continuing increases in tuition. She strongly urged Senate to vote for the motion because she saw no other way of attempting to slow the increasing costs which each year kept more students from attending institutions such as Dalhousie.

Mr. Whyte spoke to the specific tuition increase for the Faculty of Medicine. As a member of that Faculty, he was disturbed over the consequences of a \$1000 increase in tuition. That amounted to roughly a 15%

increase. He also thought the notion was wrong that we could set tuition fees according to significant earnings potential over students' careers. He reminded Senators that students entered Medical School after years of undergraduate and sometimes postgraduate study, during which time they had run up significant debts. They incurred further debt during Medical School, such that there was now considerable concern about the level of medical residents' debt, which was around \$80,000. Some residents who came from wealthy families were debt free, but he believed most residents had a debt which amounted to a reasonably-sized mortgage at the conclusion of their residency. Mr. Whyte also considered it naïve to suggest that there were no social consequences arising from the levels at which we set tuition. In terms of social policy, if we increased the tuition fees for medical students according to market conditions, we would recruit wealthy students, which was exactly what had happened at the University of Western Ontario. When that institution had increased tuition, the average income of the families supporting the students had gone from \$80,000 to \$120,000. We did not want to return to the situation in the 1940s and 1950s when Medical Schools and Physicians Institutions were run by elitist and wealthy physicians. Nova Scotia should be particularly concerned about the prospect of losing its medical graduates to jurisdictions which offered higher remuneration and consequently the capacity to pay back loans more quickly.

The motion was **LOST**.

2000:37.

Interim Report of the Board of Governors' Facilities Renewal Strategy Committee

Mr. Stuttard welcomed Mr. Howitt, Assistant Director of the Department of Facilities Management, and Mr. Cowan, Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors. Mr. Traves reminded Senators that the Board of Governors had begun to consider the issue of deferred maintenance on campus. The Committee was still in the process of seeking suggestions concerning the nature of the problem and how to proceed and set priorities. Mr. Howitt presented a series of slides from across campus demonstrating the need to tackle maintenance or renewal that had been deferred, on a planned or unplanned basis, to a future budget cycle or postponed until funds became available. Mr. Howitt gave a profile of Dalhousie facilities, including the age of Dalhousie buildings; examples of recent capital renewal; factors affecting the timing of renewal and replacement; the categories for renewal and replacement; and an overview of deferred maintenance. A copy of the overheads would be available for viewing in the Senate Office. Mr. Howitt concluded by pointing out the need to develop a funding strategy to confirm and identify the needs and then set priorities in the area of deferred maintenance.

Mr. Cowan reminded Senators that Dalhousie was not alone in facing problems with aging buildings and deferred maintenance. Every university and institution across the country had similar problems. Studies had indicated that our problem at Dalhousie was no better and no worse than that of other institutions within Nova Scotia. Members would be aware of reports from universities across Canada which together had attempted to give a higher profile to the issue and to encourage governments to recognize the need to provide resources to address the issue. Universities did not have the capacity to solve the problem on their own, but we could not expect that governments would solve the problem for us. Dalhousie would need to give deferred maintenance a higher priority within our budget planning processes and allocate greater physical and financial resources to it. The Committee intended to file a final report in the near future. Mr. Cowen encouraged members to offer their guidance and assistance.

2000:38.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Secretary

Chair