

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN SENATE
SATURDAY, 9:30 A.M., APRIL 18, 2009
EXETER ROOM, MARQUIS HALL**

Present: V. Pezer (Chair), J. Alexander, S. Allen, L. Balas, M. Beazely, H. Ben, R. Bhargava, E. Bourassa, D. Boyko, D. Brûlé, N. Burns, L. Butler, E. Cherneski, B. Cram, J. Crawford, R. Delahey, J. Dillon, B. Dubois, M. Dubois, L. Ebel, R. Eirich, L. Ewing, B. Fairbairn, I. Farthing, M. Freeland, D. Froese, P. Gatin, G. Groves, W. Gulka, G. Gullickson, S. Haines, D. Hannah, G. Hansen, E. Hartman, D. Hasell, R. Hiebert, L. Krause, M. Kuzyk, L. Lacoursiere, E. Macfarlane, P. MacKinnon, H. Magotiaux, A. March, L. Martz, G. McCreath, R. Mowat, P. Rempel, C. Rhodes, C. Rodgers, S. Ross, D. Senecal, J. Shanks, P. Stroh, D. Szmuto, E. Taman Athmer, D. Taylor, G. Turner, J. Victor, D. Wagner, F. Wagner, L. Wagner, H. Walker, J. Walker, A. Whetstone, A. Whittles, V. Williamson, G. Willms, and L. Pennock (Secretary).

Regrets: W. Albritton, K. Chad, B. Cotter, B. David, S. Fedoruk, T. Flavell, R. Florizone, J. Germida, G. Giesbrecht, D. Gorecki, Y. Gu, V. Hajanl, R. Harasymchuk, A. Herzberg, G. Isaac, P. James, C. Keess, J. Kozinski, H. Lafond, G. McCaffrey, K. McInnes, P. McKercher, T. Molloy, R. Norris, B. Nylander, K. Ogilvie, M. Orr, O. Panchuk, T. Paulsen, F. Puckett, B. Reynolds, W. Richards, G. Scoles, G. Smith, G. Stevens, G. Stewart, S. Sun, D. Thompson, B. Traynor, T. Turner, D. Uglem, G. Uswak, and W. Young.

Also Present: E. Barber, J. Buzowetsky, C. Card, C. Lang, P. Melis, M. Soroka, R. Schultz, J. Steeves, C. Tennent, and N. Woods.

Introductory Remarks

Chancellor Pezer welcomed members of Senate back to campus and invited members to introduce themselves and to indicate the region or association they represent.

The chair sought changes or additions to the agenda; there being none, the agenda was accepted by consensus.

1. Minutes of the meeting of October 18, 2008

McCREATH/L. WAGNER: That the minutes of the meeting October 18, 2008 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

2. Business from the minutes

No business was identified as arising from the minutes.

3. President's report

The chair invited President Peter MacKinnon to present his report. The president thanked members of Senate, and particularly those for whom this is the last meeting, for their attendance and their willingness to serve the university in this capacity. He also welcomed those who are attending their first meeting of Senate, remarking on the unique nature of the Senate as a governing body that represents the university's broader public and provides an opportunity for alumni and members of professional associations to have input into the university's decision-making processes.

The president alluded to the tour of the College of Law addition, which took place earlier in the day, and pointed out the ways in which the project illustrates several of the challenges and opportunities facing the university: the necessary renewal of aging infrastructure, the extraordinary inflation in construction costs in recent months, imperatives around environmental sustainability, and opportunities for partnership with external supporters.

The president also spoke about the impact of the recession on the university, particularly the downturn in investment earnings to support scholarships, bursaries and chairs and to fund the pension plans of the institution. He described the measures the university is taking to meet the required solvency tests for pensions and to address some of the shortfalls experienced in the operating budget. These measures include institution-wide adjustments in the budget for 2009-10. The president committed to providing ongoing reports about the success of measures being taken to address this issue.

President MacKinnon drew senate members' attention to the items on student housing in his report, and thanked the student associations for their vigorous and successful initiatives in partnering with the university to secure provincial funding for housing projects. He also asked members to take note of the items in his report relating to the Senate Roundtable on Outreach and Engagement, the president's provincial tour, and government relations.

The president then invited questions from members of Senate. There were questions and comments on the following matters:

- The impact of the economic downturn on scholarships and bursaries
- The availability of actuarial studies to inform the university's pension strategy
- The importance of the university's continuing to place a high priority on accessibility
- The university's strategy for dealing with the declining high school demographics in the province
- The shortage of occupational therapists in Saskatchewan compared with other provinces
- The university's strategies to ensure that aboriginal students are admitted and retained across programs

4. Report on undergraduate student activities

Josie Steeves presented the report as outgoing president of the USSU. Her report included an update on the Place Riel expansion, which is expected to meet LEEDS standards and to be complete in 2010 (more information is available at www.renewplacieriel.ca); the *Learning Well and Living Well* report, written by VP Student Affairs Shannon Dyck, which resulted in substantial provincial funding for student housing; the launch of a new USSU web site at www.ussu.ca; the *Be Book Smart* campaign, headed by VP Academic Brea Lowenberger, which is looking at the cost of academic materials and textbooks; a number of debates and forums sponsored by the USSU on topics such as environment and energy; the USSU Excellence Awards which recognize excellence in teaching, advising and service; discussions at the undergraduate forum about student governance; and various lobbying efforts with both the federal and provincial governments, the latter in collaboration with the U of R and FSIN to discuss tuition and access ability and affordability. She noted that elections have concluded for the 2009-10 Executive, which takes office on May 1.

Ms. Steeves then invited questions from members of Senate. A student member thanked Josie for the significant accomplishments that she and her executive have made this year, and asked what the institution, and particularly its faculty, are doing to work with the USSU on the *Be Book Smart* campaign, and what members of the community can do to be supportive. Ms. Steeves responded that VP Lowenberger sent out e-mails to all faculty to ask them to take cost into consideration when choosing textbooks, and that this communication has elicited a positive response. She also noted that the bookstore manager, Mark Jagoe, is very supportive of this initiative. She encouraged members of Senate to do what they can to inform themselves about this issue and to participate in awareness raising and education.

The chancellor thanked Josie for her contribution to Senate and for the excellent work of the USSU executive over the past year.

5. Report on graduate student activities

Janice Victor presented the report of the Graduate Students' Association as outgoing president. She noted that the GSA has been busy on two major initiatives since Senate's last meeting. The first of these is the graduate commons project, which has as its goal to provide a common venue and strong common programming for graduate students. The Commons will be located in the former College of Emmanuel and St. Chad chapel, and the GSA anticipates being able to move in by this coming September. Institutional support has been approved by the Provost's Committee on Integrated Planning with the support of CGSR Dean Lawrence Martz, and the GSA is working with University Advancement to develop a campaign to secure additional support from alumni.

The second project involves lobbying the provincial government to include graduate students in its graduate retention program. The program offers a tuition

rebate to graduates of Saskatchewan post-secondary programs who remain in the province to work, but graduate students have been excluded on the assumption that these students already receive sufficient funding and that many are doing graduate programs as mid-career professional training. Representatives of the GSA travelled to Regina in March along with the opposition critic for education, the Honourable Cam Broten, where they participated in question period and also met with the minister of advanced education, the Honourable Rob Norris and are continuing the dialogue to ensure equitable distribution and opportunities for graduate students to remain in Saskatchewan.

Finally, Ms. Victor reported that the GSA has been very pleased this year with the administrative and government support being provided for student housing.

The chancellor thanked Janice for her service on the Senate and for the work that she and her executive have done over the past year in support of graduate students.

6. Report on Council activities

The chair invited Claire Card, Chair of Council, to present her report. Dr. Card expressed greetings on behalf of Council to all members of Senate, and highlighted some of the main achievements of Council as outlined in her report, particularly

- The approval of the second integrated plan
- Approval of new programs in many colleges
- Creation of three new centres
- Initiatives around articulation and transfer credit
- Revisions to the criteria for admission
- Revisions to the examination regulations
- Consideration of guidelines for social networking
- Revisions to the academic discipline regulations, which have been very much informed by the good work done by Senate on the non-academic discipline regulations
- Development of a framework for international programming and an internal review for international research
- Revisions to guidelines for establishment of departments and establishment of centres
- Search and review procedures for senior administrators
- The new foundational document on teaching and learning (available through the university web site)

Dr. Card concluded by observing that Senate contributes significantly to the work of the university, and plays a vital role in furthering the goals of higher education in this province. The academic community needs and requires informed partnership with the public about matters facing society which are relevant to higher education, and continuing connectedness is important. She commented at how impressed she was with the high attendance at this meeting, and thanked Senate members for their time and devotion to the University of Saskatchewan.

7. Items for Approval

7.1 Executive committee re appointments to nominations committee for 2009/2010

Dr. Pezer presented this item as chair of the executive committee.

WHETSTONE/L. WALKER: That William Gulka, Emily Cherneski, Bev Dubois, Peter Stroh and Vera Pezer be appointed to the senate nominations committee; and that William Gulka be appointed as chair and Emily Cherneski as vice-chair for 2009/2010.

CARRIED

7.2 Honorary degrees committee report

The Chair invited President MacKinnon to present the report as chair of the honorary degrees committee. President MacKinnon provided some background to the process for considering nominations for honorary degrees, and reminded Senate members of the importance of continuing to nominate candidates for consideration for honorary degrees.

Senate approved a confidential motion to award honorary degrees to four individuals.

7.3 Nominations committee

7.3.1 Committee membership for 2009/2010

The chair invited William Gulka to present the report as chair of the committee. Following his presentation of the motion, the chancellor called for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, she then called the question.

GULKA/STROH: That Senate approve the appointments to senate committees for 2009/2010 as outlined on page 42 of the report.

CARRIED

7.3.2 Senate representative to the Board of Governors

This item was also presented by William Gulka. Grit McCreath left the room for this item. Following Mr. Gulka's presentation of the motion, the chancellor called for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, she then called the question.

GULKA/DUBOIS: That Susan Milburn be re-appointed as the Senate representative to the Board of Governors, effective July 1, 2009 for a three year term.

AND That Grit McCreath be appointed as the Senate representative to the Board of Governors, effective July 1, 2009 for a three-year term.

CARRIED

7.4 Membership committee report

The chair invited Dana Brûlé to present this item as a member of the membership committee. Mr. Brûlé described the results of the survey that was undertaken by the committee and the process that led to the formulation of the criteria that are presented in the agenda materials. The chair pointed out that only elected regional and members-at-large may vote on this resolution.

BRÛLÉ /GUILLICKSON: That Senate adopt the criteria outlined on pages 49 – 53 of the agenda material for assessing eligibility for membership of organizations on the University of Saskatchewan Senate, effective April 18, 2009.

CARRIED

7.5 Decision from University Council re revisions to criteria for admission

MacKINNON/MOWAT: That Senate approve revisions to the criteria for meeting undergraduate admission requirements for students from American-curriculum high schools, such that a combination of high school grades and SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) or ACT scores will be acceptable, effective for the May 2009 applications; and

That Senate approve revisions to the criteria for establishing English proficiency for undergraduate applicants for admission, effective for the May 2009 applicants.

CARRIED

8. Items for information

8.1 Registration report

The chair invited Vice Provost Ernie Barber and David Hannah, Associate Vice President for Student and Enrolment Services to present their report. Their presentation is attached as APPENDIX A.

Following the presentation, a member of Senate complimented Dr. Barber and Dr. Hannah for the thoroughness and thoughtfulness of their report.

A student member reported that Ontario has seen a significant increase in applications for the fall and wondered whether the same phenomenon is evident here. Dr. Hannah noted that the reported increase in Ontario is primarily in the College sector, and mainly in Toronto. The application numbers here are almost exactly the same as last year, though the number of offers made is up by 700 as a result of a concerted effort to respond promptly to applications for admission.

Another member commented on the way that distance learning may provide a solution to enrolment pressures, and noted there is a dearth of distance and independent learning opportunities at the U of S. In his response, the vice provost

discussed the considerations that go into building learning communities whether they are on line or in person.

Another member commended Drs Barber and Hannah on the comprehensiveness of their approach to enrolment management and the focus on student success. He emphasized the importance of blended and cross-institutional programming and of pursuing transfer credit articulation agreements. He also advocated looking at the attitudinal and systemic barriers that may detract from student success. He then asked what research has been done to track conversion rates, and whether it would be possible to get a report for a future Senate meeting on these rates. Dr. Hannah agreed that this will be important information to gather and that the institution will be focusing primarily on first-year completion rates over the next year.

A member reported on an issue that came up in the Regional Advisory Council meeting this year, which was that the U of S no longer seems to be even a second choice for Regina students. He wondered how the university's branding and positioning might be used to effectively recruit Regina students so we don't lose them to other provinces. Dr. Hannah alluded to the work currently being done at the university on positioning, branding and marketing, including an emerging appreciation that different audiences require a different approach.

8.2 Update on Senate election

The secretary provided a brief update on Senate elections, which will be held by electronic balloting from mid May to mid June.

Senate adjourned for lunch from 12:15 until 1:00 p.m.

9. Presentation and discussion

9.1 Assessment activities at the U of S: quality and accountability commitment

A copy of the provost's presentation is attached as APPENDIX B.

In introducing this topic, the provost provided an overview of the development and implementation of the twenty commitments in the university's second integrated plan, and distributed a document that identifies the commitment leaders for each. He reported that all of the commitment leaders have assembled teams and work plans to help them address their areas of commitment.

The provost also commented on the status of the plan itself in the context of the economic downturn, stressing that the priorities of the university will remain the priorities, and that the plan is helpful to the university in this environment by reminding us of the areas that must be protected and nourished, even when financial resources are scarce.

Dr. Fairbairn then reported on a number of strategic initiatives have been undertaken by the university in the last few months to position the institution to achieve its goals, including allocation of funding for academic priorities. Among these are graduate-level scholarships, three new interdisciplinary graduate schools, the learning communities in arts and science, experiential learning, and aboriginal partnerships and initiatives. There are also a number of building and renovation projects going on across campus, including two in the core of campus, the Place Riel renovation and the second phase of the university learning centre/library transformation.

The provost indicated that it is not enough to have a plan; the university must also be able to determine whether or not it is being successful in attaining its goals. This is the reason that one of the commitments specifically addresses matters of quality and accountability. This commitment recognizes that a more comprehensive approach is needed in the matter of assessment. The University took a step towards this more comprehensive approach with its *Framework for Assessment* document, which addresses matters of quality improvement, quality assurance, and accountability to the public and to the university's internal and external stakeholders. The university has also approved a new information strategy and a new office for information and analytics. In the *Framework* there are plans for the systematic review of graduate programs, periodic review of undergraduate programs, and non-academic unit reviews for planning purposes. The document also looks forward to the creation of an achievement record which can be used as a report on progress towards goals. The commitment working group has explored this in an initial way with a number of the governing bodies of the university and has developed a number of principles, including the need for collaboration in how it's developed and will be used; accountability to the public; and the need to keep the record simple and short (fewer than 20 indicators). The working group plans to have an achievement record finalized by the end of June, a goal which is described as aggressive but doable.

Discussion was led by Assistant Provost Pauline Melis, based on four questions, which Senate members were given 10 minutes to think about and respond to individually, and then to discuss in the full group:

- 1) From your perspective, what key achievement areas should the university concentrate on in order to know it is successful?
- 2) What measures do you think would be good indicators of success in the key areas you identified above?
- 3) How can we ensure success in outreach and community engagement is appropriately measured and reported?
- 4) Other comments?

In reporting back, members of Senate were asked to indicate whether they thought the five key achievement areas proposed by the working group were the right ones. They are:

- Student experience and success
- Teaching and learning
- Research, scholarly and artistic work
- Institutional effectiveness, efficiency and endurance

- Reputation and community engagement

By show of hands, most Senate members expressed general support of these five areas. When asked whether there were additional areas that might be included, one member suggested that “teaching and learning” be expanded to include “teaching and learning and caring”—caring about teaching, about the discipline, about the program the students are in, and about the students. A student member pointed out that many students are at university because they want to find a job and wondered whether there is a way to measure whether they are getting what they want out of the “product” they get from the university.

Senate members were also asked to provide suggestions of measures that would be good indicators of success in these areas. Their responses were as follows:

- Student experience and success:
 - Ask employers how well our students are prepared for the job as well as asking students whether they were able to find work in their field
 - Find ways to encourage families with multiple generations of U of S students to engage with the university and recognize intergenerational attendance
 - Find out how students engage with the administrative side (registration system and other systems)
 - Ask what the experience of students is before they come here, while they are here, and after they leave
 - Is there a waiting list to get into a program because it’s a great program? (This could be an indicator of success).
- Teaching and learning
 - Track the number of faculty who are engaging in programs offered by the teaching and learning centre
 - An indicator of the extent to which students are taken out of the classroom to apply what they are learning
 - Students’ attitudes and level of confidence in their work and practicum experiences, and their sense of how they can influence and shape the world around them
 - Identify the courses that students most often fail, and make a commitment to track and improve student performance in those courses and report on them
- Research, scholarly and artistic work
 - Attract big-name faculty (e.g. Stephen Hawking at Waterloo).
 - Measure what the university does to shape society and address social issues—e.g. aboriginal income disparity study done by SFU
 - Knowledge translation measures
 - How would we know if we are a leader in the community in arts and culture?
- Institutional effectiveness, efficiency and endurance
 - Minimize administrative costs

- Reputation and community engagement
 - It was pointed out that there is a Michigan-based university that has developed some measurements for outreach and engagement
 - Service learning initiatives
 - Celebrate achievement more; showcase what students and faculty are doing
 - Student involvement in community and charitable work
 - Measure each of the 5 initiatives that were identified in the foundational document on outreach and engagement
 - Awareness of brand and positioning and level of confidence in the claims made by the university
 - Impact on community and society, on things like social wellbeing, income, employment, welfare rates, crime rates, knowledge, the GDP of Saskatchewan. There are methodologies to do this.
 - Do people feel their contribution of time to the university's outreach activities is meaningful?

A more general suggestion was that the university identify benchmarks and best practices for all of the indicators and measure them against how other universities are doing.

Assistant Provost Melis asked members of Senate to hand in their discussion sheets for collation. The provost made closing remarks, in which he described some of the leading and lagging indicators that the university has considered using in its achievement index. He noted that Senate in its conversation confirmed some of the thinking of the working group but that in the past hour, members of Senate have added four or five things that the working group has not yet come up with; this is a good example of the way in which Senate adds value to the university's thinking.

10. Other business

The chancellor reminded members of Senate that Convocation will take place May 26, 27, and 28, and members of Senate are welcome to join the platform party.

She asked members of the membership committee to remain following the meeting for a brief meeting.

Bob Cram reported on a national event taking place in connection with the 2010 Olympics, and announced that our chancellor will be participating by invitation in a sports sustainability and culture lecture series organized by the Vancouver Olympics organizing committee.

The chancellor also acknowledged those members of the Senate who have completed their terms as Senate members and thanked them for their service.

11. Adjournment and Dates of Future Senate Meetings

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m. Future meetings will be held on:

- Saturday, October 17, 2009
- Saturday, April 17, 2010
- Saturday, October 16, 2010