

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN SENATE
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2009
MARQUIS HALL**

Present: Vera Pezer (chair), D. Agema, J. Alexander, H. Allyn, M. Beazely, H. Ben, G. Blackmore, E. Bourassa, D. Boyko, K. Breker, N. Burns, L. Butler, J. Buzowetsky, K. Chad, E. Cherneski, J. Crawford, B. Dubois, L. Ebel, L. Ewing, I. Farthing, H. Fellehner, S. Fisher, J. Forbes, S. Fortugno, N. Fraser, M. Freeland, P. Gatin, R. Grauer, G. Groves, W. Gulka, D. Hannah, R. Harasymchuk, E. Hartman, D. Hickie, R. Hiebert, J. Huyghebaert, B. Johnson, M. Kuzyk, L. Lacoursiere, B. Laroque, A. Lowe, P. MacKinnon, A. March, L. Martz, G. McCaffrey, R. Mowat, B. Nylander, R. Nystuen, M. Orr, O. Panchuk, F. Puckett, P. Rempel, C. Reynolds, C. Rodgers, B. Sanderson, D. Senecal, A. Steffen, G. Stevens, G. Stewart, P. Stroh, D. Szmuto, E. Taman, D. Taylor, B. Traynor, D. Uglem, G. Uswak, D. Wagner, L. Wagner, A. Whetstone, A. Whittles, and L. Pennock (secretary).

Regrets: R. Bhargava, M. Buhr, L. Calvert, B. Cram, J. Dillon, B. Dobni, B. Fairbairn, S. Fedoruk, R. Florizone, J. Germida, D. Hasell, D. Hill, R. Isinger, J. Kozinski, L. Krause, H. Magotiaux, P. McKercher, N. Poon, W. Richards, G. Smith, F. Wagner, J. Walker, V. Williamson.

Also present: C. Card, W. Kirkland, R. Long, J. Rigby, H. Rashid, M. Soroka, C. Vipond.

Absent: W. Albritton, B. Cotter, R. Delahey, R. Doucette, D. Froese, G. Giesbrecht, S. Haines, G. Hansen, C. Isman, T. Molloy, R. Norris, K. Ogilvie, T. Paulsen, C. Rhodes, G. Turner, T. Turner.

1. Introduction of senate members

Chancellor Pezer welcomed members of Senate, especially new members, and extended an invitation to those who are interested to the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the research, teaching and service of the former College of Home Economics at a ceremony that will take place in Convocation Hall at 3pm. The chancellor then invited members to introduce themselves.

The agenda was adopted as circulated, with the addition of Item 7.2a, appointments to the joint committee for the nomination of Chancellor, which was circulated at the door.

2. Minutes of the meeting of April 18, 2009

CRAWFORD/L. WAGNER: That the minutes of the meeting of April 18, 2009 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

3. Business from the minutes

No business was identified as arising from the minutes.

4. President's report

The president welcomed Senate members and commented on the importance of the Senate in the university's tricameral governance system. He expressed his gratitude to the citizens of the province represented in this assembly for their service to the University of Saskatchewan. He invited members of the Senate to review the commitment posters on display at the back of the meeting room; these reflect progress made towards the 20 commitments outlined in the university's second integrated plan.

The president commended members to the "Quality and Accountability Achievement Record" distributed with today's meeting materials. This document represents a very public progress report for the university and is the product of broad consultation including input provided by Senate at its last meeting.

The president also noted that the university's Census Day is just past, and that the enrolment figures for the fall term represent a modest increase in the size of the student body, up by just over 2%. He stressed that this increase has happened in the context of a declining population of high school graduates in the province. This decline was underscored at the university's annual *Experience Us!* open house over the past two days, where just 2,500 students were in attendance; this represents a drop from a high of almost 4,000 students a few years ago..

The board of governors met earlier this month and approved a report on the university's land holdings. This report, entitled *Vision 2057*, sets forth a designation system for the university's lands as either core lands or endowment lands. The purpose of the document is to set a foundation to ensure the university's land base is used wisely and in support of the mission and goals of the university. The president assured Senate members that any specific proposal to sell, lease or develop any of the university's lands would of course still require approval by the Board of Governors.

Last week the university and the Minister of Advanced Education turned sod on the E wing of the Academic Health Sciences Centre on our campus. This is a major component of this important project, which will facilitate interdisciplinary research and study in the health sciences.

The president then invited questions from members of Senate.

In response to a question about the university's proposal for a Canadian Neutron Source, the president clarified that the Government of Canada recently called for proposals in connection with the medical isotope shortage in the country as a result of the failure of the Chalk River Reactor. The call invited submissions; 21 universities across the country responded to say that they could be part of the

solution. He stressed that no decision has yet been taken that the university will build a research reactor; if the university is asked by the federal government to develop its proposal, there will be broad consultation within the university's community. The president noted that the proposal itself does not commit the institution to anything, but allows the university to be part of the ongoing conversation.

Another member asked about the credit unit change in enrolment over last year; Associate Vice President Dave Hannah indicated that while headcount is up, the credit unit count remains more or less stable from last year.

A student member commended the university for continuing to expand and renew its physical plant, with specific reference to the Place Riel renovations and the construction of the Academic Health Sciences Centre

A member of Senate asked the president to comment on the university's response to the economic downturn. President MacKinnon responded that the university's endowment funds and long-term investment pool were down by something close to \$100M. He reported that Vice-president Richard Florizone has undertaken a scenario planning exercise, and that based on this, the university has developed tentative plans that are contingent upon which of the scenarios unfolds. Since the summer there has been some improvement in the situation, but the university's endowment and pension funds still need to come back a very long way. Budget measures are being taken by all units over a 2-year period to address the decline in investment revenues.

A member complimented the university on its Vision 2057 land holdings review and on working closely with the City of Saskatoon to ensure ongoing communication and coordination.

Another member asked about the status of the proposed fine and performing arts centre. The president observed that the proposal is getting a lot of discussion within the university, but remains more of a dream than a plan until firm sources of funding are identified.

There was a follow-up question about the enrolment report and the extent to which the university conducts research on the reasons for students' leaving the university. Associate Vice-president David Hannah noted that the university conducted a major review of retention patterns between 1993 and 2003. The study concluded that most of the students who leave do so in first year, and that 75% of those who left were eligible to continue. One of the biggest reasons identified was a lack of a clear goal. The study found that about half of the students who discontinue their studies here go to another institution, and about half of those go to SIAST. There did not appear to be significant differences in behaviour between rural and urban students—the biggest factor was which college they were in. Dr. Hannah indicated he would be happy to provide more detailed information on the findings of the retention study to members who are interested.

A member of Senate pointed out that with its recent influx of immigrants, Saskatchewan is the beneficiary of many additional language students from immigrant families, and expressed the hope that the university engage with those students in partnership with the school system.

There was another question about the university's preparedness to identify and address students who are at risk of suicide; Dr. Hannah commented on the complexity of this issue, which is one that his office, as the office responsible for student health and counseling, has been spending time on, to ensure that protocols are in place to do what is in the best interest of the health and safety of our students.

In response to a question about the use of a 6-year time frame to measure completion rates for students, Dr. Hannah clarified that this time frame is driven by comparability considerations rather than an expectation that everyone will finish their degrees within 6 years. The measure reflects not necessarily an ideal, but rather a standard that is emerging across the country.

In response to a question about the apparent drop in revenues from fundraising last year, the President noted that the pattern reflects the timing of the university's centennial fundraising campaign *Thinking the World of Our Future*, which raised \$115M. The drop was expected because that campaign had wound up. Nevertheless, the president stressed that the university has made substantial investments in university advancement directed at a continuing high level of fundraising activity rather than relying primarily on periodic campaigns.

A member expressed concern that the recent budget cuts are differentially affecting the university's offerings in the arts and humanities. The president stressed that the deans of all colleges have been closely involved in decisions about budget measures, and that wherever these are necessary the deans and the senior administration are working hard to find ways to do so without compromising the quality of our academic programs.

5. Report on undergraduate student activities

The report was given by Warren Kirkland, president of the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union. Mr. Kirkland introduced himself and provided some background about the USSU, an organization that represents around 15,000 students, has a budget of \$3.5M and runs a number of business operations. He leads an executive of 4 vice presidents. The USSU has five main goals this coming year:

1. *Place Riel construction*, which he described as a wonderful project to improve the student experience. The students have contributed substantially, as has the university, and are striving for LEEDS silver certification.
2. *Working with campus clubs*: there are over 125 clubs ratified each year with the USSU. His executive would like to give the clubs better visibility with students and expand their web and online presence.
3. *Working with the province and the university* to find a long-term strategy for tuition.

4. *Working with the province on issues of child care space* to respond to the needs of more mature students with children coming to university.
5. *Working with the university to lower the costs of academic materials* including a textbook registry.

Mr. Kirkland invited members to contact the USSU with any comments or questions they might have.

A member asked what the USSU is hearing from students about their challenges in finding accommodation. Mr. Kirkland noted that the issue now is not so much a shortage of accommodation as a shortage of affordable housing. He expressed the hope that the university's newly approved housing project will alleviate the pressures and provide more affordable housing.

6. Report on graduate student activities

Nicholas Fraser, President of the Graduate Students Association, presented the report on graduate student activities. Mr. Fraser commented that it is an honour to be able to present to Senate. He supplemented his written report with comments on some initiatives that the graduate students are undertaking this year, noting that the university has made a commitment to a graduate student commons project in the former Emmanuel and St. Chad chapel. The GSA is working with the university on this and it has been exciting to see the project come to life. The GSA has also been meeting with the Ministry of Advanced Education around issues of funding for graduate student education, and is looking at a number of graduate student issues including relationships that the graduate students have with their supervisors as employees.

7. Items for approval from Senate committees

7.1 Motion regarding membership

It was agreed to defer this item to the end of the agenda, under *Other Business*.

7.2 Proposed Senate bylaws amendments

This item was presented by Senate member Peter Stroh of the Executive Committee of Senate, who provided context for the changes, including discussions that took place at the Senate meetings over the past three years around selection of chancellor.

STROH/BOURASSA: That the Senate Bylaws be amended as proposed on pages 33-37 of the agenda materials, to reflect recent changes to the *University of Saskatchewan Act 1995* concerning the election of the Chancellor, and

That three members of Senate be appointed to the *Joint Board for Nomination of Chancellor*, on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee

CARRIED

7.2a Appointments to the joint board for nomination of chancellor

William Gulka, chair of the Nominations Committee, presented this report.

GULKA/AGEMA: That Peter MacKinnon, Judy Buzowetsky and Bill Johnson be appointed to the joint nomination committee for chancellor.

CARRIED

8. Items for Information from Senate committees

8.1 Senate roundtable on outreach and engagement annual report

Peter MacKinnon presented this report for information, on behalf of the Senate roundtable on outreach and engagement. President MacKinnon described the work of the round table over the past year and reported on a meeting held yesterday to discuss the university's positioning project.

8.2 Membership committee report

The chancellor presented this report for information on behalf of the membership committee. This report concludes the membership review that the committee was tasked with last year.

8.2 Nominations committee report

The secretary presented this report as secretary of the committee, noting the addition of Kurt Breker as a member of the membership committee.

8.4 Report of the non-academic student discipline

The secretary noted that these regulations were approved exactly a year ago; the report was received for information.

9. Items from University Council and Board of Governors

The chancellor noted that there are three items at today's meeting that come to Senate from the Council, which is the university's academic governing body.

9.1 College admission policy changes

This item was presented by Claire Card, Chair of Council.

There were questions about the admission average currently for students entering education from high school and about whether there has been any increase in the seats available for second degree entrants. Peter Stroh commented that a parallel motion came before the U of R yesterday and it was approved; he urged approval.

PUCKETT/THOMPSON: That Senate approve the deletion of the Sask First admission requirement for the College of Education, AND

That Senate approve a change in English proficiency admission requirements for the College of Nursing.

CARRIED

9.2 Review of the search and review procedures for senior administrators

This item was presented by Professor John Rigby, Vice Chair of Council. Dr. Rigby described the history of the committee and its composition, the process that the university goes through to appoint the members of the senior administration, and the timelines that the committee has set for itself. A copy of the presentation is appended to the minutes as **Appendix A**.

In response to a question about whether Senate should be represented on this committee, Dr. Rigby noted that the composition of the committee reflects the employment relationship between the board of governors and members of the faculty, who are all members of the general academic assembly.

9.3 Preliminary presentation of draft learning charter

This item was presented for information by Professor Rick Long, chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee of council. Dr. Long thanked Senate for the invitation to come and talk about the development of a learning charter for the University of Saskatchewan. He described the Learning Charter as a 'work in progress' and provided an introduction to the concept of a learning charter.

Further information and the presentation slides can be found at http://www.usask.ca/university_secretary/council/committees/teaching_learning/Learning_Charter.php

Dr. Long then invited comments and questions from members of Senate.

Members of Senate congratulated Professor Long and his committee on the draft. There was a suggestion that the charter include explicit reference to the concept of academic freedom, and also a suggestion that the list on p. 73 include the application of knowledge. There was also a suggestion that section 4a reflect the need to be sure our systems are success-oriented. A graduate student member suggested that given the distinctive nature of graduate studies, there could be room to build in principles particular to graduate work on campus.

There was some discussion about how the effectiveness of the learning charter would be measured (perhaps using the achievement record and/or SEEQ) and it was noted that there isn't an equal partnership among the 3 participants in the charter, since so much depends on the commitment, knowledge and skill of the teacher. One Senate member observed that this document will be an important tool for helping students to think about their own responsibility for their learning.

Professor Long invited Senate members to email him with further comments at long@edwards.usask.ca.

Senate adjourned for lunch at this point.

10. Institutional Positioning – presentation and group discussion

Carla Vipond of University Advancement made a presentation on the university's positioning project. For slides from her presentation see **Appendix B** of these minutes.

Members of Senate then broke into discussion groups to consider the following questions:

1. What two or three words would you use to describe the U of S today?
2. In two or three words, what would you like the U of S to be known for in the future? Why?
3. What makes the U of S unique? Why?
4. How would you describe the personality of the U of S? Why?
5. How will you evaluate the success of this project?

Following group discussions, Senate reconvened as a group to hear about the responses that the institutional positioning working group have had to these questions from other groups.

11. Other business

Senate then turned to the deferred item 7.1.

The secretary reported that there is one organization that has, as of this meeting, now missed four meetings in a row. Under the membership criteria adopted at the spring meeting of the Senate, this organization is no longer eligible to continue to send a representative to the Senate.

AGEMA/TAYLOR: That Senate revoke the membership of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, effective today, due to lack of attendance at Senate meetings.

CARRIED

William Gulka spoke to encourage Senate members to join the platform party at either the spring or the fall meeting of convocation. This fall's convocation takes place on October 31.

12. Adjournment and next meeting

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m. The next meeting of Senate will be held Saturday, April 17, 2010.