



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

Senate Council Minutes of the Friday, March 24, 2023 Meeting

Present: Peter Meehan (Chair), Carol Ann MacGregor (Vice Chair), Carol Acton, Michelle Atkin, Veronica Austen, Steven Bednarski, Kieran Bonner, Honor Brabazon, Susan Brophy, Serena Catania, Roberta Cauchi-Santoro, Andrew Deman, Carm De Santis, Stephanie Gregoire, Dan Hutter, Scott Kline, Carlie Leroux, Diana Lobb, Saphron Moule, Carl Rodrigue, Caitlin Roehrig, BJ Rye, David Seljak, Mark Spielmacher, Andrew Stumpf, Siobhan Sutherland, Sylvia Terzian, Bruno Tremblay, Angela Underhill, Cristina Vanin, David Williams

Guests: John Arnou, Britt Scowen

Recording Secretary: Christine Schwendinger

Absent: Chris Burris, Fred Desroches, Maureen Drysdale, Alysia Kolentsis*, John Rempel, Ryan Touhey*, Jessica Vorsteveld, Denise Whitehead*, Chad Wriglesworth

**regrets*

On Sabbatical/Leave: Tristanne Connolly, Norm Klassen, Jane Nicholas, Toni Serafini, Anastasia Tataryn, Nikolaj Zunic

Note: This meeting was held using the online video conferencing platform, Zoom.

Open Session

1. Territorial Acknowledgement and Prayer/Reflection

The Chair opened the meeting with a territorial acknowledgement, followed by D. Seljak reading the poems "Hidden" and "If What You Say Becomes Memorable" by Hafiz and translated by D. Ladinsky.

2. Chair's Remarks

Thank you to the faculty who came out to the March Break Open House on Saturday, March 18, 2023, and spoke with prospective students and their parents/caregivers. Our Fall 2023 application numbers are outstanding, a good sign that students are picking St. Jerome's University as their destination at the University of Waterloo (UWaterloo). We now look at converting those applications to acceptances. In a subsequent meeting, the Chair will ask the Registrar to make a formal report.

The last Lectures in Catholic Experience event of 2022-2023 was held on March 9, 2023. Dr. M. Faggioli, Villanova University, gave an engaging talk about the 10th anniversary of the Pope's pontificate. Prior to his talk, Faggioli gave a brief graduate seminar to our Master of Catholic Thought (MCT) students, organized by the Director of MCT.

3. Agenda Review, Declare Conflicts, Additions, Changes

No conflicts, additions, or changes to the agenda were declared.

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented.

Moved: D. Seljak, **Seconded:** A. Deman, **Carried.**

Consent Agenda

4. Minutes of the January 27, 2023 Senate Council Meeting

5. Committee on Research and Scholarship Report

Motion: To approve by consent item 4 and to receive for information item 5 above.

Moved: D. Hutter, **Seconded:** S. Brophy, **Carried.**

Regular Agenda

6. Business Arising from the Minutes of the January 27, 2023 Meeting

There was no business arising from the minutes.

7. Governance Committee Report

At its meeting on February 10, 2023, S. Moule, Executive Director, Finance and Administration (EDFA), spoke to the Governance Committee about its duty to meet with the University auditors to review the annual audited financial statements and this no longer being possible. The Committee invited Moule to present the same information to Senate Council.

Moule noted that SJU began having auditors present to the Governance Committee a few years ago after the employer was made aware of this requirement in the Senate Council Terms of Reference (TOR). Each year, the University's auditor agreed to come do a high-level overview of the financial statements as a general courtesy. This past September, the auditor declined doing so as they had released SJU as a client. SJU now has new auditors. But auditors are obliged by law to follow specific standards in their industry, Canadian auditing standards (CAS), that govern how they do their business and interact with their clients. CAS 260: *Communication with Those Charged with Governance* (effective June 2017) notes that it is at the sole discretion of the auditor to determine who the appropriate persons are that they will communicate with and share information with. Therefore, although the Senate Council TOR contains this duty, it cannot be honoured because SJU as an institution cannot mandate or require an auditor to come speak with the Governance Committee. That is the auditor's decision to make. Also, auditors as a general rule do not release this type of information to employees as they consider this a conflict of interest; for example, when the auditor presents to the Board Finance and Audit Committee, the employees (President, Vice President Academic and Dean [VPAD], EDFA) need to leave the meeting.

The Governance Committee (and Senate Council) would still have the audited financial statements presented each year, but by the EDFA. It is typical for auditors to only present to a Board, not to a Senate; for example, these statements are presented by the provost at UWaterloo Senate.

At an upcoming meeting, the Governance Committee will bring forward a motion to change the TOR.

8. Academic Committee Report

Five courses in the Health Humanities program were intended to be cross-listed with English and the UWaterloo Department of English has now approved these requested cross-listings.

Motion: To approve the five HHUM course changes, to be effective September 1, 2024.

Moved: C.A. MacGregor, **Seconded:** C. Acton, **Carried.** (26 Votes: 24 Yes, 0 No, 2 Abstain)

The changes to the *Revisions to the Academic Operations Manual (AOM)* policy place the administrative work of updating the AOM policies in the VPAD's office. The Governance Committee's responsibility for determining what goes forward to Senate Council for review and approval is maintained.

Motion: To give the *Revisions to the Academic Operations Manual (AOM)* policy a second reading and to approve the revised policy for the SJU Academic Operations Manual.

Moved: C.A. MacGregor, **Seconded:** K. Bonner, **Carried.** (26 Votes: 24 Yes, 1 No, 1 Abstain)

9. Vice President Academic and Dean Report

The VPAD referred to topics in her written report and highlighted a few items.

Congratulations to A. Deman and C. Leroux, Continuing Lecturers, the newest members at SJU. Thank you to the search committee members and to those who participated in the interview process.

A draft of the new Academic Plan has been circulated among Academic Committee, which is serving as the academic planning steering committee. Feedback received will be incorporated and then the Plan will be circulated to faculty and staff for comment. Academic Committee will discuss responses from the community and what updates to make to the Plan. The hope is to bring the updated draft Plan to the April or May Senate Council. Thank you to those who have engaged in academic planning.

As shared in the VPAD's report, a number of events in Student Affairs have happened or will be happening, one being Relay for Life tomorrow, March 25, 2023, on campus. Student leaders have worked hard to put this event together.

10. President Report

The President is involved with ongoing discussions with UWaterloo and the Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) to clarify the nature of our relationship and how it can be improved moving forward. UWaterloo has appointed Dr. P. Gooch, President Emeritus, Victoria University at the University of Toronto, to facilitate these conversations, which have been cordial and fruitful. The group is currently working on the preface of a framework agreement, with a broad understanding of the value and efficacy of the AFIW and what each have in common and what is unique.

The report from the President's Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is now on our website. The Committee focused on five areas and provided 25 recommendations, the ultimate recommendation being the establishment of an EDI action committee at the University. The President hopes to present a draft structure of that committee for feedback at the April meetings of Senate Council and the SJU Assembly.

11. Teaching and Student Preparedness

Senate Council had a discussion on their recent experiences in teaching and the preparedness of students. Several members are finding students unprepared or more passive in class, and some are finding poor attendance and decreased quality of written work. Other members are finding a split between students, with some excited to be back in person and others being weary, and wonder if it is a matter of student resilience. Students have shared several factors with instructors, including stress, mental health, pressure of keeping their composure in front of the instructor and their peers, feeling overwhelmed, etc.

Student advisors are seeing similar patterns with students' engagement in appointments and wonder if this is a post-pandemic effect. Students are navigating education (e.g., taking three courses versus the typical five while being fully aware the degree will take longer to finish). Many first-year students have acknowledged social anxiety of the transition to in-person classes and many upper-year students are taking more online courses. Advisors are having a lot of coaching conversations and encouraging student advocacy.

It was noted that this issue has been raised with the Council of Ontario Universities. Ontario universities need to come together with a broader strategy for this skills development gap, to start in high school. Students need to understand these consequences already in high school.

The Students' Union advocated that various factors attribute to this issue. There are differing expectations from high school to university and from transitioning to online courses to in-person courses. Some students do not understand the importance of participation. Students have also shared a lack of support or the quality of support and resources that UWaterloo in general provides.

The VPAD commented on SJU being a community that deeply cares about our students and wanting them to succeed. The hope is to start scheduling Teaching Forums again in the coming weeks and next academic year to allow time for further discussion on these topics and strategies for supporting students.

12. Sustainability Committee Report

The Sustainability Committee would like to start providing monthly updates to Senate Council on what it is doing, how this impacts everyone, and how the community's collected efforts could contribute to making SJU a more sustainable institution (often with small actions or adjustments). On behalf of the Committee, C. Rodrigue shared two current initiatives: 1) The Committee is currently inventorying where SJU is to date with regards to sustainability and is also pursuing a waste audit. A report of this review will highlight areas for improvement and help the Committee to define goals. 2) In collaboration with UWaterloo's Green Office program, lunch and learn events are being planned in April for Earth month. More details will be sent out soon.

13. Indigenization and Decolonization

The President is continuing to hold conversations with various Indigenous leaders and advisors about an Indigenous advisory committee. The committee would meet with SJU a couple times a year to discuss how we can move forward with reconciliation. The President is meeting with Indigenous Knowledge Keeper M. Henry next week.

UWaterloo will be welcoming a sacred Eagle Staff from the UWaterloo Indigenous campus community. M. Henry will introduce this item at an Eagle Staff ceremony on March 27, 2023, 10:00 a.m., Federation Hall. A sunrise ceremony will take place earlier at 7:00 a.m.

14. Updates from Academic Departments

There were no updates from academic departments

15. New Business

There was no new business.

Motion: To adjourn Open Session and move into Confidential Session.

Moved: C.A. MacGregor, **Seconded:** D. Seljak, **Carried.**

March 24, 2023
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