



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

Senate Council

Minutes of the Friday, November 24, 2023 Meeting

Present: Peter Meehan (Chair), Carol Ann MacGregor (Vice Chair), Carol Acton, Michelle Atkin, Steven Bednarski, Kieran Bonner, Honor Brabazon, Serena Catania, Tristanne Connolly, Andrew Deman, Carm De Santis, Stephanie Gregoire, Jesse Hutchison, Norm Klassen, Scott Kline, Alysia Kolentsis, Diana Lobb, Clayton McCourt, Andrew Moore, Saphron Moule, Carl Rodrigue, David Seljak, Toni Serafini, Mark Spielmacher, Siobhan Sutherland, Ryan Touhey, Bruno Tremblay, Cristina Vanin, Denise Whitehead, David Williams

Recording Secretary: Christine Schwendinger

Absent: Chris Burris, Roberta Cauchi-Santoro*, Fred Desroches, Maureen Drysdale, Carlie Leroux*, Jane Nicholas, John Rempel, Andrew Stumpf*, Sylvia Terzian*, Chad Wriglesworth*, Saman Zaidi, Nikolaj Zunic

**regrets*

On Sabbatical/Leave: Veronica Austen, Susan Brophy, BJ Rye, Anastasia Tataryn

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

Open Session

1. Territorial Acknowledgement and Prayer/Reflection

N. Klassen opened the meeting with a territorial acknowledgement, followed by a reflection on the feast of Christ the King.

2. Chair's Remarks

This is the last Senate Council meeting for 2023. The Chair will be occasionally inviting others to give brief reports under his opening remarks; the Registrar will give an update early in the new year.

The President's Christmas party is on December 7, 2023.

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: A. Deman, **Seconded:** D. Whitehead, **Carried.**

Consent Agenda

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

5. Sustainability Committee Update

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

Moved: A. Kolentsis, **Seconded:** D. Lobb, **Carried.**

Regular Agenda

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

There was no business arising from the minutes.

7. Governance Committee Report

- a. *Academic Operations Manual (AOM) Policies*: The Academic Committee and Library Advisory Committee are bringing forward two AOM policies for a second reading and approval. The Committee on Research and Scholarship is bringing forward one AOM policy for a first reading.

- i. *Protocols for Exams at St. Jerome's University*: With the approval of this new policy, the three current exam policies will be cancelled.

Motion 1: To give the new *Protocols for Exams at St. Jerome's University* policy a second reading and to approve the *Protocols for Exams at St. Jerome's University* policy for the SJU Academic Operations Manual. This one new policy will replace the three previous exam policies.

Moved: T. Connolly, **Seconded:** C. MacGregor, **Carried.** (23 Votes: 21 Yes, 0 No, 2 Abstain)

- ii. *St. Jerome's University Library Collections*

Motion 2: To give the revisions to the *St. Jerome's University Library Collections* policy a second reading and to approve the *St. Jerome's University Library Collections* policy for the SJU Academic Operations Manual.

Moved: T. Connolly, **Seconded:** A. Kolentzis, **Carried.** (26 Votes: 23 Yes, 0 No, 3 Abstain)

- iii. *Faculty Research Grant Policy: Appendix A*: The Governance Committee is calling for two readings of the FRG guidelines appendix because substantive revisions are being made. One of the more significant revisions is the elimination of peer reviews. Although there is a provision in the Collective Agreement (full-time unit) that the Committee on Research and Scholarship "may" send FRG applications for peer review, there are no clear criteria on when to seek a review and when not to. Senate Council deliberated over foregoing some form of peer review and the Committee having a level of responsibility when adjudicating the intellectual merit of applications. The Committee makes decisions based on the priorities outlined in the FRG guidelines and an addition to the guidelines is the Committee now being able to follow-up with the candidate to seek additional information or clarification. The Research Officer noted that if not moving in the direction of eliminating peer review, the Committee would bring forward a revised proposal with criteria based on when to seek peer review (e.g., pre-tenured members).

Motion 3: To give the revisions to Appendix A of the *Faculty Research Grant* policy a first reading.

Moved: S. Bednarski, **Seconded:** K. Bonner, **Carried.** (24 Votes: 18 Yes, 3 No, 3 Abstain)

8. Academic Committee Report

- a. *Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies Name Change*: The Vice President Academic and Dean (VPAD) introduced this item noting that the Department of Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies (SMF) is seeking to change its name to the Department of Sexualities, Relationships, and Families (SRF). The VPAD outlined that this was first addressed at Academic Committee where there was a lengthy discussion about our unique role as a Catholic university and hence resistance to the name change while also recognizing the importance of expertise of disciplinary experts about what is happening in their field of study and in society more broadly and the ability to respond accordingly. Ultimately, Academic Committee recognized it was at an impasse and moved for discussion to occur at Senate Council.

The VPAD invited the Chair of SMF to provide additional context. A robust and varied discussion followed with many members of Senate Council speaking for the proposal and with

some expressing concerns about the proposal. It is important for a program's name to reflect the curriculum taught and the research of those experts. SMF is an interdisciplinary field of study and for some time the department has carefully thought about a name change, one of the recommendations in the external program review, and bringing its name into alignment with recent research in the field (as has been done before). "Marriage" is being replaced with "relationships," not because there is a problem with marriage as a form of relationship but because the word "marriage" is limiting when it is put forward to define the boundaries of the field of study, which is how people construct bonds together not just the institutional form of these bonds. "Relationships" captures the broad range of relationships (including marriage) taught in the curriculum. Peer reviewed journals in the field and premier programs in Canada are moving in a similar title change direction. The pluralization in the new name recognizes that there are multiple categories and dimensions of the concepts discussed and shows a commitment to diversity and inclusion.

A member put a motion on the floor to approve the SMF name change.

Motion: To approve the Department of Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies changing its name to the Department of Sexualities, Relationships, and Families. All SMF program plans will therefore change to SRF, effective September 1, 2025.

Moved: A. Deman, **Seconded:** T. Connolly, **Carried.** (27 Votes: 22 Yes, 3 No, 2 Abstain)

Senate Council's decision is contingent on University of Waterloo (UWaterloo) approval. Because Academic Committee, a standing committee of Senate Council, deferred this discussion to Senate Council and a decision was made, the proposal will not go back to Academic Committee for further discussion. Academic Committee needs to consider a number of SMF course changes at its next meeting and will provide a recommendation on those to Senate Council.

9. Vice President Academic and Dean Report

Given the discussion of our Catholic mission and identity at the meeting, the VPAD noted that she hosts a Catholic higher education reading group with faculty and staff to consider what it means to work at a Catholic institution, what Catholic higher education is about. The VPAD extended an invitation for members to join the group and consider these issues among colleagues. The group meets monthly and has had interesting discussions rooted in a wide range of readings, including readings from Pope Francis.

The VPAD referred members to her written report where she highlighted a few items:

There is good work happening in service learning thanks to the Service Learning Coordinator. We are seeing robust numbers of students interested in the Beyond Borders program. Two new partners in Uganda were recently vetted by the Experiential Learning Advisory Committee and Beyond Borders students will be sent to these placements for the first time.

Thank you to the faculty and staff who are coming in this Saturday, November 25, 2023 to support the Fall Open House, spending time talking with prospective students and their families.

The VPAD will provide an Academic Plan update later in the meeting.

10. President Report

The President referred members to his written report where he highlighted a few items:

On November 9, 2023, the SJU Lectures in Catholic Experience (LCE) featured J. and S. Mancini, two SJU alum, who spoke about their work and initiatives at The Working Centre. It was an engaging talk with lots of good questions. The LCE will feature three more speakers in the new year.

Thank you to the Executive Director, Finance and Administration for her work on the SJU Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP), a detailed document providing guidance and a chain of responsibilities should an emergency take place involving faculty, staff, students, and visitors. Everyone should familiarize themselves with the EPP and the different possibilities envisioned. It is important to be prepared, whether an external crisis (e.g., pandemic) or a crisis on campus (e.g., violent situations).

On November 30, 2023, Dr. J. DeFeo, Executive Director, Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, will give a presentation to the Administrative Leadership Group. DeFeo has a rich background helping people understand what it means to work and lead at a public Catholic university.

The President's Christmas party takes place on December 7, 2023, 4:00-6:30 PM. A variety of people will be attending from SJU, UWaterloo, and also the broader community.

Thank you to anyone participating in the Fall Open House this Saturday, November 25, 2023. Thousands of prospective students and their families will be visiting different areas at UWaterloo and many will flow to SJU.

Discussions around the Equity Agreement have begun with the Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) and the UWaterloo Associate Vice-President, Academic Operations. Conversations have been good, broadly exploratory, more discussing the mechanics of the Agreement itself (1981, revised 1991). All parties are committed to meeting regularly to discuss the Agreement and the nature of our relationship. The President will keep Senate Council informed of developments as he is able.

11. Academic Plan Update

The VPAD plans to provide an update on the SJU 2023-2026 Academic Plan at the end of each term, this being the first update since the Plan was approved this past June. She referred members to her written Academic Plan report where she highlighted a few initiatives under the three pillars:

- *Keeping Our Promises, Living Our Mission:* A committee has been assembled to discuss an opt-in first-year program, one that adds academic meaning to being co-registered at SJU. The Wellness Implementation Team (a collaboration between faculty in the Well-Link lab led by M. Drysdale and Student Affairs staff including the Wellness Coordinator) meets monthly with a group of students to talk about D. McMurray's 2022 report on student wellness and mental health, looking at which of the recommendations should be worked on this year. One major progress is that the Wellness Coordinator recently became certified as a Mental Health First Aid Facilitator, allowing her to train others on mental health first aid.
- *Leveraging Our Strengths to Reach New Audiences:* The VPAD and President are having discussions with stakeholders in the Diocese of Hamilton about how SJU can meet the needs of the broader Catholic institutional community in the region; there is interest in the possibility of developing micro-credentials for early to mid-career working professionals (e.g., non-credit certificate in faith and leadership). The Department of SMF will be collaboratively offering the Sexual Attitude Reassessment micro-credential this coming summer as a weekend conference. Lecture series such as the previous Bridges Lecture Series and a new Health Humanities speaker series are being explored; having these external speakers would bolster the student experience and connect our researchers to others.

- *Enriching Lives Through Research*: A lot of preliminary conversations are occurring. SJU will be hosting a delegation from the UWaterloo Office of Research who are coming to see the DRAGEN lab and Well-Link lab and to talk about past, present, and future research at SJU.

12. Indigenization and Decolonization

The Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC) consists of a variety of people with Indigenous backgrounds as well as resource people from SJU. The IAC's first meeting is next week where members will discuss establishing terms of reference and a list of future discussion topics, and will review basic documents (e.g., SJU's mission statement, SJU's Strategic Plan, UWaterloo's Indigenous Strategic Plan). The goal for this group is to provide advice on indigenous and reconciliation initiatives. A webpage on SJU's website is being created to provide updates on the IAC's work.

13. Updates from Academic Departments

There were no updates from academic departments.

14. New Business

There was no new business.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Moved: D. Lobb, **Seconded:** C. Rodrigue, **Carried.**

November 24, 2023

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