



MINUTES OF MEETING #5 (2006-07)

SENATE TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2007, 3:00 PM

BOARD ROOM, 13TH FLOOR, SCHMON TOWER

PRESENT: Professor Anna Lathrop (Chair), Professor Michael Carter (Vice-Chair),
Ms. Karen Bordonaro, Professor Don Brown, Dean John Corlett,
Professor Maureen Connolly, Professor Patricia Debly, Ms. Margaret Grove,
Professor Julian Kitchen, Professor Pierre Lizée, Dean Marilyn Rose,
Professor Paul Zelisko

Mr. Patrick Beard, Ms. Beth Natale, Ms. Margaret Thompson (Secretary)

REGRETS: Dr. Terry Boak, Mr. Ron Dubien, Dean John Corlett, Ms. Michelle Green

Professor Lathrop welcomed members and called the meeting to order.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[Minutes of Meeting #4 held on January 17, 2007 had been distributed with the meeting materials.]

MOVED (Zelisko/Kitchen)

THAT the minutes of meeting #4 held on January 17, 2007 be approved.

CARRIED

2. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Professor Lathrop noted that she would report on two items under other business.

3. UNDERGRADUATE RETENTION STRATEGY – DRAFT REPORT

[The *Undergraduate Retention Strategy: Draft* dated January 24, 2007 had been distributed with the meeting materials.]

Professor Lathrop welcomed Beth Natale to the meeting. Ms. Natale provided a brief overview of the changes that had been made to the *Undergraduate Retention Strategy* since it was last presented to the Committee on November 22.

During discussion, Ms. Natale responded to questions. In response to a suggestion, Ms. Natale would confer with Ms. Grove following today's meeting, and the document would be amended to include appropriate reference to the Library prior to presenting it to Senate.

MOVED (Connolly/Kitchen)

THAT the *Undergraduate Retention Strategy* be forwarded to Senate for information.

4. TASK FORCE UPDATES

4.1 *Context Courses*

[A Report *Context Courses at Brock University: A History of the Recent Senate Task Force* had been distributed with the meeting materials. Appendices 3 and 4 to the Report were circulated during the meeting.]

Professor Carter referred members to the report "*Context Courses at Brock University: A History of the Recent Senate Task Force*" which he had provided in follow-up to a discussion held at the previous meeting of the Committee. He reviewed the comprehensive report which provided background information and the rationale for the initiatives currently under consideration by the Task Force. The two main goals of the Task Force were the examination of the process and/or policy for creating new context courses which qualify for contextual standing within the humanities, social sciences and sciences but are developed within another Faculty, and the creation of a "student friendly" website or brochure to provide students with detailed information regarding Brock's context course requirements. Professor Connolly indicated she would provide Professor Carter with the information regarding the process of approving context courses following the meeting; however, she noted that a process for the proposal and approval of a context course outside the customary three faculties may need to be developed.

During discussion, it was once again emphasized that the term "context" courses, as opposed to "core and context" courses, ought to be utilized to more accurately reflect the breadth of the courses offered and to ensure the language was consistent with current practice. Professor Connolly agreed to check the terminology utilized in the Faculty Handbook, Section III, 6.2 to determine if an amendment was required.

A concern was expressed regarding the potential impact of the proposed budget reductions on the offering of context courses as many are taught by part-time professors in the spring and evening. In response to a suggestion, Professor Carter indicated that the Task Force would review the number of context courses being offered in the evening and spring which Senate had previously recommended be increased during its meeting held April 12, 2006.

4.2 *Standardized Course Evaluations*

Professor Connolly circulated several pages of the analysis from the Brock University Faculty Course Evaluation Survey and discussion ensued regarding the results. It was agreed that the Task Force, with the assistance of the CTLET, would develop a model of best practices for the standardization in the evaluation of teaching which would include a recommendation that course evaluations be posted on departmental websites. Professor Connolly would bring the best

practices forward to the Committee for consideration. Once approved, the document would be forwarded to Senate.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Start Day of Fall Term

Professor Lathrop reported that the challenges associated with a late weekday start of term for several courses within the Faculty of Mathematics and Science continues to be examined with faculty members and the Department Chairs for potential solutions. Following a brief discussion, it was suggested that Professor Lathrop investigate further with regard to the specific courses affected and report back at the next meeting.

5.2 WebCT

Professor Lathrop noted that she had recently received several concerns regarding WebCT. Professor Connolly clarified that WebCT was functioning extremely well and that users may perceive there is a problem if they were not aware of the regularly scheduled down time for maintenance which is posted on the website or if they are attempting to access WebCT on their laptops in one of the rare areas that are not fully wireless.

5.3 Proposed Budget Reductions

Professor Lathrop indicated that she had received several concerns regarding the potential impact of the proposed budget reductions on teaching and learning. It was emphasized that the Committee had an important role in advocating for the preservation of the teaching and learning culture of the University, and the Chairs of Departments must clearly make know the potential consequences in the budget presentations to Administration.

5.4 Room Modernization Committee

Professor Connolly reported the Room Modernization Committee (a campus-wide advisory committee) had investigated the continued use of chalkboards. The Committee endorsed the percentage distribution of chalkboards/whiteboards as 10% chalkboards/90% whiteboards.

5.5 University Academic Plan

Professor Connolly noted that a University Strategic Academic Plan was currently being developed and that it would be beneficial for the Teaching and Learning Policy Committee to review and provide feedback on the Plan. Mr. Beard indicated that a sub-committee of CAD was currently developing a vision statement.

6. NEXT MEETING - Wednesday, March 7, 2007, 3:00 p.m., Board Room

7. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.