



Senate  
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## MINUTES OF MEETING #2 (2006-07)

### SENATE TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2006, 10:30 AM

CONFERENCE ROOM 1215, SCHMON TOWER

**PRESENT:** Professor Anna Lathrop (Chair), Dr. Terry Boak, Ms. Karen Bordonaro, Professor Don Brown, Professor Michael Carter, Dean John Corlett, Professor Maureen Connolly, Mr. Ron Dubien, Ms. Michelle Green, Professor Julian Kitchen, Professor Paul Zelisko, Ms. Margaret Thompson (Administrative Support)

**REGRETS:** Ms. Margaret Grove, Professor Pierre Lizée, Dean Marilyn Rose

Professor Lathrop called the meeting to order. She welcomed new members, Professors Paul Zelisko and Julian Kitchen. Members of the Committee introduced themselves.

The Chair noted the late addition of item 6.1 to the agenda at the request of the Chair of Senate. She emphasized that members could choose to abstain from discussion of this item. To broaden discussion, Professor Lathrop suggested and members concurred that the agenda item be renamed "Interruption of Academic Operations".

#### 1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

[Minutes of Meeting #1 held on October 4, 2006, together with Appendix 1, Brock University Faculty Course Evaluation Survey, had been distributed with the meeting materials.]

**MOVED** (Green/Bordonaro)

**THAT the minutes of Meeting #1 held on October 4, 2006 be approved.**

**CARRIED**

#### 2. **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Professor Lathrop reported that she had invited Ms. Barb Davis and Ms. Pat Cane to attend the next meeting of the Committee on November 22 to report on the status of teaching space. Their written report would be distributed with the agenda prior to the meeting. As well, Professor Connolly related that she would provide an update from the Room Modernization Committee.

### 3. REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Professor Lathrop related that she had received a communication from Professor Greg Finn, Chair of the Undergraduate Program Committee, requesting that the Teaching and Learning Policy Committee examine the interpretation of Faculty Handbook III: 11.8.6. The matter regarding a change to a student's grade following Convocation had been referred to UPC from the Chair of Senate at the meeting of Senate on October 18. The issue would be placed on the agenda for the T&LPC Committee on November 22 and relevant materials would be distributed.

A request had also been received by the Chair from Ms. Beth Natale, Co-Chair of the Retention Committee, that all Senate Committees review the Campus Retention Strategy document which was recently received the approval of the Committee on Academic Deans. The item would be placed on the November 22 agenda and would be distributed in advance of the meeting. As well, Ms. Natale would be in attendance to respond to questions. In response to a question, Professor Lathrop indicated that there were four identified goals and corresponding recommendations contained in the document, specifically, Academic Performance, Year 1 Transition, Academic Advising and Financial Aid. As the Retention Committee had requested that the document be presented to Senate by the T&LPC (following review by Committees), she encouraged members to be fully prepared for the discussion.

### 4. WEBCT UPDATE

[A Report to the Committee together with the Learning Management System recommendations for the Education Technology Advisory Group had been distributed with the meeting materials.]

Professor Connolly and Mr. Dubien referred members to the Report. They reviewed, in detail, the drafted responses to Senate regarding concerns raised with WebCT during Mr. Dubien's status update to Senate on October 18. Professor Connolly noted that the Educational Technology Advisory Group (ETAG) would be further examining the recommendations contained in the detailed explanation attached to the Report.

As indicated in the written Report, Mr. Dubien and Professor Connolly reported that WebCT should remain stable during the remainder of the term. Commencing the start-up of term in January, two environments would be provided, one environment specifically dedicated to fully online courses. Should problems not be resolved with grade book, it was suggested that further discussions would be necessary with the Freedom of Information Officer, Marion Hansen, as FIPPA regulations will not allow for students' grades to be posted on doorways, etc.

Dr. Boak raised concerns regarding the financial implications of a renewed license with Blackboard (who recently purchased WebCT). Mr. Dubien commented that financial issues would need to be considered, in addition to academic viability. It was suggested, and Mr. Dubien concurred, that a representative from the Teaching and Learning Policy Committee be included in the composition of the consultative sub-committee of ETAG when the evaluation of the three alternative learning management systems (Blackboard, Moodle and Sakai) commences. He anticipated a decision would be made by February 2008 as the WebCT license expires in 2009).

In response to a question regarding the load risk for WebCT for the remainder of this term, Professor Connolly responded that the risk was minimal as long as the users who left the system did not return. Professor Lathrop requested that the Report to Senate be amended accordingly to include this vital information.

## 5. TASK FORCE UPDATES

### 5.1 *Standardized Course Evaluations*

Professor Lathrop noted that following the previous meeting of the Committee, members were polled, and concurred, that the Faculty Course Evaluation survey be distributed without the suggested amendment to avoid the need to re-submit the survey to the REB.

Professor Connolly reported that the REB had just recently approved the extended submission deadline and the survey would be distributed within the next two days.

During discussion, Dean Corlett suggested that it may be beneficial for the Committee to further examine a motion that had been presented to Senate in 2004 from the Instructional Development Committee proposing that course evaluation processes and evaluation forms used be posted on the departmental web site. He noted that the intent, at that time, was to ensure that students would know how their course would be evaluated. If there was no common form, students should be advised to ask their instructor on how their course will be evaluated. Members agreed that the matter be placed on the agenda for the November 22 meeting.

*[SECRETARY'S NOTE: The section of the minutes of Senate 518 containing the proposed motions and issues raised are appended.]*

### 5.2 *Core and Context Task Force*

Professor Carter, Chair of the Core and Context Task Force, provided an oral update on the discussions held at the recent of the Task Force with respect to the delivery and effectiveness of Core and Context courses. He noted that the membership included Karen Bordonaro, Paul Zelisko, and Barb Davis. The Task Force is currently investigating the status of other universities' core and context offerings through the assistance of Ms. Davis and the Registrars' network.

During discussion, it was suggested that the Report reviewed by the Task Force which had been submitted to Senate in 1967 regarding the proposal of core and context courses for undergraduate studies be distributed to all Committee members by the Secretary.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS

### 6.1 *Interruption of Academic Operations*

Professor Lathrop, as indicated earlier, noted that the Chair of Senate had requested that each Senate Committee examine this topic. She related that the Governance Committee would be meeting with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Senate Committees on November 22, 2006 at which time the issue would also be examined.

The Chair noted that the University had plans currently in place related to interruptions of normal operations, namely the *Interruption of Normal Operations Policy* (related to weather), the *Emergency Management Protocol* (related to issues such as fire, bomb threat, hostage taking, riot or bio-hazard) and the *Medical Emergency Planning policy*, pending release (related to pandemics).

A discussion ensued during which members recognized that while Senior Administrators would ultimately be involved in decision making, it would be beneficial for Senate to examine the development of a policy regarding the implications of a substantial disruption of academics due to labour disputes or other causes. Such a policy could focus on issues as priority (i.e. prioritizing resources, examinations, certain academic terms, etc.) and decision-making responsibilities regarding length of term and the granting of credit based on sufficient instruction and assessment. It was commented that such a policy should also consider “aftermath” issues such as student appeals.

It was suggested that the Committee may wish to investigate, upon recommendation of Senate, comparable policies currently in place at other institutions which could potentially be utilized as a starting point for the development of a Brock specific policy.

It would be determined if there were comparable policies currently in place at other institutions which could be utilized as a starting point for development of a Brock specific policy.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Committee concurred that a summary of this discussion be included in the Committee’s Report to Senate.

**7. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday, November 22, 2006 at 10:30 a.m. in the Alumni Lounge.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

**APPENDIX 1**

**\*\* SECTION of the \*\***

MINUTES OF THE  
**518<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF SENATE**  
HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 2004  
AT 3:00 P.M.  
IN THE SENATE CHAMBER, MACKENZIE CHOWN COMPLEX

**b) Sub-Committee on Instructional Development (Agd. 518-2)**

Professor Owen presented the Committee's Report. She noted that the Report had been postponed from the previous meeting of Senate as the proposed motions within the Report had implications for Deans, and several Deans had not been present at that meeting. Professor Owen further explained that following that meeting, further consultations had been held with the Committee of Academic Deans and the motions had been modified.

Professor Lye commented that while the rationale was not binding, it might be taken as a guideline as to best practices.

MOVED (Owen/Bradish)

- i) THAT Senate endorse the expectation that "The Departmental Committee, after consulting with its Dean, shall establish common evaluation forms and a procedure for student evaluations of all departmental courses with enrollments of five (5) or more students" (Collective Agreement, 2003-2006, Article 16.03, f) as outlined in Agd. 518-2.
- ii) THAT Senate endorse that by November 15, 2004 all academic departments, after consultation with the Dean, shall submit to the Senate Teaching and Research Policy Committee copies of their course evaluation *process*. Any standard course evaluation form(s) used should also be submitted at this time. These materials shall also be posted on the departmental web sites. (As outlined in Agd. 518-2)

Professor Owen reviewed the rationale for the proposed motions.

A lengthy debate ensued regarding the level of autonomy of Departments. It was questioned whether the Departmental Committee should be able to establish a common evaluation form and a procedure following a "consultation" with the Dean, as opposed to gaining "approval" from the Dean. Discussion included the following concerns/comments/suggestions:

- With respect to motion i), it was essential that Deans "approve" common evaluation forms and procedures as Deans were responsible for the academic quality and delivery of programs.

- Motion i), which indicated a “consultation” with the Dean, was a direct quote from the Collective Agreement. It was not under the purview of the IDC or Senate to alter the wording within the Agreement.
- Motion i) was redundant as this requirement was set out in the Collective Agreement. Motion i) should be withdrawn and motion ii) should include a statement that the Deans’ approval was required.
- Motion i) endorsed the expectation that the procedures required by the Collective Agreement would, indeed, be followed; the motion was intended to ensure adherence, currently not the case.
- It was essential that students be involved with the departmental committees in developing the teaching evaluation process, that the process be transparent for students, and that the students in some way be involved in reviewing evaluations prior to selecting their courses.
- The Dean should not be able to prohibit a decision made by the Department to utilize a specific evaluation form.
- As approval of the motions would have implications with respect to the mandate and work of the new 2004-05 Senate Teaching and Research Policy Committee, the matter should be referred to this Committee.

MOVED (Sternin/Sivell)

That the motions be referred to the Senate Teaching and Research Policy Committee for further consideration.

CARRIED  
(8 opposed, 3 abstentions)

Professor Lye requested that the 2004-05 Senate Teaching and Research Policy Committee address the motions contained in the Report from the Sub-Committee on Instructional Development as an initial undertaking. He thanked Professor Owen for bringing these long-outstanding issues forward and commended her for her courage in tackling this contentious issue. Professor Owen, in turn, commended the full Committee.