



**SENATE ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES**

Monday 14 December 2020 3:31-5:00 p.m. via Zoom

Attendees

Senators

Meigan Aronson
Eshana Bhangu
Julia Burnham
John Gilbert
Sathish Gopalakrishnan
Paul Harrison
Claudia Krebs
Kin Lo (Chair)
C.W. Marshall
Shigenori Matsui

Karen Smith
Richard Spencer (Vice-Chair)
Hisham Zerriffi
Justin Zheng

Ex Officio

Kate Ross

Regrets

Sue Grayston
Anubhav Pratap Singh

Moura Quayle

Guests

Stefania Burk
Oana Toma
Annie Yim

Senate Staff

Jo-anna Cowen
Christopher Eaton
Jessica Iverson

Call to Order

The meeting of the Senate Academic Policy Committee (the “Committee”) was called to order at 3:31 p.m. on 14 December 2020 by K. Lo, Chair.

Agenda

THAT THE Senate Academic Policy Committee adopt the 14 December 2020 agenda as presented.

Moved: C.W. Marshall
Seconded: C. Krebs
Carried.

**Business Arising
from the Minutes**

None to report.

**Policy J-XXX:
*Academic Freedom***

K. Lo explained an Academic Freedom Working Group led by P. Harrison reported its finding and recommendations to the Committee in May 2020. The Committee accepted the recommendation to redraft the policy in the standard Senate format and to consider the others separately. With that, he turned the discussion over to P. Harrison.

P. Harrison explained there were differing opinions on the fundamental issues that lead to the creation of the working group. The current statement grants academic freedom to members of the community (undefined) and those invited to the campus. There was strong resistance to the report from the Committee because it did not solve the issue of offensive speakers on campus.

P. Harrison said academic freedom is a privilege that comes with responsibilities. The draft policy attempts to provide a different definition so it is clear to whom it does and does not apply. This still does not address the speaker issue, but that is not the intention. It should be clear that the academic freedom policy is not the appropriate mechanism for addressing controversial speakers. The crux is how to protect vulnerable members of the community without limiting academic freedom. K. Lo noted some of this pressure has been relieved following the President's statement on a room booking policy. There is also a joint Board and Senate task force in development to look at issues of equity, diversity and inclusion, which will help the Committee think about academic freedom more narrowly.

Members offered the following comments:

- J. Burnham was part of the working group and said it is important the Committee have the report, regardless of whether or not it agrees with the recommendations. She suggested the report be shared with Senate as well. The takeaway was not the wording of the policy, but its application.
- H. Zerriffi asked for clarification of the status of the report. K. Lo explained the report is final. The working group fulfilled its mandate and was discharged. C. Eaton said the Committee now needs to decide how to move forward. This is complicated, in part, because the policy is joint with the Okanagan campus and the current statement is embedded within the Faculty Association preamble.
- C.W. Marshall said the policy is missing discretion. P. Harrison agreed and said the proposed definitions speak to that by assigning responsibility to members of the community. K. Lo added defining members does limit the rights of outside speakers, to an extent.
- R. Spencer offered a number of observations: the policy includes two different definitions of members; those with commercial interests and/or motivations are omitted and he would like to see that addressed; the Committee should consider accompanying procedures (what do people do when feeling pressured, for instance?).
- C. Krebs reiterated members needs to be clearly defined. She asked about the relationship between the room booking and academic freedom policies (especially when a room is not necessary). She also suggested that in addition to scholarly integrity, the policy add "the common good" which includes the protection of the health and safety of the community.

The Committee will continue discussing the policy at a future meeting.

Class Standing at Graduation

K. Lo introduced the proposal before turning to S. Burk for more information.

THAT THE Senate Academic Policy Committee approve the Class Standing at Graduation (Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of International Economics, Bachelor of Media Studies, Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Social Work) Calendar entries as presented.

Moved: C.W. Marshall

Seconded: P. Harrison

S. Burk said the matter arose last year when the Faculty approved the inclusion of majors on parchments. The Faculty proposes to recognize the highest performers and remove the lower standings. There is a lot of encouragement from students and the change is well-supported in the Faculty.

Members offered the following comments:

- K. Ross supported the proposal, noting the University has considered consistency across all direct-entry undergraduate programs. S. Burk said Arts is the only Faculty to break it into two separate distinctions. It made more sense not to align with others considering Arts' students and programs.
- R. Spencer said the University should shift its focus from failure to success. He suggested replacing "on all attempted" with "courses passed" (speaking to calculations of averages).
- J. Zheng said student do not normally encounter Class 1/2/P standing until graduate. He supported the proposal.
- K. Ross said the University needs a consistent practice. C. Eaton said diction is an issue, as are the slight variations in averages.

Seeing no further questions or comments, the Committee voted.

Carried.

**UBC Vancouver
Scheduling Project**

A. Yim and O. Tama returned to continue the scheduling project conversation. A. Yim asked members what scheduling questions or concerns her team could help address. Members offered the following comments:

- P. Harrison asked if the current system can accommodate the multitude of factors (times, preferences, constraints, requirements, etc.) that were presented at the last meeting. A. Yim said yes, technically, but P. Harrison's question relates to a model that is not being recommended because the ability for departments to retain agency to make changes was flagged as very important to the stakeholders. The results in terms of realized benefits are the same, but one path requires much more work.
- K. Smith asked if one course will have the same room. O. Tama explained the scheduling team collects and incorporates specific requirements from departments. A. Yim added the consistency of space is very important to stakeholders.
- H. Zerriffi asked about the impact year-over-year. A. Yim said there is no expectation from year-to-year that instructors will teach in the same classroom, but pedagogical requirements will continue to be met.
- S. Gopalakrishnan asked about both primary bottlenecks and supports for the hybrid model (especially given lessons learned from the pandemic). To the first, A. Yim said the have/have not situation and space crunches. To

the second, she said the benefit of the hybrid model are the opportunities to make best use of rooms (coordinated, efficient, optimized).

- C.W. Marshall noted a hybrid model does not resolve all have/have not situations. With respect to core courses, he pointed to the fact that smaller and/or humanities departments that have already made pedagogical choices to increase diversity to students so that there are multiple accesses/paths for a degree will be disadvantaged. A strong case can be made for non-core courses. This also has financial implications. A. Yim said all courses need to be scheduled, core or not. The team is going to explore what removing that piece would look like.

Next Meeting The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 25 January 2021 3:30-5 p.m.

Adjournment ***THAT THE Senate Academic Policy Committee adjourn the meeting.***

Moved: S. Matsui
Seconded: H. Zerriffi
Carried.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.