



**SENATE ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES**

Monday 25 January 2021 3:30-5:04 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
Anubhav Pratap Singh

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

Ex Officio

Kate Ross

Regrets

Sue Grayston
Shigenori Matsui

Moura Quayle

Guests

Joanne Fox

Senate Staff

Christopher Eaton
Jessica Iverson

Call to Order

The meeting of the Senate Academic Policy Committee (the “Committee”) was called to order at 3:30 p.m. on 25 January 2021 by K. Lo, Chair.

Agenda

By general consent, the Committee adopted the agenda.

Meeting Minutes

By general consent, the Committee approved the 30 November 2020 meeting minutes.

By general consent, the Committee approved the 14 December 2020 meeting minutes.

**Business Arising
from the Minutes**

K. Lo referred to the 30 November 2020 meeting minutes, specifically with regard to a 2019 recommendation from the Senate Academic Building Needs Committee that this Committee consider eliminating the Thursday scheduling block. The Committee will consider that recommendation at a future meeting.

**Term 2
Withdrawal (W)
Deadline**

That Senate directs the Faculties to normally grant formal withdrawal (W) standing upon the request of a student for a course or courses taken in Term 2 of the 2020 Winter Session, provided such a request is made on or before April 14th, 2021.

Moved: K. Lo
Seconded: C. Krebs

J. Fox joined the meeting in her capacity as Chair of the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee (T&L). She explained T&L has gathered information on how Faculties have been accommodating academic concessions, recognizing students' need for increased flexibility. The motion, which was informed by language from the Term 1 extension for UBC-V and the Term 1 and 2 extensions for UBC-O, explicitly includes a date that is consistent with last day of classes to improve clarity for students and advisors alike. T&L has approved the same motion and is now seeking the Committee's support to jointly present the recommendation to Senate.

Members offered the following comments:

- J. Burnham asked if the Committee must also approve the motion. C. Eaton explained T&L approved an exception to a policy for which the Committee is responsible, so consultation is required.
- H. Zerriffi queried the purpose of the word normally in the motion. J. Fox explained normally allows for the non-normal cases, and gave the example of a student who is involved in an academic misconduct investigation.
- K. Lo asked about the dates in the SISC for a self-service option. C. Eaton confirmed students will be required to contact their Faculties to make a request. There are a variety of financial and non-financial ramifications related to this extension, and the University wants to ensure students know the options available to them. K. Ross added this term students will have more notice to plan accordingly.
- J. Zheng asked if students must be formally advised by April 14. J. Fox said the feedback from last term indicated academic advising offices are being flexible; making the request by April 14 is the point. K. Lo added most Faculties set up processes last term to create request forms; the submission date is what is important.
- A. Pratap Singh asked how April 14 was determined and how classes that started early (before January 11) will be accommodated. C. Eaton said April 14 will be the end of term for the vast majority of students, and for those whom it is not, they will have a week longer. The date was also agreed upon so as not to compromise the integrity of the transcript. K. Lo noted some students will know their unofficial final grade before April 14, which is an issue that has also been raised by the Associate Deans Academic.
- R. Spencer voiced concern that when self-service options are turned off it increases workload and decreases the service level for those who really need the help. UBC needs to continue to support online, self-service opportunities.
- E. Bhangu asked if it would be possible to create a resource that can help students understand their options. J. Fox noted T&L's consultation found students are receiving information on websites, via forms, etc. E. Bhangu said it would be worthwhile reviving those various resources. C. Krebs noted the Senate has already approved similar extensions in past terms, and this time the recommendation is being made earlier. If approved, those websites, forms, etc. can be updated. P. Harrison suggested the motion could be amended to direct Faculties to update their resources. K.

Lo said those considerations should be left to the Faculties. The motion was not amended.

The Committee voted on the motion on the floor.

Carried.

**Proposal to the
Joint Board and
Senate Chairs for
the
Implementation of
the Inclusion
Action Plan Goal2A**

THAT THE Senate Academic Policy Committee supports the action team structure set out in the proposal.

Moved: J. Gilbert
Seconded: J. Burnham

K. Lo explained the Committee began considering this item at the end of the last triennium. A number of iterations have developed since then, and the action team membership piece has now stabilized. For context, the Okanagan Senate Academic Policy Committee voted to support the structure.

Members offered the following comments:

- J. Burnham said she will be supporting the motion and hopes the next time the Senate collaborates with the Board of Governors it learns from this experience and streamlines processes.
- H. Zerriffi noted the member appointed by and from the Vancouver Senate must be faculty, but the same does not apply for the Board member. K. Lo said the composition of the action team has changed significantly across the various iterations; the only part that was definite is the single member from the Board. To maintain a reasonable size in the membership there was a compromise between faculty and student representation. The senator must be a faculty member to preserve that balance.
- P. Harrison said he is uncomfortable approving something that has a selection process that is not yet revealed. K. Lo noted the Equity & Inclusion Office's involvement and can be trusted. The key consideration is that the structure of the action team is supported.
- J. Gilbert noted for future initiatives it might worthwhile to include Convocation Senators.

The Committee voted on the motion on the floor.

Carried.

**Policy J-XXX:
Academic Freedom**

P. Harrison revised the document previously circulated to the Committee. He said most revisions are in the policy itself and looked to the Committee for answers/guidance on how to address the comments in the documents. The definitions in particular need work.

Members offered the following comments:

- C. W. Marshall noted all graduates and emeriti are included in the definition of member, which seemed broad. He also noted the policy still

does not seem to include the discretion the Provost requires. The Provost previously said the policy must allow him the discretion to decide who is protected by academic freedom.

- C. Krebs said the work graduates completed while UBC students should be protected. K. Lo said including all graduate and emeriti could be problematic. The flipside of academic freedom is the responsibilities that come with that privilege. If it is not clear how members demonstrate that responsibility, how can UBC hold them to account? H. Zerriffi agreed all graduates it too broad, but understood C. Krebs' point that the work completed at UBC could still be protected by the academic freedom policy. The policy needs careful language to make that distinction clear.
- H. Zerriffi said the policy includes members and invitees of members, but it does not address the question of those coming to campus to book a room to express their viewpoints that may or may not be on academic grounds. P. Harrison said he attempted to make that distinction by further defining invitee. Booking space does not make you an invitee. The University has a separate vetting process for those who rent rooms, and this policy does not address that. With respect to academics from other institutions, their academic freedom is not a given at UBC. This then becomes a freedom of expression matter, which is also off the table. H. Zerriffi said his concern is the Academic Freedom Working Group (AFWG) report complicates the situation; the policy itself is clearer. P. Harrison reiterated the report was to this Committee, not to Senate. K. Lo suggested a revised report could go to Senate, but not the report as-is.
- C. Krebs said if members are defined as individuals who are currently academically engaged with the University, then some of the recent controversial speakers were invited by members of the community, and they would still be protected by this policy. Who is the arbiter of what crosses the academic line? The Committee needs to look at extending the respect part of the policy and the impact of this particular aspect on the University community. P. Harrison said while the issue of who gets invited and the community's response is important, it is not the fundamental purpose of a policy on academic freedom.
- J. Burnham noted the EDI Action Team will be developing a statement on values and this academic freedom piece will help. She previously supported presenting the AFWG report to Senate. There is a lot of discussion at the University about the policy, and whether it is the full report or a summary of the report, the document should go to Senate for transparency.
- C. Eaton said the policy removes the ability for controversial speakers to use it for their protection. He added the policy previously included the convocation, and this Committee will have to decide if it wants to revoke that privilege.
- K. Smith said the policy is fundamental to everyday operations. The Committee needs to think beyond the outliers and focus on protecting members and helping people navigate issues when academic freedom is challenged.

- R. Spencer noted section 7 of the policy says members will be defended, which is the core purpose. To that same section he suggested considering adding “including the Board of Governors and those holding administrative positions...” to expressly charge the Board with an awareness of their role in ensuring academic freedom is protected. K. Lo said the section is sufficient without naming the Board because there is a general understanding it includes the governing members. Delimiting the Board might have adverse impacts; it could shift the responsibility from other members of the community. R. Spencer said his point is there are some people in the community currently excluded from the definition of member; the Board is one example.
- C. Krebs said “University” is broad. There’s the academic component, then the financial/legal component, and that latter piece could be parsed out. University = academic community + legal entity (“the University”).
- K. Ross suggested adding active or current to make the member definition timebound. P. Harrison asked how to define active/current in the context of alumni. K. Lo said in general, the policy would exclude graduates, except for those still academically engaged. C. Krebs said alumni who are attacked for work completed while at UBC should be defended. K. Lo suggested a separate reference to that protection extending to the work completed while at UBC.
- H. Zerriffi said it is the overlap of the membership and the nature of the work that the policy is trying to protect, and the Committee is attempting to address that in the definition of member. This raises the question of a current member engaging in activities outside of UBC. Are those activities protected? There should be tangible support (money) for those who are being attacked. But what happens when those attacks are internal? It’s not just an external consideration.
- Regarding membership, R. Spencer said it might be easier to restrict scholarly activities than it is to restrict member. He suggested adding language to the policy to link viewpoints to the scholarly activities.
- P. Harrison said some will argue academic freedom should apply to staff. C. Krebs said she often thinks of worst-case scenarios. What do we do if someone gets into trouble for supporting someone else’s scholarly activities? Staff should be included.
- S. Gopalakrishnan said scholarly activity might be too limiting. The Committee needs to think about academic freedom with respect to the University’s mission. Membership should also be contemplated in this regard.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 22 February 2021 3:30-5 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.