

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Vancouver Senate Secretariat
Enrolment Services
Senate and Curriculum Services
1874 – 2016 East Mall
Vancouver, BC
V6T 1Z1

September 11, 2006

To: The Vancouver Senate

From: Agenda Committee

Subject: **REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE VANCOUVER SENATE
2005/2006 Academic Year (for information)**

Introduction

The Vancouver Senate conducted a review of its activities during the 2004/2005 academic year. In its May 2005 report, the ad hoc Senate Committee that undertook the review observed a need to raise awareness of the Senate's role and activities within the University. To help address this need, the Senate Secretariat and the Senate Agenda Committee were asked to compile an annual report on the activities of the Vancouver Senate for the information of the University community. This is the first such annual report.

Background

The Vancouver Senate is established and vested responsibilities related to the academic governance of the University under the *University Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 468. The Senate has 85 members, including faculty members, student senators, convocation senators, representatives of affiliated theological colleges, and senior administrators of the University, including the President as Chair of the Senate, the Chancellor, the Vice-President- Academic, the University Librarian, 12 Deans and one Principal. The Senate has 12 standing committees that perform much of the Senate's work. Committees deliver reports for consideration at Senate meetings for information, discussion and/or approval. Some of these reports are annual reports on committee activities, some present routine matters for the approval of Senate, while others address more *ad hoc* matters for particular consideration or decision. The Senate schedules nine meetings per academic year. During 2005/06, the Senate met eight times from September 2005 through May 2006. Meetings of the Senate are generally open to the public, with a few matters being considered in closed session. The 2005/2006 year was the first year of a three-year Senate electoral term.

Regular Activities of Senate

Matters brought forward during the 2005/06 year included the following:

The Curriculum Committee and/or Admissions Committees brought forward matters relating to admissions policy and over 870 curriculum changes, including new and revised degree and diploma programs and their related courses. The Student Awards Committee recommended for approval over 100 new student awards. The Nominating Committee brought forward revisions to the terms of reference and composition of Senate committees and recommended committee assignments for new members.

Based on recommendations from the Vice-President Academic & Provost, the Senate:

1. Revised the voting membership of the Faculty of Medicine
2. Approved and recommended for approval by the Board of Governors the establishment of two departments and two centres, as well as two departmental mergers
3. Approved and recommended for approval by the Board of Governors the establishment of seven Chairs

At the November and May meetings, the Associate Vice-President, Enrolment Services & Registrar presented for approval lists of candidates for degrees and diplomas. The Vancouver Senate granted a total of over 8800 degrees and diplomas. The Associate Vice-President Enrolment Services & Registrar also submitted for information dates relating to the 2006/2007 Academic Year (January meeting).

In closed session, the Tributes Committee recommended a list of candidates for honorary degrees, which the Senate discussed and approved. The Tributes Committee also recommended 77 individuals for emeritus status and prepared short tributes known as “memorial minutes” for two former Senators who had recently passed away.

Annual reports were presented by the Committee on Student Appeals on Academic Discipline, the Committee on Appeals on Academic Standing, the Interim Budget Committee and the University Librarian. At the November meeting, the Vice President Administration and Finance presented for information the University’s financial statements for the 2004/2005 fiscal year.

Review of Senate

An Ad Hoc committee to Review Senate delivered its report to Senate at the May 2005 meeting. The review arose largely because of a sense that the levels of responsibility of the Senate and the extent and nature of its debate had diminished in recent years. Subsequently, the Agenda Committee has been

engaged in following up on the Review Report's various recommendations, and otherwise attempting to enhance Senate's overall role in various ways. The Review recommendations included:

1. Adjustments to the terms of reference and operating procedures for Senate standing committees, including a streamlining of the presentation of routine matters by the Curriculum and Admissions Committees;
2. Prospective changes to the *University Act*, including a recommendation that the Senate elect its own Chair rather than having the President serve ex officio in this role; and
3. Changes to Senate meeting agenda preparation. These included provisions for substantive debate on academic issues from time to time; a suitable orientation of Senators; regular reports to Senate from the Vice-President Academic & Provost; an increased use of electronic meeting materials; the preparation of an annual report; and modifications to the Rules and Procedures of Senate. Many of the recommendations have already been implemented, with a few still in the final stages of consideration for implementation.

UBC Okanagan and the Vancouver Senate

A number of activities of the Vancouver Senate during 2005/2006 were related to the creation of UBC Okanagan and the resulting establishment of the Okanagan Senate and the Council of Senates.

During the 2004/2005 academic year, the Vancouver Senate had established an ad hoc committee to serve as the Interim Academic Governing Body (IAGB) for UBC Okanagan, until such time that the Okanagan Senate was established. The Okanagan Senate was established in the fall of 2005, and held its first meeting in December 2005. Accordingly, the Vancouver Senate dissolved the IAGB at its December meeting.

Secondly, a joint committee of the Vancouver Senate and the IAGB made recommendations relating to the composition of the Council of Senates, consistent with the provisions of *University Act*. Although the recommendations of this joint report were accepted by the Vancouver Senate at its November meeting, they were rejected by the IAGB, largely because the IAGB would have preferred equal representation of the two campuses on the Council of Senates. In light of these circumstances, the President opted to initially establish the Council with three Committee Chairs from each Senate, and requested that the Council consider its own future composition. This process has unfolded, and at its June 2006 meeting the Council of Senates approved its permanent membership structure.

Thirdly, guidelines were established on how the two Senates communicate with one another and collaborate to approve routine matters affecting both campuses

without creating unnecessary business for the Council of Senates. These were approved at the March meeting.

Fourthly, the Okanagan Senate had approved the granting of UBC degrees to a group of alumni of the former Okanagan University College. This arrangement was challenged by some members of the Vancouver Senate who felt that it was important to consider the input of both campuses. President Martha Piper then referred this matter to the Council of Senates for final disposition. The Council considered the matter at its June 2006 meeting and approved a framework for the granting of these degrees by the Okanagan Senate.

Other Topics

Finally, a number of other non-routine items were considered by the Senate over the past year. These included the following:

The Chancellor provided an update on the status of the Presidential Search Committee that included a number of Senators among its members.

The Director of UBC International delivered status reports on the activities of Universitas21, and U21 Global. The Senate then established an ad hoc Committee of Senate to review U21 Global; that Committee is expected to deliver its report early in the 2006/2007 academic year.

The Tributes Committee presented a revised policy on the Emeritus/Emerita status for retiring and resigned faculty members. The revised policy included, for the first time, a mechanism to revoke emeritus status of an individual. Senate approved the new policy.

The Admissions Committee made recommendations about the University's use of third party agencies in student recruitment, and the Senate accepted those recommendations at its May meeting. The Admissions Committee also considered issues related to institutional membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (AUCC) and delivered a report to the Senate.

The Academic Policy Committee presented a proposal to use First Nations names for languages in the University calendar; the Senate requested more information about implications and costs, and the Admissions Committee is due to report once again on this matter during the 2006/2007 year.

At the April meeting, the Vice-President Academic & Provost presented for discussion a report entitled "Optimizing Interdisciplinarity at UBC." Discussion about interdisciplinarity and the future of the Faculty of Graduate Studies will continue in 2006/2007.

At the May meeting, Senate accepted a number of recommendations from the Teaching and Learning Committee regarding student evaluation of learning experiences.

The Senate approved University-wide Enrolment Targets for the 2006/2007 cycle at the May meeting, and requested additional data about enrolment targets by Faculty and program.

Finally, at the May meeting Senate paid tribute to President Martha C. Piper in wishing her farewell.

Concluding Remarks

Overall, the Vancouver Senate had an active year, dealing with both regular and ad hoc matters. A major focus of its activities has been the academic governance aspects of the transition to a multi-campus, multi-Senate institution. The Senate has also been working diligently to implement changes to its own operations in light of the Review, so as to optimize levels of responsibility and engagement.