

**SENATE ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES**

Monday 25 April 2022 3:35-5:33 pm via Zoom

Attendees**Senators**E. Bhangu
J. Burnham
J. Gilbert
S. Gopalakrishnan
P. Harrison
K. Lo (Chair)
C.W. Marshall
A. Pratap-Singh
K. Smith
R. Spencer (Vice-Chair)

H. Zerriffi

Ex Officio

K. Ross

RegretsM. Aronson
J. Fox
C. Krebs
S. Matsui
M. Quayle

J. Schumacher

GuestsS. Bates
C. Hendricks
M. McTavish
A. Webb**Senate Staff**C. Eaton
J. Iverson**Call to Order and
Territorial
Acknowledgement**

The meeting of the Senate Academic Policy Committee (the "Committee") was called to order at 3:35 pm on 25 April 2022 by K. Lo, Chair.

K. Ross offered a territorial acknowledgement.

Agenda

The agenda was adopted by general consent.

Meeting Minutes**THAT THE** Senate Academic Policy Committee approve the 28 March 2022 meeting minutes as presented.Moved: E. Bhangu
Seconded: C.W. Marshall
Carried.**Faculty of
Education |
Bachelor of
Education |
Academic Policies
and Regulations****THAT THE** Vancouver Senate Academic Policy Committee approve, and recommend to the Senate for approval, revisions to the Bachelor of Education Academic Policies and Regulations as presented.Moved: P. Harrison
Seconded: H. Zerriffi

A. Webb thanked the Committee for the earlier feedback. The Faculty had been trying to edit the previous statement but opted instead to rewrite it entirely.

Carried.

**Policy V-131: Use
of Digital
Materials for
Assessment**

THAT THE *Vancouver Senate Academic Policy Committee approve circulating
Policy V-131: Use of Digital Materials for Assessment for consultation.*

Moved: E. Bhangu
Seconded: J. Burnham

K. Lo summarized key changes to the draft policy since the Committee last reviewed it: expanded preamble, clarified exclusions, how the dollar limit is referenced.

H. Zerriffi asked who will be consulted. J. Iverson said the Committee can make suggestions. Groups will parallel those consulted for the Okanagan policy.

- C. Eaton suggested all faculty members, student groups, the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology.
- J. Burnham suggested a response field to allow for open-ended feedback. She also said she was mindful of the Committee's ISP conversations and asked how Indigenous groups might be included in the consultation. She suggested the First Nations House of Learning as one such group.
- A. Pratap-Singh suggested Associate Deans, Academic; Equity & Inclusion Office; International Student Advising; financial needs offices.
- K. Ross suggested the Indigenous Working Group.

S. Gopalakrishnan noted instructors might give students the option of using digital assessment tools, and if not, to take the exam for a heavier weight. He said part of the utility of these tools is to allow students to practice. He asked if the Committee had an opinion on this possible scenario.

- S. Bates said faculty members have taken flexible approaches to assessment in recent years. Instructor may choose to be flexible in a course that uses these tools, and the policy does not address the potential S. Gopalakrishnan raised.
- K. Lo asked if the limits still apply when the tools are optional. S. Bates said, no; however, when the tools are required, he hopes instructors would think about how else students could practice.
- C. Eaton noted it is difficult to write a rule for every possible permutation, but the general principal of the policy is clear and stands.

R. Spencer noted the intersection of academic freedom and the rights of instructors to choose textbooks free from the influence of departments/units. Will some instructors interpret this policy as an infringement on their rights?

- C. Eaton said the Committee will address this more fully when it discusses the academic freedom policy. Internal constraints may be reasonable limitations on an individual member in favour of the broader interests of a unit. He noted the Senate regularly limits academic when, for example, approving course descriptions.

A. Pratap-Singh asked why the B.A. tuition is referenced in the policy; he suggested it vary by Faculty.

- K. Lo explained the B.A. has the lowest domestic tuition.

A. Pratap-Singh then asked if there is a conflict of interest element to the policy.

- S. Bates said it is different than the conflict that might arise when an instructor assigns their own text. Digital assessment tools are typically provided by the publisher.

Returning to optional use of digital assessment tools, K. Ross said she thought the goal of the policy is to reduce cost to students. She said making tools optional could be an unintended consequence of the policy, which is a concerning possibility. Student feedback is needed.

P. Harrison said varying cost limits by Faculty would be confusing to students; using the lowest tuition is in line with the goal to reduce costs. WRT optional use, he suggested revising the policy so that it applies if an instructor uses it for assessment of any students in a course.

S. Gopalakrishnan said the original question regarding optional use related to equity. Given the review clause, he suggested the Committee explicitly look at courses where there is an option to purchase tools.

H. Zerriffi agreed optional use raises an equity concern. He asked why the policy does not apply to all digital learning materials, not just those used for assessment. As the policy stands, students with time and money will benefit. He suggested doing away with the “used for assessment” component.

- S. Bates said the equity issue is a challenge, and one that already exists. The goal should be high quality open educational resources for all students.
- K. Lo noted “where not used for assessment” is bordering on textbook territory.
- J. Burnham said to think of a constellation of approaches. She supports going a step further than what the draft policy proposed, but does not think there will be the same buy-in if change is too quick. She said the policy is a good first step and the applicability could be expanded when reviewed. WRT to consultation, she said the point is to have conversations, not just edit the current documents. Conversations will make the policy better.

R. Spencer said these tools are not like textbooks and that he encourages and supports the use of information technology to assist learning. He said the university should think about building access to these resources into the

education system. The said he hopes the policy is a small step that will lead to more significant steps down the road.

WRT to consultation, P. Harrison said the Committee will need to work with other parts of the university to collect the necessary data to meet its goals.

- C. Hendricks said the university does not currently have a mechanism to collect data on required vs. optional use. The Committee would need to be very strategic about how data will be collected.

Carried.

**Discontinuing
Distance Education
(DE)/Guided
Independent Study
(GIS) Course
Designations**

THAT THE Vancouver Senate Academic Policy Committee approve, and recommend to the Senate for approval, discontinuing Distance Education (DE)/Guided Independent Study (GIS) Course Designations effective 2022W, and that the Academic Calendar be revised as presented.

Moved: A. Pratap-Singh
Seconded: S. Gopalakrishnan

C. Hendricks provided an overview of the proposal. Key points were as follows:

- DE course administration fees were eliminated by the Board of Governors in 2020 because almost all courses were moved online and the related services applied to all students and courses. Elimination of fees prompted the question of what purpose the course designation serves. In part, it triggered fees. If no fees, is the designation required?
- Some Faculty of Education courses are still designated as DE, but that is expected to change.
- LT Hub indicated low use of DE designation.
- Main impact of discontinuation: designation provided a way for Okanagan students to directly register in DE courses. Those students can still register going forward, albeit by a different process.
- Some Calendar implications for Faculties (e.g. number of DE credits that apply to a program).
- New ways for students to find what were DE courses in the SISC.

S. Bates said the designation is now redundant. Pre-COVID there were approximately 200 DE courses on the Vancouver Campus and 0 on the Okanagan Campus. This year, there were over 700 fully online courses, plus there is a new way to identify those courses in the SISC. The Okanagan anticipates a growth in its fully online course offerings. The original motivation for Okanagan students to register in Vancouver online courses has diminished.

H. Zerriffi said a number of motivating factors are being conflated and suggested differentiating the drivers before recommending the discontinuation to the Senate. He questioned the COVID factor, stating there were presumably

reasons to have DE courses in the first place, and those reasons have not changed. He said he was worried some courses may not remain online in the absence of a DE course designation.

- S. Bates explained the DE fee was assessed for the CTLT, which handled the appointment of DE instructors and provided differentiated supports for DE courses. Around 2012, the responsibility for those services shifted to the Faculties, but the fee and designation remained. Prior to COVID, most DE registrants were “regular” UBC students looking for flexibility, not students who *needed* the flexibility.
- H. Zerriffi suggested the fee and designation pieces be separated, and S. Bates’ point be included. He said he was still concerned the original need for DE courses has not gone away.

K. Lo asked if there is a minimum requirement for DE courses, to which S. Bates said no, and added the portfolio of DE courses was ad hoc pre-COVID; by and large, the courses were unrelated to online programs. K. Lo noted removing the designation does not remove a commitment.

P. Harrison noted GIS courses give students flexibility to progress at their own pace and questioned whether that is being lost, to which S. Bates said it depends on how the course is designed (synchronous, asynchronous). He added that the number of self-paced asynchronous courses is unclear.

C. Hendricks said H. Zerriffi’s point is interesting. The original intention of DE courses was to provide an option for students who were not on campus and could not travel to campus. The DE designation itself does address that, so the question remains: what is UBC doing for those students? Without a fee, the designation is not needed, but she noted there are multiple strands to the issue.

- C. Eaton noted this relates, in part, to section 47 (e) of the University Act, which states a university must “provide a program of continuing education in all academic and cultural fields throughout British Columbia.”

The Committee agreed to vote on the proposal subject to suggested revisions based on what was presented and discussed. K. Lo will be responsible for reviewing the revisions.

Carried.

**Policy J-###:
Academic Freedom**

THAT THE Vancouver Senate Academic Policy Committee approve circulating
Policy J-###: Academic Freedom *for consultation.*

Moved: C.W. Marshall
Seconded: R. Spencer

K. Lo said he and P. Harrison have met with the Okanagan Senate Academic Policy Committee, which has approved the same draft policy for consultation.

P. Harrison recognized there are still components of the draft policy that will not meet everyone's approval. He said he would prefer to see what is submitted when the document is circulated for consultation.

H. Zerriffi thanked P. Harrison for his work. He said there are still elements he would comment on but agreed with circulating for consultation.

R. Spencer echoed H. Zerriffi. He then asked if there is an agreed-upon approach to the consultation process, and whether the Senate will be made aware of comments from the community. He said he assumed more revisions will be needed and asked how the consultation process will end.

- K. Lo said every point of feedback does not need to be reflected in the policy. The Committee needs to consider the feedback in terms of prior discussions and those of the working group. He suspects the Committee will have to filter contradictory viewpoints, accepting some and rejecting others.
- C. Eaton said the policy will be revised upon direction, but clarity is needed in terms of what the Committee values and what it would like to change.

J. Burnham echoed thanks to P. Harrison. She said the Board policy review process has a decent mechanism for reviewing feedback. Referring to the SC-17 policy review, she said comments were highlighted and the Board committee had the opportunity to provide pointed responses [see pg. 46 for reference: https://bog3.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/05/6_2020.06_Sexual-Misconduct-Policy-Amendment.pdf]. She also said she hopes the intensive policy revision process remains the Committee's responsibility and is not delegated to another working group. K. Lo agreed with this last point and added the Okanagan committee made a lot of the same comments as the working group.

- H. Zerriffi agreed with the idea of preparing a document that shows what the Committee has already considered.
- K. Lo suggested organizing responses by theme.
- P. Harrison agreed with taking a thematic approach. He offered to help with the process.
- C. Eaton said the Office of the Senate has prepared robust consultation documentation in the past and would suggest the same for this policy. It is a good idea to show the Senate how comments were considered, incorporated, etc. by the Committee.

A. Pratap-Singh asked if there is a reason this policy does not fall under the Provost's Office, to which C. Eaton said that office has purposefully absented itself from these sorts of discussions in the past.

- K. Lo added the original policy comes from the Senate and is one in which every member at the university has an interest. The administration is not the appropriate proponent. The policy relates to the Faculty Association as well.
- K. Ross noted the administration are members of the UBC community, and in some cases, the Senate. They have a way to be involved if they so choose.

Carried.

P. Harrison said he has been invited to a panel discussion the Board is having in May regarding academic freedom. He said it is a chance to share the philosophy behind the draft with the Board and asked if it would be appropriate to do so at that point. The Committee had no concerns. C. Eaton noted while academic freedom is of shared import, it is an academic matter, not a financial one.

**National Day for
Truth and
Reconciliation**

THAT THE Vancouver Senate Academic Policy Committee recommend to the Senate, Policy V-125 notwithstanding, the Vancouver Senate amend the 2022-2023 Academic Year to close the University on 30 September 2022 in recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Moved: H. Zeriffi
Seconded: C.W. Marshall

C. Eaton explained the government has effectively created a non-statutory statutory holiday. Presently, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR) is a federal holiday, but not one in the majority of provinces. This is not something the province can force upon the university, but it is nonetheless an important day to recognize for many reasons. C. Eaton suggested UBC honour the NDTR and close the university on September 30, 2022. He said "University closed" is the standard language.

C. Eaton noted the NDTR falls on a Friday in 2022. Days that move year-to-year (vs. the second Monday of a given month, for example) pose challenges for setting teaching days. He hopes the province decides how it recognizes the day, but in the event it does not, he suggested going forward the university nonetheless recognize the NDTR each year and no further one-off closures be considered.

- P. Harrison asked if 2022 needs to be treated as a one-off or if the Committee can recommend an ongoing closure as of this year. He said for UBC to be true to its goals and aspirations for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the NDTR must be recognized.

- C. Eaton said the university needs more time to do that properly, but the Committee could signal it would like the closure to be ongoing.

H. Zerriffi said some folks have suggested the university mark the day in a different way that is more appropriate to the mission, but not necessarily close. He said there should be a process to decide what that looks like. What will UBC do regardless of what the provincial government decides?

- C. Eaton said it has been the plan to recognize the NDTR with appropriate programming, ceremonies, etc., but there are labour relations issues and concerns if the university is not officially closed.

A. Pratap-Singh asked if it is possible to replace “close” with “suspending academic activities.”

- C. Eaton said “closed” is the usual diction; plus, it means more than suspending academic activities. Many offices, services, etc. will in fact be closed.

S. Gopalakrishnan supported the motion but said he is concerned the number of instructional days is on the decline. This is stressful for students, who are covering the same amount of materials as other institutions in significantly fewer days.

- C. Eaton said he is very aware of the challenge. BC has more statutory holidays than other provinces. The only university with fewer teaching days is Toronto. There are a number of constraints to the academic year. It might be appropriate to discuss this when it is time to review Policy V-125.
- K. Smith agreed with S. Gopalakrishnan. She said having full weeks is better than defining a set number of days. She did not agree with a clause restricting academic activities, as that might impair students’ abilities to recognize/reflect on the holiday in an academic way.

J. Gilbert said the NDTR is not a holiday; it is a day to remember bad things that have happened. How we do that in the context of the university (like Remembrance Day, for example)? Truth and Reconciliation is not about taking a holiday. This is a serious piece of the country’s history.

J. Burnham suggested considering other educational opportunities on the NDTR, and that Indigenous students, faculty and staff not be expected to perform the various initiatives.

Carried.

Proposed 2022/23 Meeting Schedule

K. Lo said the proposed 2022/23 meeting schedule was drafted based on the same cadence and time as 2021/22. He solicited feedback from members.

P. Harrison asked if a fixed meeting schedule is a deterrent to students, to which J. Burnham said the caucus is used to it and periodically shuffles committee assignments.

R. Spencer asked if there is any merit in considering an extended meeting time.

- K. Lo said the Committee runs out of time on occasion and noted the Senate Curriculum Committee has traditionally scheduled tentative Wednesday meetings.
- C.W. Marshall did not support extending the meeting past 5 pm for childcare reasons.
- H. Zerriffi echoed C.W. Marshall. He added he would be in favour of additional meetings from time-to-time. S. Gopalakrishnan agreed.

S. Gopalakrishnan said it would be nice to have a list of running items for discussion with a go-to place to see what is on the waitlist. This would also help set priorities. He then asked if meetings will continue to be held via Zoom, to which C. Eaton said senators will be surveyed for feedback on format of both committee and Senate meetings.

- H. Zerriffi said having a list of priorities is a good idea. The Committee could separate time-sensitive discussions from those that are for discussion only.
- P. Harrison supported a list of topics and additional meetings.

J. Iverson said she heard folks suggesting 3-4 extra meetings throughout the year and will draft additional schedules for review. She also suggested sharing a rolling list of discussion items on the meeting agenda (separate from the items for business).

Next Meeting	The next meeting of the Committee will be held in September 2022 (exact date TBD).
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 5:33 pm.