



**SENATE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

Friday 18 November 2022 10:00-11:30 a.m. via Zoom

Attendance: Guy Faulkner (Chair), James Stewart (Vice-Chair), Nancy Ford, Romina Hajizadeh, Rob Kozak, James Olson, Greg Martyn, Susan Porter, Anubhav Singh

Regrets: Robert Boushel, Benjamin Fischer, Jorden Hendry, Merje Kuus, Gail Murphy

Senate Staff: Michael Jud

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Senate Research and Scholarship Committee (the “Committee”) was called to order at 10:04 a.m. on 21 October 2022 by G. Faulkner, Chair.

ITEM 1: AGENDA

The agenda was approved by general consent.

ITEM 2: MEETING MINUTES OF 18 OCTOBER 2022

The meeting minutes of 18 October 2022 were approved by general consent.

ITEM 3: CONSULTATION RE POLICY ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The Senate Academic Policy Committee has been developing an updated policy on academic freedom for approximately three years. Impetus for developing the updated policy came from a series of controversies involving certain speakers invited to campus by students organizations.

The Chair and Vice-Chair have been in contact with the Chair of the Academic Policy Committee to discuss potential synergies whereby the Research & Scholarship Committee may offer useful input on the draft policy. The draft has been put out for comment by the wider community and has received a very large number of comments.

The Committee discussed the importance of defining key terms appropriately within the policy and avoiding uncertainty. Interest was expressed in drawing comparisons between the definition of academic freedom found in the draft policy and that adopted by other institutions. It was stated that the principle of academic freedom entails both rights and responsibilities, whereas the definition set out in the policy seems relatively light with respect to the issue responsibilities, merely providing that academic freedom must be guided by the principle of scholarly integrity.

The Vice-Chair stated that he has been working with the aid of a research assistant to document points of comparison between key aspects of the draft policy and corresponding language found in the policies

of other institutions. It was suggested that the Committee could contribute to the draft policy by supporting this effort.

It was additionally noted that there appears to be some degree of interplay between the Board policy on scholarly integrity and the draft academic freedom policy, and this should be made more explicit in some way.

It was asked whether it would be possible to explore a more national or global perspective on issues pertaining to academic freedom. Current events taking place in Iranian universities were mentioned as a point of reference. It was noted in response that the draft policy could incorporate more specific language around, for example, the right to criticize one's own institution.

A Committee member drew attention to provisions of the draft policy dealing with allegations of academic freedom being constrained or denied. The draft policy indicates that the Academic Policy Committee will be responsible for investigating such matters. It was noted that Senate committees do not typically conduct investigations and there may not be sufficient capacity for this type of undertaking.

The following motion was put to the Committee:

THAT THE Senate Research & Scholarship Committee undertake the production of comparative tables on different definitions of academic freedom.

Moved: J. Stewart
Seconded: G. Faulkner
Carried.

ITEM 4: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH WORKING GROUP REPORT

The Committee reviewed the Report of the Senate Undergraduate Research Working Group and discussed issues pertaining to undergraduate research at UBC.

It was noted that the Vice-President, Research & Innovation has been in discussion with the Vice-President, Students about ways of supporting initiatives in this area. There is willingness and interest on the part of the VPRI organization and other components of the administration to support these initiatives.

Committee members commented on a number of related issues:

- More work will be needed to identify where the Committee can contribute to moving this issue forward. This may involve making recommendations to the VPRI.
- Supporting undergraduate research will necessarily involve the Provost's Office, so engaging the Provost will be an important step. There is a significantly bigger conversation beyond just the VPRI.
- Valuable opportunities for undergraduate students may be created through, for example, research projects funded by NSERC and other funding agencies. It may be worthwhile to develop more infrastructure to connect students to opportunities.

ITEM 5: UPDATE ON RESEARCH CENTRES AND INSTITUTES POLICY

Senate staff provided an update on issues discussed at the Committee's previous meeting, particularly focusing on concerns around whether Senate-approved research centres and institutes will be granted

the status of academic units. It was noted that established practice at UBC holds that units established under the authority of Senate and Board are presumed to have the status of academic units. For this reason, senate staff recommended that the draft policy on research centres and institutes provide that Senate-approved centres and institutes be granted the status of academic units.

It was noted that the Learning and Research Committee of the Okanagan Senate may be undertaking a review of Senate Policy O-5 in the very near future. It may be beneficial to exchange notes and work towards an approach with at least some level of coordination between the two campuses.

Next steps are the following:

- prepare a draft policy using the approved template for Senate policies;
- once the draft policy is approved by the Committee, put the draft out into the community for review and feedback.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.