



**SENATE RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

Friday 17 March 2023 10:00-11:30 a.m. via Zoom

**Attendance:** Guy Faulkner (Chair), James Stewart (Vice-Chair), Robert Boushel, Nancy Ford, Romina Hajizadeh, Rob Kozak, Anubhav Singh

**Regrets:** Melina Amirsharafi, Benjamin Fischer, Jordan Hendry, Merje Kuus, Greg Martyn, Gail Murphy, James Olson, Susan Porter

**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 17 March 2023 by G. Faulkner, Chair.

**ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

The agenda was adopted by general consent.

**ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF LAST MEETING’S MINUTES**

The Chair noted a correction to a typo under Item 4 of the minutes.

The meeting minutes of 17 February 2023 were adopted by general consent, subject to the correction noted above.

**ITEM 3: COMMITTEE RESPONSE TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM POLICY CONSULTATION**

The history of the Senate academic freedom policy (the “Policy”) was briefly summarized. The current Policy was adopted in 1977 and has been unchanged since then. The Policy is now under review by the Academic Policy Committee (the “APC”). A draft of the revised Policy was circulated for public comment by the APC several months ago. The Chair and Vice-Chair have met with the Chair of the APC a number of times to discuss the policy development process. It was agreed that given its recent business the Committee would likely have valuable feedback to offer on the Policy. The Committee was reminded that they had adopted a motion several months previously to commission a comparative study of academic freedom policies at Canadian academic institutions. The results of this work were included in the meeting materials.

The materials also included a draft document addressed to the Chair of APC which presents a possible version of the Committee’s feedback on the draft Policy. Committee members were invited to comment on the document. The following comments were offered:

- The document is an impressive piece of work. It was described as insightful and well-written.
- It was asked whether the Committee should frame its feedback on the Policy in the form of answers to questions or direct recommendations. It was noted that the Committee may wish to consider how it feels about making recommendations concerning business that falls within the purview of the APC.
- It was stated that the Policy is a profoundly important and foundational policy for UBC, analogous to a major constitutional change. It accordingly requires broad and deep consultation and the input of people with considerable relevant expertise. It was noted that while there is substantial relevant expertise in the Faculty of Law, it is important to draw feedback from across the institution to avoid the perception of anyone's input being excluded or deprioritized.
- The Committee agreed that a preamble should be added to the draft document to emphasize the profound importance of the Policy and to underscore the necessity of a well-thought out consultation process.
- It was suggested that the APC consider using the questions set out in the document as a framework for
- or thinking through the responses received via the public consultation process. The APC could direct its attention to whether the public comments contain satisfactory answers to the questions. The questions could also be used as part of a framework for communicating the results of the public consultation process back to the community and potentially undertaking a 2<sup>nd</sup> round of consultations.

The document will be revised in accordance with the above with an update to the Committee at its April meeting.

#### **ITEM 4: SELECTION OF A COMMITTEE MEMBER FOR THE ACADEMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON A UBC INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY**

A. Singh, R. Kozak and R. Hajizadeh volunteered to be appointed to the Academic Advisory Committee.

#### **ITEM 5: UPDATE ON POLICY V-5: RESEARCH CENTRES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

Senate staff provided an update on the Policy V-5 consultation process. The initial comment period closed on March 14 with comments received from several faculties and the Office of the University Counsel. Comments received on or after the response deadline have not yet been reviewed and were not included in the attached summary. The Committee can expect to receive more information about those comments at its April meeting.

The Committee's discussion focused on several main issues:

- The draft policy currently provides that institutes and category 1 centres may have faculty members appointed on a part-time basis. It was stated that it is currently very unclear what implications this provision may have from the perspective of employment matters. Senate staff indicated that advice on this issue is being sought from Faculty Relations and that the Committee can expect to be further advised at its April meeting. The Committee can then determine whether to retain this provision in the draft.
- It was noted that the issue of academic unit status continues to be a challenging one. The term "academic unit" is not defined in the policy and is not consistently defined across the university.

It was asked whether the provision dealing with academic unit status should simply be removed from the policy. Senate staff responded that institutes and category 1 centres will be deemed academic units under other policies regardless of whether the provision is included or not, so there may value in retaining it for the purpose of clarity.

- It was noted that Section 8, concerning dual-campus centres and institutes, has been deleted from Version 1.3 of the draft following advice from the University Counsel's Office that it would not be appropriate to address this issue in a Vancouver Senate policy.
- It was recommended that in section 2(e) the words "...dealing with any aspect of..." be replaced with "...dealing with aspects of..."
- It was stated that the language used in the Definitions and Exclusions sections continues to be vague and open to interpretation. It is unclear precisely what "support academic research" means in practice. It is necessary to define this and perhaps provide examples to avoid excessive breadth.

Senate staff indicated that the draft policy will be presented to the Committee with another round of revisions incorporating feedback received from the Faculty of Medicine. It was suggested that the revised draft should eventually be presented to the Committee of Deans, the Academic Affairs Table organized by Simon Bates, and the Faculty Affairs Table organized by Moura Quayle.

#### **ITEM 6: COMMITTEE RESPONSE TO 2020/23 SENATE TRIENNIAL REVIEW**

The Committee discussed the questions posted to it as part of the 2020-2023 Senate triennial review. It was asked whether Committee members wished to express any feedback or offer substantive recommendations to the Nominating Committee for consideration. The following points were raised:

- It would be desirable to implement a system for tracking compliance with and implementation of Senate resolutions. It was noted that serious governance issues can result when Senate resolutions are routinely not implemented by the administration and no follow-up is conducted. There should be a register kept of outstanding Senate resolutions and a regular process of reporting on implementation progress.
- The Vice-President, Research and Innovation should be seated as a member of the Vancouver Senate in the same manner as the Vice-Principle, Research and Innovation is a member of the Okanagan Senate.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.