

## SENATE MINUTES

NOVEMBER 14, 2000

A special meeting of Senate was held on Tuesday, November 14, 2000, at 4:00 p.m. in Room E5004.

### 18. PRESENT

The President, Dr. E. Simpson, Mrs. B. Cox (for Dr. K. Keough), Professor A. Fowler, Mr. G. Collins, Professor J. Dempster, Mr. R. Ellis, Dr. C. Higgs, Dean G. Kealey, Dr. C. Loomis, Dean R. Lucas, Dean T. Murphy, Dr. Sandra MacDonald (for Dr. C. Orchard), Mr. L. O'Reilly, Dean R. Seshadri, Dr. T. Gordon, Dr. L. Walker, Ms. D. Whalen (for Professor H. Weir), Dr. R. Adamec, Dr. J. Ashton, Dr. G. Bassler, Dr. J. Bear, Dr. M. Brosnan, Dr. G. Clark, Professor M. Coyne, Dr. J. deBruyn, Mr. C. Dennis, Mrs. C. Dutton, Dr. J. Evans, Dr. V. Gadag, Dr. R. Gosine, Dr. D. Goldstein, Dr. G. Herzberg, Dr. M. Kara, Professor K. Knowles, Ms. K. Lippold, Dr. V. Maxwell, Dr. D. McKay, Dr. J. McLean, Dr. M. Mulligan, Dr. M. Murray, Dr. H. Pike, Dr. V. Richardson, Dr. D. Rideout, Dr. G. Sabin, Dr. W. Schipper, Dr. C. Sharpe, Dr. P. Sinclair, Dr. D. Treslan, Professor D. Walsh, Dr. B. Watson, Dr. M. Wernerheim, Mr. B. Whitelaw, Mr. D. Newton, Ms. Anna Muselius, Ms. Kirsten McDonald, Mr. K. Dunne, Ms. J. Mahoney, Ms. J. Morgan, Mr. D. Nowak, Mr. L. Walsh.

The President welcomed Ms. Joanne Morgan, the new undergraduate student Senator from Sir Wilfred Grenfell College,.

### 19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Dean W. Blake, Dr. Michael Paul, Dr. S. Saha, Ms. D. Rehner,

### 20. Academic Remedies as a Result of Disruption of Instructional Activities October 31, 2000 – November 12, 2000

A memorandum dated November 13, 2000, was received from Dr. E. Simpson, Vice-President (Academic), forwarding a report, outlining principles and remedies proposed in order to mitigate the

impact on students caused by the disruption of instructional activities from October 31, 2000 to November 12, 2000.

At the President's request, Dr. Simpson addressed Senate with regard to the documents.

Dr. Simpson advised that the University stands to lose six instructional days from the minimum of sixty mandated by Senate. He noted that with 10% of the term gone, instructional time will be compressed and in these imperfect circumstances there will be no perfect solution, so it should be borne in mind that in human affairs the ideal is the enemy of the good.

He noted that suggestions had been made that compression could be dealt with by extending the term or by meeting on weekends (especially to prevent some Science students from missing another week of laboratories). But such measures create problems for many students who have overriding prior arrangements or religious/employment/family commitments.

Dr. Simpson advised that, taking these things into account, the report consists of a package of remedies which has been designed to serve the greatest good of the greatest number, including leaving a lot of discretion to individual instructors and departments to complete the work that must be done.

The report was commissioned and developed in consultation with undergraduate and graduate student leaders from the St. John's campus and Sir Wilfred Grenfell College as well as with Deans and Directors, in an effort to minimize the impact on students of the disruption in academic activities between October 31, 2000 and November 12, 2000, and with the goals of having students successfully complete their Fall 2000 semester. The report is guided by respect for the academic integrity of courses and the desire to ensure that students are not disadvantaged by the interruption. In the case of those students who are disadvantaged, the purpose of the document is to provide appropriate academic remedies by Senate as recommended below.

The text of the report in its entirety is given below:

"Academic Remedies Proposed to Mitigate the Impact

## of the Disruption of Instructional Activities

October 31, 1000 – November 12, 2000

### 1. PRINCIPLES

The governing principles of this document are: Fairness to Students, Academic Integrity and Timely Information.

#### 1.1 Fairness to Students

Students affected by the disruption referenced above are entitled to leniency in the application of academic regulations, to reasonable alternative access to materials covered in their absence following the resumption of instructional activities, to reasonable extensions of deadlines and to such other remedies as Senate deems necessary and consistent with the principle of academic integrity.

#### 1.2 Academic Integrity

It is the obligation of Senate to ensure the academic integrity of all courses. No dilution of standards normally expected of students should be permitted and there should be as little diminution as possible in the instructional or supervisory support given to students.

#### 1.3 Timely Information

Students, staff and faculty have a right to be informed in a timely manner of procedures to be in effect at the conclusion of the disruption, any changed requirements, and rescheduled academic activities.

Strict application of the principle of academic integrity requires individual instructors and academic units to ensure that normal standards of course content and assessment are maintained. Given the lack of instruction during the disruption and the compression of instructional time resulting from it, maintaining academic integrity may well place an unacceptable burden on some students, especially on those whose performance to date has been below average. Reconciling the principle of academic integrity with the

practical consequences of the disruption and with the principle of fairness to students therefore requires instructors, academic units and Senate to see that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that no student's academic standing is irrevocably damaged as a result of the disruption. Recommended steps are set out below: they fall into two broad categories, namely rescheduling of instructional activities and relaxation of academic regulations and Senate policy. The principle of timely information requires instructors, academic units and Senate to advise students not only of the measures that are to be taken to accommodate legitimate needs arising from the disruption, but of the requirement to maintain academic integrity. Stressing both principles equally should ensure that students are made aware both of the need to concentrate fully on their course work during the remaining instructional time and of the availability of suitable remedies in case of a genuine inability to cope with the academic consequences of the disruption.

## 2. RESCHEDULING OF INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Our consultation process confirms that the impact of this disruption on course offerings is best dealt with directly by the academic units, where the most appropriate remedies for individual courses can be developed in consultation with the students affected. Such remedies will normally be governed by existing academic regulations, except as noted below in 3. It is recommended that Senate approve the following guidelines governing any changes to the methods of evaluation and the rescheduling of academic activities.

### 2.1 No Evaluative Devices in First Class

No evaluative device can be administered or due, in the first scheduled class held after the resumption of academic activity on November 14, in the case of on-campus courses, or in the first two days following the resumption of academic activity on November 14, in the case of distance education courses.

### 2.2 No Evaluative Devices on November 14 or 15

As previously announced by the Vice-President (Academic) and disseminated to the university community, no evaluative device can be administered or due on the days when the Fall semester break was originally scheduled (November 14 – 15, 2000).

### 2.3 Rescheduling of Evaluative Devices

Evaluative devices originally scheduled or due either during the disruption or after the resumption of academic activity can be rescheduled or cancelled. Resulting changes to the method of evaluation, including any redistribution of the allocation of marks for parts of the evaluation, can be made only after consultation with the students affected, and with the approval of the head of the academic unit. Such changes to the method of evaluation for any course must be communicated in writing to students no later than one week after the first lecture or laboratory in that course following the resumption of academic activity. Accommodation should be made for students who advise the instructor that they are disadvantaged by the change so approved.

### 2.4 Rescheduling Meeting Times

If, in the opinion of the course instructor and with the concurrence of the head of the academic unit, lectures, laboratories or other scheduled meeting times lost as a result of the disruption need to be rescheduled, such rescheduling will take place only after consultation with the students affected. Students unable to attend such rescheduled meetings are entitled to reasonable alternative access to materials covered in their absence.

Note: Saturday, November 18, 2000 was earlier recommended as a teaching day. However, in keeping with the view that makeup time is best dealt with directly by academic units, we now recommend that this be the case for all six instructional days lost as a result of the disruption. It is already evident from feedback that significant religious, personal, employment and family problems will result if an entire day of instructional activity is centrally scheduled on a Saturday.

### 2.5 Observance of Remembrance Day Holiday

The Remembrance Day holiday was observed on November 13, 2000, with no instructional activity on that day. Instead, Tuesday, December 5, 2000 is designated to be a teaching day. Classes will follow the Tuesday timetable on this day.

### 3. RELAXATION OF ACADEMIC REGULATIONS and SENATE POLICY

Successful completion of the Fall 2000 semester by all Memorial University students is the first priority. For a multitude of reasons, some articulated and others unknown, some students will require special consideration in meeting the challenges associated with completing the semester. The following remedies, intended to mitigate the complications that the disruption of instructional activities presents for students, are therefore recommended to Senate for approval in accordance with the governing principle of Fairness to Students:

#### 3.1 Modification to Fall 2000 Teaching Length

Up to and including Monday, October 30, 2000, 38 of the 60 scheduled days of instructional activity occurred in the Fall 2000 Semester. As of Tuesday, November 14, 2000, 16 teaching days remain. Senate Minute 116, 74/02/12, which states, in part, that as of Fall Semester 1974 each semester consist of at least twelve working weeks will be modified for the Fall 2000 semester which shall consist of 54 instructional days plus makeup time designated at the academic unit level in consultation with the students involved.

#### 3.2 Regulations for Continuance and Readmission

General Academic Regulation (Undergraduate) Y, Regulations for Continuance and Re-Admission, will not be applied at the end of the Fall semester to any student who would otherwise have an Academic Warning or be required to withdraw. This will ensure that the university has taken every possible measure to protect students from academic penalty arising from the disruption, and to prevent the precipitous dropping of courses by students. The Registrar's Office should write all students whose academic performance in the Fall 2000 semester would otherwise have led to academic warning or academic withdrawal, advising them to seek appropriate academic advice early in the Winter semester.

#### 3.3 Deadlines for Dropping Courses

General Academic Regulation (Undergraduate) P2(a), Changes in Registered Courses, and Q1, Withdrawals from University, and

Graduate Studies General Regulation C4(b), Changes in Course Registrations, be amended for all students, and students be permitted to drop courses or to withdraw from the university without academic prejudice up to and including the last day of lectures in the Fall 2000 semester, Tuesday, December 5, 2000. Students wishing to drop courses must first seek advice from both the course instructor and either the head of the student's major or delegate, or, in the case of students who have not declared a major, the head of the department of the course in question. Students wishing to withdraw from the university must first seek advice from the Dean or Director of their faculty or school, or the Senior Faculty Advisor for students who have not declared a major or the Principal of Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, as appropriate.

### 3.4 Regulations for Examinations and Evaluations

General Academic Regulation (Undergraduate) S6(b), Regulations for Examinations and Evaluations, be amended to permit the administration of evaluative devices normally prohibited by that regulation as late as November 28, 2000, one week later than prescribed by regulation. This would make provision for nine teaching days to administer evaluative devices from the time of return to classes until the beginning of the period when no evaluative devices are permitted.

## 4. GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC UNITS

Academic units are encouraged to be flexible in using existing regulations and appeals mechanisms to minimize the impact of the disruption on students. It is recommended that Senate endorse the following guidelines for adoption by all academic units in dealing with individual requests:

### 4.1 Deferred Examinations/Incomplete Grades

For purposes of applying General Academic Regulation (Undergraduate) S8b and S9 Regulations for Examinations and Evaluations, and Graduate Studies General Regulation G3 Deferral of Examinations and G4 Incomplete Grades/Change of Grade, the disruption of academic activities referenced above is deemed good cause and acceptable cause for submitting an INCOMPLETE grade, and for permitting a deferred examination.

## 4.2 Extensions of Deadlines

Upon individual request, extensions to deadlines for submission of assignments, laboratory reports and other evaluative devices should be granted to compensate students for the compression of academic activities resulting from the disruption.

## 4.3 Faculty/School Regulations

Leniency should be granted, where circumstances require, to students who may marginally fail to satisfy the requirements for promotion or advancement in undergraduate and graduate programmes.

## 5. DEFINITIONS

The term academic activity includes any work subject to evaluation or necessary for a student to meet the requirements of a course.

The term evaluative device includes, but is not limited to, assignments, laboratory projects, presentations, performances, and tests."

Following consideration, it was moved by Professor D. Walsh, Chair, Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, seconded by Dean G. Kealey, Chair, Academic Council of Graduate Studies, and carried, that Senate accept the report and the recommendations contained therein.

It was moved by Professor D. Walsh, seconded by Mr. Dunne and carried that Senate recommends that, where possible, instructors modify the remaining course material such that students are not subjected to unreasonable material overload. In subsequent courses for which the disrupted course is a prerequisite, attempts should be made, where possible, to include the necessary material that is dropped from a course this term.

It was moved by Professor D. Walsh, seconded by Dr. Sharpe and carried that Senate approve the principle of placing a notation on the transcript of students whose performance would otherwise have led to academic warning or academic withdrawal and that the



Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies be asked to develop appropriate wording for such a notation.

A question was raised regarding a similar notation on the transcripts of graduate students. It was agreed that the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies will be asked to prepare appropriate wording and share it with the School of Graduate Studies to take under advisement and to report back to Senate in December.

## 21. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.