

SENATE MINUTES

MAY 8, 2001

A special meeting of Senate was held on Tuesday, May 8, 2001, at 4:00 p.m. in Room E5004.

78. PRESENT

The President, Dr. E. Simpson, Professor A. Fowler, Dean W. Blake, Dean I. Bowmer, Dean B. Burnaby, Mr. G. Collins, Professor J. Dempster, Mr. R. Ellis, Dr. P. Moody–Corbett (for Dean G. Kealey), Dean R. Lucas, Dr. J. Black (for Dean T. Murphy), Dr. C. Orchard, Mr. L. O'Reilly, Dr. T. Gordon, Ms. D. Whalen (for Professor H. Weir), Dr. R. Adamec, Dr. J. Ashton, Professor P. Ayres, Dr. G. Bassler, Dr. J. Bear, Dr. M. Brosnan, Dr. J. Evans, Dr. V. Gadag, Dr. D. Goldstein, Dr. R. Gosine, Dr. G. Herzberg, Dr. M. Kara, Dr. D. Kimberley, Professor K. Knowles, Professor V. Kuester, Ms. K. Lippold, Dr. J. McLean, Dr. M. Mulligan, Dr. H. Pike, Ms. D. Rehner, Dr. V. Richardson, Dr. D. Rideout, Dr. G. Sabin, Dr. S. Saha, Dr. W. Schipper, Dr. C. Sharpe, Dr. P. Sinclair, Dr. D. Treslan, Dr. J. Usher, Professor D. Walsh, Dr. B. Watson, Dr. M. Wernerheim, Mr. B. Whitelaw, Ms. B. Kitchen, Ms. A. Muselius, Mr. J. Clements, Mr. A. Kennedy, Ms. J. Morgan, Ms. R. Smith, Mr. K. Wiseman.

The President welcomed the following new undergraduate student Senators:

Mr. Kirk Wiseman, President, MUNSU, Mr. Jamie Clements, Vice–President, Academic, MUNSU.

Mr. Aaron Kennedy, who was an undergraduate student representative during 2000–2001, was recently elected as Vice–President Executive, MUNSU, and as a result will serve on Senate for the 2001–2002 year.

The President also advised Senate that the terms of office of the following student representatives have been extended to September 1, 2001:

Mr. Christopher Collins, Mr. Daniel Maveneke, Ms. Raylene Smith (undergraduate students) and Ms. Anna Muselius (graduate student).

79. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr. C. Dennis, Mrs. C. Dutton, Dr. J. Finney Crawley, Dr. M. Laryea, Ms. J. Mahoney, Dr. D. McKay.

80. The Future of Research at Memorial University

Dr. Simpson introduced the topic of the special meeting by reminding Senators that a major theme of the Strategic Framework approved by Senate in September, 2000 is research. The then Vice-President (Research and International Relations), Dr. Kevin Keough, commissioned a report from a Committee chaired by Dr. Peter Tremaine on how to increase Memorial's research activities. That report served as a basis of discussion for academic deans and directors at a retreat held in February, 2001.

The objectives of that retreat were

- * to determine how Memorial can enhance its research activity and foster an environment that is uniformly conducive to effective research as well as dedicated teaching

- * to identify and prioritize the main strategic issues pertaining to research

- * to develop particular strategies around these issues and translate them into specific goals and actions, and

- * to devise means of measuring progress towards the goals

The document entitled "The Future of Research at Memorial University -- A Report to Senate from Academic Deans and Directors" which was circulated to Senators conveys the outcome of the retreat and forms the basis of the topic for discussion at this special meeting. A copy of the document is appended to these minutes.

Dr. Simpson suggested that Senate discuss the ideas outlined in the report as a means of testing their advisability or desirability, and drew Senate's attention to the following illustrative point on page 3 of the document which reads as follows:

- * The University will ask academic units to develop simple statements of their strategic research goals and refer to these goals in making proposals for faculty recruitment and resource allocation.

He advised that if this is desirable then deans and directors will be asked to develop such statements. He noted that the actions called for in the document are relatively modest and do not call on the University for vast infusions of money to support research endeavours, but rather to explore funding more within our immediate power.

A broad ranging discussion involving a large number of Senators then took place. Following is a list, illustrative but not exhaustive, of topics covered:

- * The need to provide seed money for new faculty and bridging funds for researchers whose grants have expired.

- * The desirability of assisting faculty members in the development of good proposals so that they become fundable or re-fundable as the case may be.

- * The need to investigate non-traditional funding sources such as the web based Community of Science.

- * The feeling that less time is available for research as resources shrink, and faculty members are called upon to undertake more activities which take time from research.

- * The seizure of FRETs several years ago remains a sensitive issue in the Faculty of Science and the restoration of a similar system would require very strong assurances that funds would not be seized in the future.

- * The advantages and disadvantages of implementing merit awards.

- * The need to balance pure and applied research.
- * The need to increase the number of graduate students.
- * The concern that assigning teaching assistant duties to graduate students might affect the quality of instruction. There is a need for assurance that teaching assistants are adequately trained for the classroom by completing for example, the "Graduate Programme in Teaching", offered by the School of Graduate Studies.
- * Similarly, care should be taken to maintain the level of graduate instruction. It was suggested that productivity gains in research should be matched by similar gains in teaching.

Dr. Simpson closed the discussion noting that the key words he had derived from the meeting are "seed, overheads, merit and time", all of which are matters which will be discussed in the months to come. He then thanked Senators for providing a focus to direct initial discussions and for their deep interest expressed in developing research as well as teaching.

The President asked Senators to engage in discussions on this topic in their Faculties, Schools and Departments, and to pass on any additional thoughts and suggestions to the Acting Vice-President (Research and International Relations).

81. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.