

Minutes of Special Meeting of Senate

Friday, April 14, 2023

4:00pm – 5:00 pm

Alumni Hall and via Zoom

Present: G. Keefe (Chair), K. Mears (Vice-Chair), P. Bernard, R. Bissessur A. Braithwaite, L. Brinklow, O. Brown, M. Buote, A. Campbell, T. Carroll, E. Côté, R. Dennis, A. Doyle, N. Etkin, G. Evans, R. Gauthier, H. Hill, I. Igbineweka, B. Linkletter, A. MacKenzie, A. MacLaren, D. MacLellan, T. Mady, W. Montelpare, D. Moses, C. Murray, S. Nandlal, G. F. Naterer, T. Ngo, W. Peters, J. Podger, R. Raiswell, C. Ryan, T. Saunders, J. Sentance, B. Stoughton, D. Sutton, M. Sweeney-Nixon, J. VanLeeuwen, B. Waterman, A. Zinck

Regrets: M. Arfken, D. Coll

Recorder: S. O'Connor

President Keefe called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm and provided a land acknowledgement. He thanked Senators for attending this special meeting of Senate in order to review APCC's motions regarding the completion of the 2023 Winter semester by April 28, 2023 after the four-week Faculty Association labour disruption.

He mentioned that the Senate Steering and Nominating Committee did not meet or set an agenda for this meeting as would be the normal process for a regular meeting of Senate. In the past, special meetings of Senate have also proceeded in this fashion due to time sensitivity, however the process for special meetings can be reviewed going forward.

B. Linkletter stated that because the motions coming before Senate were not submitted to the Secretary of Senate nor to the SSNC two weeks prior to the meeting, the motions may only be added to the agenda of this meeting with 50% plus one of the Senate members present.

President Keefe shared that the process of adding items to the agenda in advance pertains to regular meetings of Senate, nonetheless he called upon Senators to vote on adding the four motions from APCC to the meeting agenda. Unanimous agreement.

B. Waterman asked about ratification of the collective agreement by the Board of Governors, to which President Keefe answered that the Board will be meeting at 5:00 pm today regarding the matter.

1. Motion 1

MOTION (G. Naterer/T. Carroll) to approve the following changes to the examination period, academic regulations and calendar dates for completion of the 2023 Winter semester.

(See details in the attached APCC document – Pages 1-2)

B. Linkletter asked to make a friendly amendment which would move the end date from April 28, to May 2nd or 3rd, citing needs of honour students.

VPAR Naterer shared that the date was discussed extensively at APCC. In view of student input, and because there are other courses that begin in May, April 28th was the consensus.

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B. Linkletter stated that he would withdraw his amendment as the end date had clearly been given significant consideration.

C. Ryan voiced concern surrounding the wording under the second bullet of the first motion, asking for a friendly amendment to state that instructors agree to make every reasonable effort to accommodate the needs of individual students during the remainder of the academic year as related to issues that have arisen from the labour action.

A. MacKenzie voiced that he was comfortable with the wording change and reminded Senators that students have booked expensive, non-refundable plane tickets to fly home and to please keep situations like this in mind.

A. Braithwaite shared that the Faculty of Nursing students were concerned regarding the idea of the Pass/Fail option.

President Keefe stated that there are processes in the system to allow for appeals of grades and there is a way to address issues around grading.

T. Mady shared that a majority of Faculty of Business students reached out to ask that the traditional numerical grading system remain and that a Pass/Fail option not be introduced.

R. Raiswell shared that the Pass/Fail option is important because most will now need to balance a very heavy workload and the Pass/Fail would be an attractive option for some students in some contexts. He suggested a commitment be made by Monday to declare which courses they would like to have graded numerically and which they would like graded as Pass/Fail.

E. Cote voiced concern about the timeframe to reach these decisions.

A. MacKenzie shared that in a recent UPEISU survey for students, which outlined four grading options, Pass/Fail ranked second. He felt that most students would have interpreted it as the only option, not a choice.

A. MacKenzie also spoke to the motion in general. He said there are numerous students who do not want to return to class, they want the semester to end today, with credits being awarded. This is due to burnout, frustration, and other emotions that have come up in these past four weeks. Other issues include students who are failing their courses and not having time to redeem themselves. He also voiced concern regarding students who are in prerequisite courses and will have gaps in their learning when it comes time to taking the post-requisite courses. He added that students were not expecting to still be in classes as of April 28th, so many are finding it unfair to have to be in-person until that time.

A. MacKenzie concluded by sharing that the UPEISU does feel that what is outlined in the motion is the best course of action for students. Faculty members are urged to make accommodations for students who have paid for expensive plane tickets to travel home before April 28th. He asked that instructors be mindful that many students are feeling frustrated, burned out, and many do not want to be here.

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President Keefe revisited the suggestion of multiple grading systems within the same course and called upon Senators to weigh in on this option as this would be a major amendment. He suggested that Senate vote on it separately and go back to the original motion to vote on it as amended or not amended.

R. Raiswell moved for the friendly amendment of a multiple grading system of numeric or pass/fail within a course and also suggested that students commit to which grading system preference right away (Monday or Tuesday).

A. Braithwaite seconded.

D. MacLellan asked for clarification regarding how the Pass/Fail option will be implemented.

President Keefe offered that this could be at the discretion of the instructor rather than universal.

K. Mears mentioned that a faculty member asked if it is possible to make changes to the course syllabus where the grading change can be addressed.

M. Buote shared that during the days following post-tropical storm Fiona, she allowed students to have individual choices of their assessments due to the extraordinary conditions. They did not choose alternatives, but there was the option to give the power of choice to the students.

C. Ryan mentioned that instructors are to lay out all guidelines in the syllabus at the beginning of the semester. She also reiterated that students, despite the grading system, must engage in all of the assessment features of a course, so performance and grading do not change. However, if students are concerned that this concentrated time will result in a low mark and hurt their GPA, they have the option to choose Pass/Fail as a grading option.

W. Peters added that confidence should be in instructors to engage with their students, and regarding the Pass/Fail, the mechanism is really just about what shows up on the transcript. It should not change the manner in which students are assessed.

T. Mady asked for clarification regarding the deadline for students to decide upon which grading scheme to select. He voiced concern that students may not truly know which scheme they prefer until the end of the semester, and fairness to them right now is very important.

N. Etkin asked for clarification regarding the role of individual instructors and how they are submitting the grades to the Registrar.

S. Myers suggested that all students be given a numerical grade and the Pass/Fail option work as an appeal process at the end of the semester.

T. Mady offered that it could go to the Dean's office for approval rather than the Senate committee.

W. Peters shared that he is clear with his students that appeals are about inequitable treatment, etc. He would be concerned to see students engaging in the appeals process simply to ask for a Pass/Fail grade.

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President Keefe asked for clarification from the mover and seconder if this amendment will apply to all courses, and all sections within a course.

R. Raiswell agreed that it would.

President Keefe clarified further that it would be at the discretion of the course instructor and would not be a universal rule, but each student would have access to the option. Where there are multiple sections, instructors would be encouraged to follow the same pattern.

R. Raiswell agreed.

T. Mady commented that perhaps too much responsibility is being given to the instructors in this case. Perhaps the students should simply specify to the Registrar's office how they want their grades to appear on their transcript after they are aware of their numeric grades. This allows them the option of seeing how the next two weeks will play out and the assessment of the student does not change on the part of the instructor.

D. Sutton agreed that this is a fair method.

C. Ryan voiced concern about the complexity of this method and voiced that flexibility in assessments is perhaps the fairest that instructors can be.

T. Mady offered that it is important to consider the hypothetical student who initially selects the Pass/Fail grading method, but then finishes the course with a 90%, and now wants the numeric grade instead. He suggested that grades go to the Registrar numerically, and any student who prefers a Pass/Fail can indicate this to the Registrar's office, leaving the onus on the student and not on the instructor.

N. Etkin agreed, adding that it is important to be clear regarding what is a passing grade.

A. Braithwaite asked if there will be a deadline for students to submit their preference. She also voiced concern regarding the Registrar's office possibly becoming overwhelmed with student communications.

D. Sutton responded that a deadline is certainly necessary, especially considering the tight turnaround time for graduating students. Regarding her office being overwhelmed, she said it would depend upon the number of students who want to opt for the Pass/Fail option, but that her office would do their best to make it work.

President Keefe asked R. Raiswell if the change to the friendly amendment suited him and if T. Mady could state it as a new amendment.

R. Raiswell was agreeable to what works best administratively.

Adjustment to friendly amendment: That final grades may be converted to Pass/Fail at the request of the student, with the approval of the Dean.

C. Ryan noted that there are certain courses where a numerical grade is necessary in order to continue to another course or to continue even in a program. If students choose a Pass/Fail in such scenarios, they will have to retake the course in order to have a numerical grade.

President Keefe agreed that students would have to be informed that choosing a Pass/Fail grade could impact their ability to qualify for subsequent courses.

T. Mady then added to the friendly amendment: Depending on the nature of the program, students can opt for a Pass/Fail.

D. Sutton restated the friendly amendment: Students will have the option to request a Pass/Fail grade once submitted to the Registrar's office. Pass/Fail grades for prerequisites may impact future registration.

President Keefe included that students will be made aware that numerical grades may be required for certain future courses.

Vote on friendly amendment: Students will have the option to request a pass/fail grade once submitted to the Registrar's office. Students will be made aware that pass only grades may have future implications. CARRIED

K. Mears mentioned that sessional instructors have reached out to her regarding their contracts ending before grades are due. She said many have contracts which expire on April 20th, some on April 28th, but grades are due after this time.

President Keefe shared that grades are always due after contract end dates. He commented that this could not be resolved at this meeting.

A. Braithwaite added that, although grades are always due after contract end dates, this has been the case when the semester ends around April 7th, and sessional instructors can decide on due dates for final assignments well before their contracts expire. However, having just extended the semester to the end of April, it creates a problem this time around.

President Keefe noted that the end date of the semester is not being changed nor have the grade submission dates.

W. Peters asked, regarding communication to students, if it is accurate to let them know that if they opt for a Pass/Fail grade on a course that has a post-requisite requiring a numerical grade, they will not be able to advance to the post-requisite.

President Keefe confirmed that this was accurate.

2. Motions 2-4

OMNIBUS MOTION (G. Naterer/J. Vanleeuwen) that motions 2-4 be approved as noted below: CARRIED.

2) That for the AVC Class of 2023, clinical rotation credit requirements be reduced to 36 instead of 39. No changes are proposed to internal rotation requirements (i.e., 23 credits of core rotations and minimum 4 credits of internal electives).

(See details in the attached APCC document – Page 3)

3) That DVM students currently in an academic probationary period that is scheduled to end in May 2023 be permitted an extension of one semester to their academic probation if their weighted semester weighted average is $\geq 60\%$ but $< 65\%$.

(See details in the attached APCC document – Page 4)

4) That for the AVC 2023 sixth semester of the DVM Program (third year, winter semester) elective credit requirements be reduced from 16 to 13 hours.

(See details in the attached APCC document – Page 5)

3. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:06 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna Sutton
Secretary of Senate