

November 17, 2021

Minutes of the Senate Executive Meeting held on the above date at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom

Those present:

Dr. M. Benarroch, Chair
Prof. J. Anderson
Prof. P. Blunden
Dr. C. Cook
Mr. Wm. Dowie
Prof. M. Faubert
Dr. D. Hiebert-Murphy
Dean E. Jurkowski
Prof. D. Oliver
Prof. R. Souleymanov
Mr. J. Leclerc, University Secretary
Dr. S. Coyston,
Associate University Secretary

Assessors present:

Ms. E. Kalo
Dr. T. Mondor
Ms. S. Sekander
Prof. E. Thomson
Prof. D. Watt

Regrets:

Prof. R. Biscontri
Dean J. Taylor

Absent:

Ms. A. Kilgour
Ms. G. Romund

Also Present:

Mr. J. Adams, University Registrar and Executive Director, Enrolment Services
Dr. M. Torchia, Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)

President Benarroch was not available for the start of the meeting. Dr. Hiebert-Murphy assumed the Chair.

**I CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES
OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 10, 2021**

Referring to page 3 of the minutes, Professor Faubert noted the announcement of Academic Schedule changes emailed to the University community following the last meeting did not comment on the need for flexible submission deadlines for graduate studies or the possibility of Authorized Withdrawals. She asked if that information would appear elsewhere.

Dr. Torchia said considerable information had been provided to students. Responses to frequently asked questions concerning Voluntary Withdrawals also included information on Authorized Withdrawals. On the website with strike information, the availability of Authorized Withdrawals and information for graduate students had been highlighted on a webpage with information specifically for students.

Professor Faubert MOVED, seconded by Dean Jurkowski, THAT the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Senate Executive Committee held on November 10, 2021, be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

II **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES** - none

President Benarroch took over the Chair.

III **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH TEAM OF THE CONTINUITY STEERING COMMITTEE**

1. **Revised Academic Schedule due to UMFA Labour Action and Return to Teaching**

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Dr. Torchia recalled that, at the meeting on November 10th, the Academic and Research Team of the Continuity Steering Committee had brought forward two possible scenarios for a return to classes following a resolution to the strike by University of Manitoba Faculty Association (UMFA) members. He briefly reviewed the Team's recommendations for two additional scenarios, Scenarios 3 and 4. Key differences between the scenarios brought forward previously and the current proposals included, first, that instructional days for interrupted classes would carry into January 2022; second, there would be a corresponding shift to the dates for the Fall Term examination period; third, in Scenario 4, revisions to the 2022 Winter Term would be required.

Dr. Torchia said, in Scenario 3, where UMFA members would return to teaching between November 24 and up to and including November 30, the Academic and Research Team was recommending the following changes to the 2021-2022 Academic Schedule: the last instructional day for interrupted classes would move from December 10, 2021 to January 12, 2022; an alternate examination period for interrupted classes would be set for January 14 – 16, 2022, which would provide for one day between the end of classes and the start of examinations; for both continuing and interrupted classes, the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline would be moved from November 23 to December 10, 2021 and the final grade appeal deadline would be moved from January 25 to February 4, 2022.

Dr. Torchia said, under Scenario 4, where classes would resume between December 1 and up to and including December 7, the Academic and Research Team was recommending the following changes to the 2021-2022 Academic Schedule, for the Fall Term, for interrupted classes only: the last instructional day would move from December 10, 2021 to January 19, 2022; an alternate examination period would be set for January 21 – 23, 2022; the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline would move from November 23 to December 21, 2021. Additionally, for both continuing and interrupted classes, the final grade appeal deadline would move from January 25 to February 11, 2022. Changes to several 2022 Winter Term dates would also be necessary, including: the first instructional day would be moved from January 17 to January 24 and the last instructional day would be moved from April 18 to April 20; the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline would be changed from March 30 to April 1 for Winter Term courses and from January 28 to February 24 for spanned courses; the Winter Term Break would be reduced to one day, on February 22, which together with the University closure on February 21 would provide students with a slightly longer weekend. Dr. Torchia referred committee members to the documents included with the agenda for changes to other Winter Term dates.

Dr. Torchia said the Academic and Research Team was also recommending that, if required, the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) approve the changes to the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline, as set out under Scenarios 3 and 4.

Dr. Torchia informed Senate Executive that the Academic and Research Team and the Office of the Registrar and Enrolment Services (ORES) were monitoring the February 2022 graduation deadlines. Once teaching resumed, a second deadline would be identified to accommodate students who might have experienced delays in completing any program requirements. Senate would be informed of any changes.

Dean Jurkowski MOVED, seconded by Professor Faubert, THAT Senate Executive approve, on behalf of Senate:

- **THAT should there be a return to teaching of striking UMFA members between November 24th, 2021 and up to, and including, November 30th, 2021, the Academic Schedule revisions as presented in Scenario 3 would be implemented;**
- **THAT should there be a return to teaching of striking UMFA members between December 1st, 2021 and up to, and including, December 7th, 2021, the Academic Schedule revisions as presented in Scenario 4 would be implemented.**

In response to a concern that the revised date for the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline occurred after the start of the examination period for continuing classes, Dr. Torchia clarified that, under both Scenario 3 and 4, the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline for continuing classes would be December 10, which was prior to the start of examinations on December 11. Under Scenarios 1, 2, and 3, the Team had recommended that the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline for continuing and interrupted courses be the same in order that the process could continue to be managed automatically in Banner. Once the deadline dates were different for continuing and interrupted courses, it would be necessary for units to manually manage the process.

Referring to the revised dates for the 2022 Winter Term under Scenario 4, Mr. Dowie asked why the dates for the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline and the last instructional day would be adjusted by only one and two days, respectively, where the term would start one week later than originally scheduled. He raised a concern about the potential for adverse impacts on students who deferred much of their learning in courses to the end of the term.

Dr. Torchia said the revised schedule for the 2022 Winter Term would retain the same number of instructional days and instruction hours. In addition to the number of available instructional days, the proposed schedule reflected the distribution of holidays in the 2020 calendar. With respect to the concern about late learners, Dr. Torchia observed that, regardless of the date on which the last instructional day fell in the calendar, the number of instructional days would be the same. Moving the date would not address students who waited until the end of term to learn the course material.

Dean Jurkowski recalled that, at the previous meeting, Senate Executive had approved a provision that no assignments be due or tests held for the first 72 hours following the first class session after the return to teaching. He asked whether there would also be a period of time between the end of the strike and the resumption of classes.

Mr. Leclerc said the date for the resumption of classes would be decided as part of the return-to-work agreement that would be negotiated between UMFA and the University. He anticipated based on past experiences that there would be one or two days between the end of the strike and the resumption of classes.

Professor Watt asked whether students had been consulted on the proposed changes to the Academic Schedule, including, in particular, the recommendation under Scenario 4 to reduce the Winter Term Break to one day rather than extend the Winter Term into the month of May. He recognized that extending the Winter Term into May might delay the start of the Summer Term. He sought Ms. Kalo's and Mr. Dowie's views on students' preference for either option.

Dr. Torchia said the Team's decision to recommend a shorter Winter Term Break had not been taken lightly. The Team had felt it was the better option given that a later date for the end of term would prevent students from applying to other programs at the University of Manitoba and at other institutions with established application deadlines. Mr. Adams added that there would also be implications for students' ability to graduate in the Spring.

President Benarroch said he had met with representatives of the University of Manitoba Students' Union (UMSU) and the University of Manitoba Graduate Students' Association the previous week. He had asked about students' preference. The advice received had been that students want to know the dates well in advance so they can plan.

Based on concerns she had heard from students, Ms. Kalo said some students would be upset by a shortened Winter Term Break and might feel like they were not valued. She proposed there would be ways to respond to these students' concerns, including, for example, by providing additional mental health and other resources. A larger number of students were aware of and had identified concerns about the ramifications of ending the Winter Term in May for their academic careers, given potential impacts on graduation dates, deadlines for applications to other programs, and practicum and co-op placements.

Ms. Kalo said she appreciated the detailed scenarios developed by the Academic and Research Team. She confirmed that one concern discussed during the meeting with President Benarroch was the need for timely and transparent communications with students. She suggested that when information about Scenarios 3 and 4 were communicated to students the communication should indicate the reasons why particular decisions had been made, including, for example, why a decision was made to shorten the Winter Term Break rather than have the Winter Term end in May.

Professor Watt suggested, in order to call attention to the option for Authorized Withdrawals and the need for flexibility for graduate student deadlines, that

information on these things might be included in the recommendation currently being considered, included in an email or other communications to students, or highlighted on the initial webpage with strike information for students. He remarked that the information was initially difficult to find on the webpage.

Dr. Torchia said he would share suggestions for communicating with students that were offered by Ms. Kalo and Professor Watt with staff in Marketing Communications.

Professor Watt said he appreciated the planning involved in developing the various scenarios, with recommended changes to the Academic Schedule, and necessity to provide clarity for students. He indicated he had had a positive exchange with President Benarroch and Mr. Leclerc regarding the reasons for bringing the recommendations forward to Senate Executive for approval. He suggested it would be useful to have a clear statement that the various scenarios for revising the Academic Schedule, which appeared to identify deadlines, would not be used as leverage in bargaining between UMFA and the University.

President Benarroch noted that the union and the University were not at the bargaining table presently and information was being communicated through the mediator. He indicated he had raised Professor Watt's concern with the University's bargaining team and had instructed the team that revisions to the Academic Schedule should not be used in bargaining. He remarked that the various scenarios for revising the Academic Schedule should put pressure on both the University and UMFA to arrive at a resolution to the strike.

Mr. Leclerc thanked Professor Watt for communicating the concern. He informed the committee, as he had previously communicated to Professor Watt, that Senate Executive and Senate had considered modifications to the Academic Schedule for various timeframes for a return to teaching in 2016, as well. One difference was that four scenarios had been brought forward as part of one recommendation. In the current situation, the Office of the Registrar and Enrolment Services required some additional time to determine, for Scenarios 3 and 4, whether it would be possible to include a break between the end of classes and the start of examinations. Mr. Leclerc assured Senate Executive that the Academic and Research Team's discussion of the recommended changes to the Academic Schedule did not consider matters related to bargaining but were focused on logistics to be considered so students, support staff, and faculty would have the information they require for planning.

Professor Watt thanked President Benarroch and Mr. Leclerc for their responses both prior to and at the meeting.

Professor Thomson also thanked President Benarroch and Mr. Leclerc. He said he appreciated the planning difficulties and that these placed pressures on both the University and UMFA and had consequences for students.

Mr. Dowie proposed that, given potential impacts on graduate students' progress in their courses, graduate faculty might be encouraged to use continuing grades (CO) for compassionate reasons. Some students might require time to adjust given other considerations, including pressures and responsibilities related to the

COVID-19 pandemic, finding employment, and supporting young families. Mr. Dowie raised the possibility that Senate Executive might make a recommendation on a compassionate grading protocol either at this meeting or a future one, as it had done for the 2020 Winter Term in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Senate Executive, March 25, and April 1, 2020).

The Chair observed that considerations concerning a compassionate grading protocol were too complex for the committee to consider without a proposal. Also, he would want Senate to decide on the matter and Senate Executive would be considering a recommendation to cancel the December Senate meeting under item V (1).

Ms. Kalo informed Senate Executive that UMSU was developing a compassionate grading proposal that it would bring forward to the Academic and Research Team for its consideration before it was brought to Senate Executive. The proposal would include information from community consultations about how the proposal might affect students in the long term, including with respect to future applications to other programs. The objective would be to provide students with some accommodations given the interruptions to their classes and additional stress experienced while also ensuring there would not be ramifications for their academic careers.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

IV MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

1. **Revised Voluntary Withdrawal Deadline, 2021 Fall Term** Page 7

President Benarroch recalled that, at its meeting on November 3rd, Senate approved a recommendation that the Provost be authorized to amend the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline for the 2021 Fall and 2022 Winter Terms, if required, and to report the decision to Senate. He referred committee members to the memo from Dr. Hiebert-Murphy confirming her approval of a change to the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline, for the 2021 Fall Term, to December 7th.

V ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

1. **Cancellation of December Senate Meeting** Page 8

President Benarroch reminded the committee that the Senate Meeting Rules specify that:

...the Executive Committee of Senate shall have the authority to cancel a meeting of Senate if it determines that the amount and nature of the agenda items make it practicable to defer consideration, and provided that notice of such cancellation is given to members of Senate at least seven (7) days prior to the date Senate is scheduled to meet.

Dean Jurkowski MOVED, seconded by Professor Faubert, THAT Senate Executive cancel the December 1, 2021 meeting of Senate.

Professor Thomson asked if the question of whether to cancel the December Senate meeting was not premature, in event that UMFA and the University were to reach an agreement prior to the scheduled meeting date. He observed that in 2016 Senate had met shortly after the conclusion to the strike to ratify items of business that had been endorsed by Senate Executive.

Mr. Leclerc recalled that in 2016 Senate had not delegated its authority to Senate Executive to make certain decisions on its behalf. Also, when Senate Executive had met in 2016 to set the December agenda, the strike had already ended. Mr. Leclerc referred committee members to the agenda for a listing of the items of business to be included on December Senate agenda. He noted that, normally, Senate Executive would have been meeting on this day to set the agenda for the December Senate meeting. In some cases, individuals who would have spoken to the reports might not have been available for today's meeting.

In response to a question, Mr. Leclerc said, if required, additional meetings of Senate committees might be scheduled to expedite the review and approval process. He anticipated this might not be necessary, as Faculty, College, and School Councils, which bring forward recommendations to the Senate committees, would not be meeting during the strike. Additionally, he noted that many of the items of business that had been received for the December Senate agenda would not be implemented before September 2022, so there would be time for Senate to consider these things at a later meeting.

CARRIED

VI ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:14 p.m.

These minutes pages 1 to 7, together with the agenda, pages 1 to 8, comprise the minutes of the meeting of Senate Executive Committee held on November 17, 2021.