

**SENATE MEETING
PUBLIC SESSION
MINUTES**

March 28, 2007

3:30 – 5:30 PM

Room 7-172 Bentley Centre - Prince George Campus

Present:

E. Annis, K. Beeler, H. Brunt, D. Casperson, D. Cozzetto (Chair), R. Ellis, A. Espíritu, M. Gorzelak, J. Holler, J. Hyndman, E. Jensen (teleconference), H. Li, J. Li, D. Macknak, M. Mandy, W. McGill, K. Medhurst, E. Owen-Williams, J. Randall, E. Rapaport, J. Safaei Boroojeny, , A. Smith, R. Tait (Vice-Chair)

Regrets:

H. Domshy, D. Hemingway, D. Kimmie, E. Kinghorn, H. Giroday, A. Nussbaumer, D. Nyce, C. Opio, E. Pratt, M. Reed, S. Rennebohm, H. Samadi, B. Simard, M. Thomson, S. Wagner

Non-voting members present:

C. Myers (Recording), S. Keith, K. Kielly, P. Madak, C. Smith, H. Smith

The meeting commenced at 3:30 p.m.

1.0

S-20070328.01

Approval of the Agenda

Tasa / Randall

That the Agenda for the March 28, 2007 Public Session of Senate be approved as presented.
CARRIED.

2.0

President's Report

Cozzetto

2.1

2007 / 2008 Budget Review and Discussion

2.1.1

Presentation of Preliminary 2007 / 2008 Budget Information by President Cozzetto

President Cozzetto outlined the issues related to the 2007 / 2008 preliminary budget, indicating that the University was faced with a budget imbalance of \$6.0 million, that there had been Budget Cabinet meetings, information provided to the community on the UNBC website, and that the Board of Governors had approved a three-year budget process plan, informed by the consultants of Mansell and Harris, on January 27, 2007.

Chief Financial Officer Colleen Smith provided Senators with a presentation outlining the current budget situation, highlighting the following points:

- The budget is one part of the management plan for the University
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- Much more flexibility is being built into the budget, which will permit the University to respond to opportunities which may arise
- The University was on track to hit the budget targets set for the 2007 / 2008 fiscal year
- A claw-back of funds from the province, in the amount of approximately \$800,000, will occur in the operating grant from the 2007 / 2008 to 2009 / 2010 budget years, as the result of failing to meet student FTE targets
- Any funds the University might receive for additional graduate spaces had not yet been incorporated into the budget, but the University expected to receive word in this regard by Friday, March 30, after which time this information would be incorporated into the budget.

2.1.2

S-20070328.02

Report from the Senate Committee on the University Budget (SCUB)

Ellis / Smith

That the 2007 Annual Report from the Senate Committee on the University Budget be received.
CARRIED.

Senator Espíritu thanked the members of SCUB for their contributions, and Allyson Truant for her diligent support of the committee. Senator Espíritu added that several groups had either been consulted or had their concerns brought to the committee by their representatives, and drew attention to the following points from the committee's report:

- It was important to reiterate the recommendations made by SCUB in 2006, as the committee had recommended changes to the budget process, so there was a synergy between what the committee had recommended in 2006 and what was currently being done in terms of the budget process and organizational changes
- Information and comments SCUB received from the University community suggested that there was widespread support for change
- Although the process undertaken since the inception of the changes had been open and transparent, there was nonetheless a feeling that Senators' voices hadn't been heard in the process, and a commitment was expressed that Senate wished to work with administration to make that happen
- It was critical to keep our goal in mind — our students
- There was an active rumour mill, with comments being heard as far away as Vancouver, and frustration had been expressed that the image of the University had been compromised and marketing "undone."
- Increased social dialogue and communication would be helpful in bringing the University community together and moving forward with the task at hand

President Cozzetto thanked SCUB for their report and their work, on behalf of Senate and the University, and opened the floor to discussion.

2.1.3

Senate Discussion

Senator Mandy asked whether there would be an additional Senate meeting in June to review the final budget, and Dr. Cozzetto indicated there would be, if it was acceptable to Senate. Senator Espíritu added that SCUB planned to hold additional meetings also, but that the committee would be chaired by another member of the committee, as she would be off campus.

It was questioned what would happen with the enrolment contingency funds if they were not used, and C. Smith responded that this hadn't yet been considered, as it hadn't been incorporated in previous budgets, but that she anticipated the University reserves would then not be used as extensively.

The guidelines for accessing funds from the strategic investment pool was questioned, and Dr. Brunt responded that it was important to think about the Embracing Change, Promoting Excellence (ECPE) process in this regard, that fund requests would be entertained in relation to 6 areas outlined in the ECPE report. He added that strategic funding requests, in excess of \$5 million, had already been received.

Whether the restructuring of the library had been taken into account in the structural budget was questioned, and C. Smith responded that it had not, but that was not to say that it wasn't funded, as \$1.4 million had been received from the province for that purpose. In response to an additional question about cost overruns in this regard, C. Smith added that normally those funds wouldn't be taken out of the operating budget, but the University would work within the total funding provided for the project, and make decisions about what would and wouldn't proceed in order to stay within budget.

It was asked whether the breakdown of the number of positions affected by the base budget reduction in salaries was available. C. Smith indicated that she did not know that information off hand, but Dr. Brunt responded that, in relation to CUPE positions, 14 positions, but only three individuals, were impacted, and that several Directors and Exempt staff positions were affected. President Cozzetto added that this information could be provided to Senators, and C. Smith indicated it would be provided in the June budget, which was satisfactory to the Senator raising the question.

The issue of debt servicing was raised, particularly the interest on the Northern Sport Centre (NSC) debt and the length of time it would take to pay this off. C. Smith responded that the debt sits with the government and their reporting, not with UNBC, and that many universities are in similar situations as the result of substantially increased construction costs. In relation to the NSC, C. Smith indicated that the Board of Governors had approved internal financing of the shortfall from University reserves, \$1 million of which would be rebuilt into the reserves, and that it was anticipated that the amount would be financed over 20 years. It was questioned whether the University had been pursuing other options for paying down the NSC shortfall, such as naming opportunities. President Cozzetto replied that naming opportunities were being pursued, but that it would not be enough to cover the entire shortfall. It was also questioned whether the province had been asked for further funding, and Dr. Cozzetto indicated that such a request would not be accommodated, but that the federal government had been approached, and although a favourable response had not yet been received, nor had the request been rejected.

The question was raised whether the funds the University receives from the province for graduate spaces would be revealed at the Board of Governors meeting on Friday. Dr. Brunt responded that, if the information was finalized by Friday, it would likely be presented to the Board. It was questioned whether Aboriginal access FTE's were being pursued, and Dr. Brunt indicated that they were, but that this would be a negligible amount, as there were only 100 FTEs available province-wide. He added that the University would be responsible for meeting graduate growth FTE targets, which thus exerted pressure on Programs to accommodate these additional students at a time when offers of admission have already been made by Programs and the University is reducing faculty and staff. In addition, it was expressed that Programs can deal with this quickly, as many applicants had already received offers elsewhere.

Capital Equipment Replacement funding was discussed, and Dr. Brunt indicated that he hoped the University would never again be in the position where these funds were so limited. It was suggested that this funding should be tied in with the AVI, such as in relation to laboratory equipment.

It was asked whether SmartCard fees would be reduced as a result of the service being reduced. C. Smith responded that the University was currently doing a detailed analysis into how to proceed in this regard.

The question was raised as to whether faculty members were being increased in some Programs. Dr. Brunt responded that the short answer to this question was "no," and although some Programs needed more faculty, every attempt would be made not to do so, and when absolutely necessary, to hire sessional instructors. It was also asked whether faculty would ever become cost-neutral, and Dr. Brunt responded that, theoretically, this should happen at some point, but if it ever did, that it wouldn't happen anytime soon.

It was questioned whether there had been any success in finding funding for the Co-operative Education Program, and Dr. Brunt replied that all budget holders had been approached, and that he was now in the process of attempting to find funding for career development initiatives in general, not simply the Co-op Program, and added that he expected this to be resolved by mid-May.

3.0

S-20070328.03

Adjournment

Jensen / Hyndman

That the Senate meeting be adjourned.
CARRIED.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.