

**SPECIAL SENATE MEETING
PUBLIC SESSION
MINUTES**

March 30, 2005

3:30 – 5:30 PM

Room 7-172 Bentley Centre - Prince George Campus

Present:

K. Beeler, R. Berthiaume, T. Binnema, C. Brown, H. Brunt (Vice-Chair), S. Cochran, B. Ellis, A. Espíritu, A. Fredeen, D. Hemingway (teleconference), K. Hutchings, C. Jago (Chair), E. Jensen, K. Kielly (Acting Registrar), E. Kinghorn (teleconference), Z. Le Fevre, M. Mandy, B. McGill, B. Milakovic, P. Montgomery, B. Morrison, K. Naziripour, A. Nussbaumer, D. Nyce (teleconference), D. Procter, J. Randall, E. Rapaport, S. Scholefield, B. Simard (teleconference), B. Tait, S. Wilson, N. Zutz, C. Myers (Recording Secretary)

Regrets:

B. Anderson, S. Beeler, M. Blouw, J. DeGrace, D. Ditto, A. Hussein, J. Kennedy-Pannett, B. Malcolm, R. Matheson, B. Muir, C. Opio, K. Penner, F. Rahemtulla, D. Small

Non-voting members present:

J. Ross (Director of Institutional Analysis and Planning)
C. Smith (Director of Finance and Budgets)

The meeting commenced at 3:35 p.m.

1.0 S-200503.30.01

Approval of the Agenda

Tait / Milakovic

That the Agenda for the March 30, 2005 Public Session of Senate be approved as presented.
CARRIED.

2.0 President's Report

Jago

2.1 2005 / 2006 Budget Review and Discussion

2.1.1 Presentation of Budget by President

The President provided a presentation of the proposed 2005/06 UNBC budget (April 1, 2005 – March 31, 2006), and requested Senate's input prior to the budget being forwarded to the Board of

Governors for approval. Some of the highlights of the budget outlined in the presentation were as follows:

- Tuition fees were capped at the rate of inflation (2%) in the February 2005 Throne Speech, which led to a revision of the proposed budget for 2005/06, and resulted in the budget being finalized much later than was normally the case
- The Ministry of Advanced Education increased the UNBC grant from \$34,714,260 to \$36,470,304, and provided some additional one-time grants in the total amount of \$785,000, one of which was to replace the Northern Allowance, which was discontinued
- The proposed tuition fee increase was 2%, to take effect May 1, 2005 for undergraduate students and September 1, 2005 for graduate students
- Tuition fee revenues were based on growth of approximately 5.6%, and included a \$200,000 enrolment growth contingency fund
- The multiplier for new international undergraduate students was increased from 3.0 to 3.5
- Significant inflationary pressures were identified, from salaries, benefits and expenditures
- In the planning process, every effort was made to align priorities with current strategic planning initiatives, particularly student recruitment and retention
- New initiatives were funded mostly through internal cuts and re-allocations
- New initiatives identified in the budget were: a Dean of Enrolment Management and Academic Advisement; a new academic advisement position in the College of Arts, Social and Health Sciences; additional student recruitment and support positions, and; the transfer of one position from Communications to ACS and the concomitant creation of a new position in Communications, to maximize the role of the Web in student recruitment and University promotion
- The Teaching Assistant stipend was increased by 5%, which was the first increase since 1994
- The number of Teaching Assistantships was increased by 10
- Other operating budget expenditures which were identified included funding for the University Archives, the MSc Nursing (Nurse Practitioner) Program, the operation of the animal research lab, and international student recruitment
- The President identified the basing of tuition revenue on 5.6% growth as a budgetary risk, as growth over the previous few years had been approximately 1.4% to 2.0% (to offset the risk of not achieving targeted growth, a \$200,000 contingency fund was included in the budget)
- Also identified as a budgetary risk was the funding of the Capital Equipment Replacement Reserve from one-time grants for 2005/06, which would have to be reinstated in the operating budget in future years

In conclusion, the budget was characterized as being largely a budget of “cuts and re-allocations.” No layoffs had been proposed, and although one vacant faculty position in Environmental Science had been eliminated, two Canada Research Chair appointments offset the elimination of that position. Finally, the President indicated that, as required by legislation, the 2005/06 proposed budget was balanced with total revenues and expenses at \$52,434.236.

The text and details of the entire proposed 2005/06 UNBC budget were included in the meeting package.

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

The Chair of the Senate Committee on the University Budget (SCUB), Senator Espiritu, presented a verbal report on the budget from SCUB. She indicated that she did not yet have a written report prepared, as the budget did not become available to SCUB until late in the afternoon on March 29 (the day prior to the Senate meeting), as a result of the late finalization of the UNBC grant from the provincial government. Consequently, although one of the mandates of SCUB was to advise the President on the setting of the University budget, SCUB was unable to fulfill that mandate, so the report consisted of advice and reaction regarding the proposed finalized budget and the budgeting process.

In order to gather information for their report, SCUB began meeting as a committee in November, 2004. Between November 2004 and March 2005, the committee underwent several membership changes, and Senator Espíritu was elected as Chair in January, 2005. The committee members were provided with budget documents from the Vice Presidents, the Academic Budget Council, and the Director of Finance, Colleen Smith. They met with the President several times, as well as with members of the President's Executive Council.

In the committee's analysis of the proposed 2005/06 UNBC budget, the following comments were offered:

- SCUB was pleased that many of the recommendations made by the Academic Budget Council, directed towards ensuring the delivery of high quality education at UNBC, were addressed in the budget, and added that the approval of these recommendations would address concerns regarding recruitment and retention of students
- SCUB indicated appreciation for the increased funding for graduate students
- Pleasure was expressed with the fact that there were no layoffs proposed in the budget
- SCUB identified the following issues as concerns: the loss of the Northern Allowance; the reliance upon increasing tuition fees to manage and balance the budget; the continued shortfall of graduate student funding, despite additional funding allocations; the addition of another Dean position, and whether adding teaching positions might be a better utilization of resources; lack of budgeting for maintenance of both new and aging buildings; the use of one-time grant money to fund the contribution to the Capital Equipment Reserve Fund; inflationary costs, and; the possible consequences of failing to meet the targeted growth rate of 5.6%.

In conclusion, SCUB offered the following recommendations for consideration:

- The budget should not compromise teaching and research, which the report referred to as "the lifeblood of the University"
- The question should be addressed as to whether planning for growth can be a reality within a budgeting environment of budget cuts and shrinking resources, or whether the University should instead focus on strengthening what is currently in place
- the University needs a comprehensive strategy for meeting its goals for growth, staff and faculty recruitment and retention, and quality of education, because although growth goals are identified in the Annual Three Year Institutional Service Plan, there is no budgetary plan in place for achieving these goals
- Budget-making should be done with long term goals in mind, with a multi-year budget planning process, so that the University is not so vulnerable to unpredictable demands. In relation to this point, the Chair added that SCUB was sensitive to the fact that the University's budget was dependent upon the budgeting policies of the Government of BC's Ministry of Advanced Education, and that SCUB was pleased to learn from the President that the BC government was seriously considering a multi-year process for University budgets.

In response to the recommendation regarding growth goals, President Jago clarified that enrolment growth is prescribed by the government, and that this proposed budget contained no Program growth except for the Nurse Practitioner Program. He added that, if new Programs are proposed, Senate has the opportunity to debate the approval of these programs.

The President also indicated that the recommendation for a multi-year plan had been a constant refrain of SCUB over the years, and he envisioned the possibility of this happening for the first time, as government processes were considerably different from what they had been in the past.

The Chair of Senate thanked the Chair of SCUB for her report, and opened the floor to discussion.

2.1.3 Senate Discussion

Senator Mandy inquired what the total number of Teaching Assistant positions was, taking into account the ten positions that were added in the proposed budget, and Dean Tait responded that the total was approximately 78.

Senator Rapaport requested clarification with regard to the meaning of the term “maximizing the web,” related to the position added in Communications. Dr. S. Cochran, Vice President Administration and Finance, indicated that the term related to providing assistance to departments with regard to the material they provide on the UNBC website, with the intent of ensuring completeness of information on the website for students who were looking at the website during the process of determining what university to attend.

Senator Brown asked whether the President expected to have further discussion with the government regarding the discontinuation of the Northern Allowance. The President responded that he had already spoken with the government about the University’s discontent with this decision, and that he did not intend to let this matter drop.

The cost of the new Dean position was requested by Senator Fredeen. Dr. H. Brunt replied that this would be a seconded position with backfill, paid with a stipend, and that the budgeted amount for the position, including all the support required for it, was \$55,000.

Senator Scholefield asked Dean Tait what amount had been proposed for the Teaching Assistant stipend. Dean Tait replied that a proposed stipend amount had not been discussed but, rather, a process that, over 3 years, would see the University move to stipend levels that were equivalent to those of a benchmark group that the University considered its competitors.

Senator Rapaport asked whether there would be cost recovery for the animal care facility, and the Chair responded that the plan was to develop a cost recovery process for the facility, using the indirect costs of research to assist with the financing.

Senator Fredeen asked whether there was any word on the Northern Sport Centre, and the Chair replied that the community would have to wait for “a bit” in this regard. Senator Fredeen added that he viewed this new building as a recruitment tool, with which the Chair agreed. The Chair added that he did not foresee the inclusion of expenses related to the operation of this building in the University’s operating budget.

A. Kranz questioned the operating costs of the new buildings, and the President responded that this budget included a reduction in the contracted amounts for janitorial and security services on campus. Related to this question, Senator Rapaport asked about the energy and heating costs for buildings on campus, and the President added that these costs were itemized in the budget and that they were part of a current discussion with the government. Dr. S. Cochran indicated that a project to install a new chiller was underway, with a projected energy cost reduction of \$140,000 per year.

Senator Ellis asked why, when most universities tended to have a staff person responsible for recruiting, UNBC thought it was important to have a Dean perform this task. Dr. H. Brunt responded to Senator Ellis’ question, indicating that the movement in the post-secondary field has been to create Vice Presidents of Enrolment Management, for several reasons. Universities are required to manage students so that they get the most out of their university experience. In order to do this, Dr. Brunt stated, UNBC has invested money throughout the University, but the services this funding is meant to provide are uncoordinated. Bringing the responsibility for student recruitment and retention and student services under the auspices of a Dean would ensure coordination of these services, and hopefully provide better outcomes. Dr. Brunt emphasized that, as a result of the fact that the University is expected to continue increasing enrolment, which has become tied to funding, this matter must now be taken very seriously. Dr. Brunt concluded with the comment that colleges are currently dealing with the situation of not having met their enrolment targets, which has been painful for them.

2.2 2005/06 – 2007/08 Annual Three Year Institutional Service Plan (Presentation and Discussion)

A presentation of the Annual Three Year Institutional Service Plan was undertaken by the Chair, who indicated that the document was still undergoing slight revision. The Chair added that, as part of the Ministry of Advanced Education's Accountability Framework, the University is required to file this Plan with the government on a yearly basis. The Chair highlighted the following points in the Plan:

- The purpose of the Plan was to communicate to the public and the Ministry the results an institution planned to achieve and how it planned to do so, and how those achievements contributed to the provincial public post-secondary system
- Some of the components of the plan were an outline of the environment and planning context, the identification of the institution's goals, objectives, and performance measures and targets, and a summary of the financial outlook and capital projects
- The 2004/05 – 2006/07 Service Plan was based on ACTION, the Strategic Research Plan, the 5-Year Capital Plan, and Ministry performance measures and targets
- The current Plan, a continuation of the previous plan, was based on the commencement of current planning initiatives, and marked a transition between the 2004/05 – 2006/07 and 2006/07 – 2008/09 Plans.
- The planning context of the Plan was one of an increasingly competitive environment, re-regulation of tuition fees, and inflationary pressures
- Short-term priority planning initiatives identified in the Plan were student recruitment, Program review and development, research planning, capital expansion, implementation of the Wireless Campus, faculty and staff development and retention, promoting diversity, and business development
- Academic and Research foci acknowledged in the Plan were: natural resources and the environment; rural, remote and northern health; sustainability of communities; Aboriginal and First Nations issues, and; The North
- The goals and objectives demonstrated in the plan were related to the University's mandate, academic development, research, region and access, and areas of performance interest and performance measures
- The 2006/07 – 2008/09 Service Plan would be a continuation of the 2005/06 – 2007/08 Plan, and would be based on results of the academic visioning exercise, implementation of short-term priority planning initiatives identified by President's Council, and Ministry performance measures and targets
- Internal consultation with Senate Committees, College Councils, and President's Council had taken place with regard to the Plan, with approval being sought from Senate and the Board of Governors
- The Plan must be submitted by April 29, 2005

The Chair commented that the theme areas identified in the plan, such as First Nations and The North, are currently up for review and may change between this year and next year.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked the members of the Senate Committee on Academic Policy and Planning, the Senate Committee on Research and Graduate Studies, College Councils, and the UNBC Programs for their comments, which had led to significant revision of the Plan. The Chair indicated that he would be requesting a motion to approve the Plan in principle, as the Plan would then be forwarded to the Board of Governors for approval. Once the Plan was approved, the Chair advised that it would be signed by the President on behalf of Senate, and by the Chairman of the Board on behalf of the Board of Governors.

S-200503.30.01A

McGill / Fredeen

That the 2007/08 Annual Three Year Institutional Service Plan be approved in principle.
CARRIED, with 1 opposed and 2 abstentions.

3.0 Committee Reports:

3.1 Senate Committee on Nominations

Binnema

S-200503.30.02

Nominations to the Search Committee for the President and Vice-Chancellor

Brunt / Binnema

That the following recommendations from the Senate Committee on Nominations (SCN), for candidates to serve on the Search Committee for the President and Vice-Chancellor, be approved as proposed.

Position to be filled

Recommended Candidate

Faculty Member (from CASHS)

Dr. Paul Madak

Faculty Member (from CSAM)

Dr. Keith Egger

Faculty Member

Dr. Heather Smith

CARRIED, with no further nominations. Dr. H. Brunt declared the nominees elected by acclamation.

4.0 **S-200503.30.03**

Adjournment

Tait

That the Senate meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED.

The meeting ended at 4:50 p.m.