

**SENATE MEETING
PUBLIC SESSION
MINUTES**

March 28, 2006

3:30 – 5:30 PM

Room 7-172 Bentley Centre - Prince George Campus

Present:

E. Annis, J. Safaei Boroojeny, H. Brunt (Vice-Chair), D. Casperson, A. Espíritu, D. Hemingway, J. Holler, K. Hutchings, J. Hyndman, C. Jago (Chair), E. Jensen, H. Li, J. Li, M. Mandy, B. McGill, A. Nussbaumer, D. Nyce, C. Opio, E. Prkachin, J. Randall, L. Sahaydak, A. Smith, M. Stephens, R. Tait, M. Thomson, S. Wagner

Regrets:

K. Beeler, R. Berthiaume, M. Blouw, B. Burkinshaw, S. Cochran, H. Domshy, R. Ellis, H. Heath, C. Hurtubise, E. Kinghorn, D. O'Bryan, E. Rapaport, M. Reed, S. Scholefield, M. Sherstobitoff, B. Simard

Non-voting members present:

J. DeGrace (Secretary), K. Kielly D. Macknak, P. Mann, S. McIntyre, P. Michel, C. Smith

Guests:

T. McIntyre, J. Orlowsky

The meeting commenced at 3:33 p.m.

1.0 S-20060328.01

Approval of the Agenda

Tait/Hutchings

That the Agenda for the March 8, 2006 Public Session of Senate be approved as presented.

CARRIED 1 opposed

2.0 **President's Report**

2.1 2006 / 2007 Budget Review and Discussion

2.1.1 Presentation of Budget by President Jago

Dr. Jago reported on the University budget that was to be presented to the Board of Governors on 1 April for their consideration. Two important contextual items were that, during the 2005/06 fiscal year, Universities had begun a new fiscal arrangement with the Provincial Government, and there had been a significant drop in student enrolment (and therefore in tuition fee revenues).

On the new fiscal arrangement, UNBC had received a base-grant adjustment of \$1.2 million for 2005/06 which would be carried forward to 2006/07 and beyond, and full funding for targeted FTEs (for example Nursing) would be provided. As a major departure from past practice, the Universities would be fully-compensated for salary increases approved by the Public Sector Employers' Council (PSEC).

A decrease in enrolment, however, meant that in 2005/06 tuition revenues were about \$500,000 below expectations, meaning that the revenue base for 2006-07 was reduced by that much.

For 2006/07 the UNBC government operating grant (excluding the Northern Medical Program, which was funded separately) would be \$37,057,472 - an increase of 4.4% over the previous year.

Areas of "good news" included a 29 per cent increase in federal funding received for indirect research costs, increased faculty success generally in accessing funding from the Granting Councils, and funding received for five new Canada Research Chairs. In addition the Dr. Donald Rix/BC Leadership Chair, and the FRBC Chair in Landscape Ecology, would be funded.

For 2006/07 a two per cent increase in tuition fees was proposed, with 10 per cent of the fee increase revenues to be allocated to scholarships, bursaries and financial aid. Both the undergraduate and graduate student "student service fees" would be increased, as would the athletic fee.

In developing the budget proposal, the University had had to take into account cost pressures that were not funded by the Province, including certain salary costs, computer infrastructure costs, and increased utilities and operating costs. All in all, the two Vice-Presidents' Budget Councils faced the challenge of reducing their expenditures by 1.5 per cent and, in the context of an overall reduction, seeking ways to fund new initiatives.

Some budgetary resources were redeployed, resulting in two layoffs, but in general the University continued to build its strengths and enhance its services. A full-time Senior Lab Instructor would be placed in environmental engineering, a student recruiter would be placed in Vancouver, and staffing in the Office of the Registrar would be enhanced. Staff support for the Health and Wellness Centre would be increased (funded out of the increased student service fee), and support systems in Finance and Purchasing would be augmented.

A major initiative would be the institution of an "automatic scholarship" of \$750 for all transfer students coming to UNBC with average grades of A- or better on 30 or more transferable credit hours, and registering as full-time students.

The University's total 2006/07 proposed budget, excluding the Northern Medical program, was balanced in the amount of \$54,469,696. Dr. Jago noted that the University had now reached the point where budget planning three to four years in advance was appropriate, and he passed this suggestion on to the new President with the expectation that it would be integrated into the Academic Visioning Initiative currently being led by the Vice-President (Academic).

2.1.2 S-20060328.02

Report from the Senate Committee on the University Budget

Annis/Mandy

That the 2006 Annual Report from the Senate Committee on the University Budget be received.

CARRIED

Dr. Casperson was not in favour of receiving the report since very little time before the meeting of Senate had been available for its review.

Dr. Espiritu summarized the contents of the Report of the Senate committee on the University Budget. She referred to morale issues on the campus, but noted that all parties still worked together effectively to “get the job done.” Referring to morale issues, she felt that the resolution would come with more effective communication between the University administration, faculty and staff. She endorsed the President’s suggestion of a multi-year budget planning process linked to the Academic Visioning Initiative.

The Committee was concerned that some instructional positions were being made temporary or sessional rather than tenure-track, and she hoped that tenure track faculty would be recruited to them once the University budget position stabilized.

The Committee encouraged the re-packaging or reconfiguring of academic programs in order to make them more attractive to potential students.

2.1.3 Senate Discussion

Dr. Jago noted that this was a public meeting of Senate. Even though the documents in the Senate meeting package were marked “confidential,” once the meeting was underway they no longer need be treated that way.

Responding to a question from Dr. Mandy, Ms. Smith said that there were no new fees relating to LCD video projection equipment rentals. The reference to “internal” users was for UNBC employees wanting to access University equipment for their own personal use.

Ms. Sahaydak asked whether the current enrolment statistics indicated that the budget was on a solid footing. Dr. Jago acknowledged that this was an area of vulnerability. Dr. Brunt added that application and registration statistics were being tracked weekly. Although applications were down, the University was responding to applications much more quickly than previously, and was following-up with more correspondence than before. Newspaper and radio advertising had been stepped-up, and summer registrations in particular were being promoted. At present it was difficult to say what would be the University’s position in September.

Referring to the proposed College Transfer Student Scholarship, it was confirmed that the \$750 amount was correct and not the \$500 amount provided in documentation. Calculations to arrive at the final amount had not been completed until after printing of the documentation. Dr. Jago said that the proposed scholarship would be sent to the Committee on Scholarships and Bursaries for review, and would then come to Senate for final approval.

Referring to the "Staffing Model" given in Appendix 7, Ms. Smith noted that sessional lecturers were not included. In response to a question from Dr. Casperson, she said that the personnel referred-to in the model were those paid-for out of Units' budgets. He pointed out that Computer Science personnel also served in Mathematics and Physics; and Ms. Smith said that she would follow-up on the issue. Dr. Brunt said that sabbatical leave funds were included in the budget of the Vice-President (Academic).

2.2 S-20060328.03

2006/07 – 2008/09 Annual Three Year Institutional Service Plan

Hemingway/Randall

That the 2006/07 – 2008/09 Annual Three Year Institutional Service Plan be approved in principle.

Dr. Jago noted that the institutional Service Plan was required by government annually as part of its "accountability framework." This year's plan was similar to the previous one, but it also reflected some aspects of the Academic Visioning Initiative underway at present. The report's destination was the Board of Governors for approval, after which it would be endorsed by the President and Chair.

Dr. Casperson pointed out that this material had been received only the day previously, giving Senators little time to absorb the contents. Dr. Jago explained there was no intent to deny Senators time to review materials, but the preparation process was such that little time was left, after preparation, for distribution. He hoped that, with the beginning of a multi-year budget process, time constraints would become less a problem.

Dr. Hyndman noted that the University's motto, represented in the Calendar as "En cha huná," was rendered in the Service Plan as "En cha khuná." It was pointed out that a Carrier language instructor had been consulted on the matter, and that "khuná" was the more correct rendering.

In response to a question from Dr. Hemingway, Dr. Jago said that some of the stated "Performance Targets" in the Accountability Framework were government's, and others were the University's. In particular, reference to "allied health programs" was a part of the government template. Under "Goals related to Region and Access," the objective to increase the number of Web courses was a government mandate for which the University was funded.

It was noted that, on the cover page of the Draft Final Report of the Academic Visioning Initiative, the version date should read "March 16, 2006."

CARRIED

2.3 2006 – 2011 Five Year Capital Plan (Presentation and Discussion)

Referring to the 2006 5-year Capital Plan, Dr. Jago noted in particular that this plan marked the beginning of Phase 3 of UNBC campus development. Phase 1, from 1990-1996, was the construction of the original core campus. Phase 2 was campus expansion that would end with the next round of renovations to the Library; and the construction of the Teaching and Learning Centre, the Northern Undergraduate Student Centre and the Northern Sport Centre – at which point students would have at their disposal all of the facilities that they should expect to find in a University. Also

as part of Phase 3, construction and renovation of facilities had been done in the Regions to support the University's activities there.

In the Planning Committee process, great attention had been paid to space needs and allocation. In the context of government formulae, UNBC was now at only 50 per cent of the estimated need for administrative space, with overall inventory at 70 percent of estimated need. With the completion of Phase 2 construction, by 2007/08, the University would be at close to 100 per cent of the estimated need, making government funding for future expansion more difficult to secure. Nevertheless, the Committee's opinion was that the space standards applied were generally inadequate, and this was particularly true in the respect of research space.

With the completion of construction, the non-academic units would have their needs met for the next five years, even though space allocation might be less than ideal. With the Northern Undergraduate Student Society moving to its own facility, Student Services would take over NUGSS' current space.

Capital activities to come included the construction of new academic building(s) on campus (linked to new program development), student housing expansion, parking expansion, and further expansion in the Regions – especially in Fort St. John. The long term use of the UNBC Downtown Centre needed to be addressed. To fully secure University lands, it was recommended that the University take steps to acquire a free Crown grant of lands currently held by the University on a twenty-year reserve basis.

In response to a question from Dr. Mandy, Dr. Jago said that classrooms now at ground level behind the Library would remain in use for that purpose after Library expansion. Any maintenance issues in respect of these rooms needed to be documented to Facilities.

Dr. Hyndman made reference to inconvenient timetabling issues and in that context wondered what was the long-term classroom plan? Dr. Mandy added that the back-to-back scheduling of some classes made it next to impossible to return and sign out audio visual equipment as needed. Dr. Jago reiterated that, as of now, it would be difficult to make the case for more classrooms than were currently planned. Dr. Brunt noted that the Office of the registrar was in the process of developing a "master schedule" that should alleviate some of the problems.

Dr. Casperson called attention to a particular reality of campus construction that, as costs escalate during the construction process, concomitant cuts in the construction plan are made and the revisions become permanent. Dr. Jago agreed that this was an important issue, and one that was at present being faced in the Teaching and Learning Building. In most cases, making revisions or cuts as planning and construction progressed was the norm.

3.0

S-20060328.04

Adjournment

Nyce/Tait

That the Senate meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED