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# Review of the Senate Standing Committees

Senate Committee on Bylaws and Membership

Final Report  
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University of Guelph  
Guelph, ON  
NIG 2WI

# Review of the Senate Standing Committees

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### **Acknowledgements**

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## **SENATE STANDING COMMITTEES AND ABBREVIATIONS**

SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXEC)  
BYLAWS AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE  
BOARD OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES (BUGS)  
BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDIES (BGS)  
SENATE RESEARCH BOARD  
SENATE LIBRARY COMMITTEE (SLC)  
COMMITTEE ON STUDENT PETITIONS  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON STUDENT AWARDS AND FINANCIAL ACCESSIBILITY (SCSAFA)  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY PLANNING (SCUP)  
SENATE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE (SIC)  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON OPEN LEARNING (SCOL)  
HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE (HD)

The current structure of the Senate standing committees, with their subcommittees, is listed in Appendix I.3.

## **I. INTRODUCTION – HISTORY AND CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW**

The University of Guelph, like all universities in Ontario, was formally created through provincial statute, which, in the case of this institution, is the University of Guelph Act (1964). Included among the features of the Act is bicameral governance; i.e., the Board of Governors and Senate, a structure that is common to universities in Canada.

Broadly, the Board of Governors is responsible for the fiscal oversight of the University, and Senate is responsible for the oversight of academic initiatives. Specifically, the Act charges Senate with formulating educational policy; creating faculties, departments, schools and institutes for the delivery of curricula and related educational initiatives (with the approval of the Board of Governors given the implications for financial resources); the creation and implementation of bylaws and regulations relating to matters under the jurisdiction of Senate; the election of the Chancellor; determining courses of study; oversight of academic examinations; matters involving to scholarships, bursaries, prizes and awards relating to students and their learning; and conferring of degrees and diplomas that fall under the jurisdiction of the University of Guelph, including honorary degrees.

The Act allows Senate to create committees and subcommittees to fulfill its responsibilities, but does not identify the committees. Appendix I.1 outlines the current Senate standing committees in relation to Senate's responsibilities under the University of Guelph Act. Since the Act does not legislate Senate committees, Senate is free to create and disband committees as it sees fit in determining how best to fulfill its responsibilities. The bylaws of each Senate standing committee outline its mandate and other terms of reference for operation. The existing standing committee bylaws are available on the University Secretariat website at <http://www.uoguelph.ca/secretariat/senate/committees/>

During the 2005-06 session of Senate, several of Senate's standing committees struggled overtly with the bylaws and terms of reference that laid out their roles and responsibilities. On the basis of the discussion of these issues, and in light of the fact that the last full review of the operation of Senate and its standing committees was undertaken in 1994-95, the Senate Executive Committee recommended to Senate in June 2006 that the Senate Bylaws and Membership Committee undertake a review of the mandate, structure and membership of all the Senate standing committees. It was agreed that the review would occur over the 2006-2007 session of Senate.

### **PREVIOUS REVIEW OF SENATE AND ITS STANDING COMMITTEES**

The last full review of Senate was prompted in part by *Making Change: The Strategic Plan for the University of Guelph* (1995), which was the University's first major strategic plan in almost twenty years. Recommendation #15 focused on governance:

**'The Senate Bylaws and Membership Committee should explore a number of options for substantially reducing both the size of Senate and the size and number of Senate committees and present a proposal to Senate by September 1996.'**

Consequently, the 1994-95 review focused primarily on Senate membership. When it became apparent that the University of Guelph Act would have to be reopened by the Provincial Legislature in order to fulfill some of the membership-related recommendations of that review, Senate chose not to proceed with changes. The full text accompanying Recommendation #15 is available in Appendix I.2.

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## **IMPETUS FOR THE CURRENT REVIEW: THE CHANGED ENVIRONMENT**

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In the ten years since the last Senate review, the University of Guelph has undergone a period of rapid change and growth that has affected the organizational structure of the University as well as its academic programming. In addition to the Guelph campus, the University now comprises the University of Guelph-Humber and three regional campuses at Alfred, Kemptville and Ridgetown. On the Guelph campus, colleges have been dissolved (the College of Social Science and the College of Family and Consumer Studies) and reformulated (the creation of the College of Social and Applied Human Sciences), then reformulated again (the creation of the College of Management and Economics). As well, in response to provincial policy and an increase in the demand for post-secondary education, the number of graduate and undergraduate programs has increased significantly. Among the additional undergraduate degree programs are ones that deliberately span formerly discrete academic areas of study (e.g., Bachelor of Arts and Sciences). Because of the need for these academic programs to have an administrative “home,” the system of locating multidisciplinary academic programs in one college is now a matter of administrative practicality.

The University has been affected by a range of other external forces, including increased student demand. Both at Guelph and other universities, information technologies have developed exponentially, radically changing the nature of teaching, learning and research, as well as the resources available to support them. Most academic programs feature courses offered in a distance education format. The Library is no longer simply a physical site that includes, among its functions, serving as a repository for materials in “hard copy,” but it is increasingly a source of resources available in digital formats. Further, the Library has enhanced its role as a centre for learning support; the Learning Commons, for instance, is physically located there. As well, the Library is taking a stronger partnership role in the development and delivery of courses and programs across the spectrum of offerings at the University.

At the same time, the University of Guelph, like other Ontario universities, has struggled with chronic underfunding from the provincial government, which has resulted in tightened budgets; the commensurate need for more intentional planning, including planning for the long term, and the struggle to continue to maintain quality while being forced to do “more with less.” In addition, there has been a call for greater transparency and accountability in the university system, and an increased focus on outcomes assessment related to both quality and accessibility goals. In this changed environment, a review of the Senate standing committees is timely and necessary to assess whether the current bylaws, membership and structures meet the reality of current needs and circumstances.

## **II. THE REVIEW PROCESS**

In conducting this review, the Bylaws and Membership Committee was conscious that Senate is responsible for controlling, regulating and determining the educational policy for the University – a responsibility that is only broadly defined by the University of Guelph Act. As a working premise, given the genesis of the review, Bylaws was attentive to the need to forge mandates and processes for the standing committees that would allow Senate to be effective as a site of planning and of formulating policy. Further, Bylaws was mindful of Senate’s role as a discussion forum for issues that, although outside the mandate of Senate, relate to its responsibility for overseeing educational policy. The committee recognized the importance of taking into consideration that the current structure and composition of the University of Guelph, its academic programming, and the broader context of post-secondary education in

Ontario are very different from the conditions under which the standing committees were established originally.

The Bylaws and Membership Committee established a framework for the review process that involved broad consultation with the members of all standing committees, as well as Senate itself. Bylaws agreed on the following plan:

## **OBJECTIVES**

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The review process would:

1. Identify recent external and internal changes affecting the relevance of existing committee mandates and the ability of committees to meet their mandates;
2. Review and modify as necessary existing mandates to reflect issues identified;
3. Review and modify as necessary the governance structure of the standing committees; and
4. Develop criteria to assess and improve the effectiveness of standing committee processes and decisions on an ongoing basis.

## **METHOD**

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These objectives would be achieved through undertaking the following tasks:

1. Committee mandates, as outlined in the bylaws of each standing committee, would be reviewed;
2. Input would be solicited from each committee;
3. The existing mandates would be discussed with each committee in a facilitated session to review the relevance and suggest modifications as necessary; and
4. Draft documents would be prepared for review and discussion at Senate, as well as at a meeting of each standing committee.

## **DELIVERABLES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

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It was agreed that the review process would result in a report to Senate in Fall 2007 documenting the review process, with recommendations pertaining to committee mandates and structures. The effectiveness of the review process and recommendations will be demonstrated by the following short-term and long-term indicators:

### Short-Term

- Senators agree with the process for the revision of mandates

### Long-Term

- Decisions made by the committees adhere to policy
  - Engagement of members of the committees with their roles on the committees
  - Achievement of appropriate membership of committees, including continuity of membership, size of the committee and constituency representation
  - “Productivity” of the committees (through assessing achievement of annual goals).
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## **WORKING GROUP**

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The Bylaws and Membership Committee established a small Working Group to undertake the review process over the 2006-2007 session. The Working Group members were: Dr. Peter Conlon (Chair, Bylaws), Dr. Ann Wilson (Vice-Chair, Bylaws), Kate Revington (Associate University Secretary), and Vicki Hodgkinson (University Secretary). Additionally, given the scope of the review, the Bylaws and Membership Committee recommended that a consultant be hired to create and facilitate the consultation process.

The University Secretariat engaged Dr. Peter Hausdorf, a faculty member in the Department of Psychology, who specializes in organizational psychology and leadership. Dr. Hausdorf has wide experience as a consultant to universities undergoing reorganization. He has also been a member of Senate at this institution. Dr. Hausdorf's role was to provide background research local to this university by surveying individual members of committees through a website, and also to attend a meeting of each standing committee with the Working Group, in order to discuss the feedback from the web survey. In addition, he was asked to collect relevant information on Senate committee governance from universities across Canada, with particular focus on those in Ontario.

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## **SURVEY OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AT OTHER UNIVERSITIES**

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Not surprisingly, given that almost all universities in Ontario are created through provincial statute, governance structures elsewhere are similar to that at the University of Guelph. Indeed, throughout Canada, a bicameral structure of governance is the norm. Further, Dr. Hausdorf's research revealed that, at most universities in Ontario and indeed, Canada, the forces that occasioned this review are evident. Most universities have experienced tremendous change as a consequence of forces similar to those Guelph has faced. In other words, the chambers of governance that are equivalent to Guelph's Senate have working practices that do not adequately meet the reality of the University. Ultimately, the standing committee structures for academic governance elsewhere do not offer much guidance in terms of evolving to a more integrated, multifaceted approach to developing and monitoring educational policy. In summary there is evidence that other institutions are finding that their Senate-type structures are similarly in need of revitalization, but have not yet found a pathway to change.

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## **SUMMARY OF ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEES**

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In advance of each individual meeting of the Working Group with the standing committees, members of the committee were invited to complete an online survey. Overall, the survey results indicated that the majority of committee members believe that they understood the mandate of their committee. Across all committees, two-thirds of committee members believed that their understanding of the mandate was "good" or better (with the exception of the Senate International Committee). The committees with the largest percentage of members having an "excellent" understanding of their mandate were the Senate Executive Committee, Honorary Degrees and Open Learning. The committees with the largest percentage of members having a "fair" or "poor" understanding of their mandate were the Senate International Committee, the Senate Library Committee and Senate Committee on University Planning. This lack of understanding was predominantly due to members attempting to interpret mandates that were no longer clear in light of new developments at the University. Overall, most committee members believed their committees were "good" or better with respect to effectiveness. The committees considered by their members to be most effective were the Board of Graduate Studies and Open

Learning. Several other committees received a portion of “poor” to “fair” responses on effectiveness. These were the Senate International Committee, Bylaws and Membership, Senate Committee on University Planning, and Senate Committee on Student Awards and Financial Accessibility.

### **RESULTS FROM DISCUSSIONS WITH STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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With each committee, the responses to the questionnaire provided the point of departure for discussion that opened into a candid exchange. The discussions typically addressed the viability of the committee’s mandate in relation to the perception of members of the committee about what it ought to be doing and by, extension, whether and how the committee fulfilled the responsibilities of Senate. A recurring feature of these exchanges was that many members of committees believed that the role of the committee on which they served was largely devoid of forging policy. Consequently, the view that emerged was that some committees, and by extension Senate, had no effective role in shaping or monitoring progress with the related strategic direction or educational policy area assigned to the committee. Further, many members described their committee’s work as reactive, rather than proactive, in terms of planning activities within their committee’s respective mandate. The sense was that initiatives were formulated outside the workings of Senate and brought to committees for consultation and approval, rather than the committees themselves discussing, formulating and generating strategic objectives and policy.

Some members reported that they benefited from prior experience on other committees, particularly when these were in chair roles. Many members believed that the most important characteristics to be effective on committees were the ability to work with a diverse group and to be able to envisage ways to connect the University in all of its constituencies (students, faculty and staff) with the broader community. Those members with a year or less of experience on committees often did not believe they understood the mandate and role of their committee, particularly as to how it connected with Senate and with other standing committees. Other concerns expressed included lack of appropriate or complete background information on which to base decisions, and a perception that a decision on the matter presented to their committee had already been made and so they were merely confirming that decision.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EXISTING STANDING COMMITTEES**

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Having captured the above information, the Working Group considered each committee’s mandate using these inputs and criteria:

- What was the feedback from committee members using the online web survey and face-to-face meetings, including self-described level of satisfaction with committee membership?
- Did members think the committee should continue?
- What was the nature of the agenda items over the past few years (for action, for information, or for advice and discussion)?
- What was the nature of the reports to Senate from the committee over the past several years (for action, for information, or for advice and discussion)?
- How many meetings of the committee were cancelled?
- Was the committee able to achieve quorum at meetings?
- Was the committee’s mandate still relevant given the educational environmental changes outlined above?
- Was the committee able to carry out its mandate?

- Was the mandate even possible to carry out?
- Where would the work of the committee go if it was dissolved?

## **DISCUSSION AT SENATE**

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The above preliminary findings were consolidated into a report and presented to Senate for discussion and input on June 5, 2007. The Senate discussion concluded with an invitation to members of Senate to relay to Bylaws any further input and suggestions for improvement of Senate and standing committee operations. A verbatim report of responses arising from this invitation is provided in Appendix 2.

## **III. EMERGING THEMES AND RESULTING RECOMMENDATIONS**

Three main themes emerged from the review process – these were related to membership, communication and integration, and mandate and structure.

### **A) MEMBERSHIP**

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When engaging in consultation with Senate, the Working Group considered the following questions that informed the final recommendations from the Bylaws and Membership Committee related to membership on Senate’s standing committees and boards.

- Members believe the work of Senate is undervalued and under-recognized.
  - How can the achievements of Senate be recognized in the wider community?
- Members do not feel knowledgeable enough about their roles as Senators and committee members.
  - How should Senators and committee members be oriented to their roles?

### *RECOMMENDATION 1: SENATE ORIENTATION AND ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SENATORS*

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Senate is a site of governance that includes representation of the diverse constituencies that make up the University of Guelph: faculty, students, staff, alumni, and administrators. Effective governance involves informed debate that, particularly given the diverse perspectives reflected by the constituencies making up the University community, inevitably involves dissenting opinions. If Senate is to be an effective body, debate must be predicated on respecting that each speaker voices her or his comments with integrity. Within the context of Senate, “integrity” involves recognition that, although Senators represent various constituencies, the terms of membership involve a balance between representing both constituency interests and the needs of the institution as a whole, rather than exclusive and entrenched partisan representation of a particular group’s interests. Senators have a responsibility to act as citizens of the University, recognizing that on occasion, the “good” of the corporate entity—the University—inevitably will involve negotiation and compromise. If Senate is to be effective, compromise needs to be achieved through debate that occurs within a climate of respect. To achieve this outcome, Senators must understand their roles and responsibilities in this context and in light of Senate’s responsibilities under the University of Guelph Act.

Many Senate committees seem to feature an ennui that stems from an inability to manage the gap between the charge of the mandates, which includes the formulation of policy, and realizing the charge and its terms. The reasons for the ennui are numerous but include the changes in post-secondary education, outlined previously. While members of Senate are conscious that the University is governed through a bicameral system, many Senators have signalled a desire for a deeper understanding of the responsibilities that fall to Senate and those that fall to the Board of Governors. This speaks to the need for an orientation session for all new Senators and not just students serving as Senators, as is the current practice.

### **Recommendation 1: That the Bylaws and Membership Committee**

**a) draft a document outlining the roles and responsibilities of Senate, Senators and standing committee members, and that the University Secretariat offer an annual Senate Orientation, open to all but primarily focused for new Senators;**

**b) extend committee terms from one year to two years, on a staggered basis, so that each committee has formalized continuity of membership from one year to the next.**

[Recommendations regarding the recognition of the work and achievements of Senate are addressed under Recommendation 8: Setting Goals and Assessing Achievement.]

## **B) COMMUNICATION AND INTEGRATION**

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When engaging in consultation with Senate, the Working Group considered the following questions that informed the final recommendations from the Bylaws and Membership Committee on the theme of communication and integration:

- Currently committees report only to Senate.
  - How can the work of committees be introduced to Senate to encourage productive debate?
- The work of Senate and its committees is largely invisible to some constituencies both inside and outside the University.
  - With what constituencies should Senate communicate and how?
- Committees operate in functional “silos” with no co-ordination of knowledge, inputs or outputs.
  - How can exchange of information among committees be facilitated?
  - Is there overlap in committee mandates that slows the efficiency and effectiveness of committee and Senate work? Conversely, are there committee mandates that isolate key functions of Senate and result in the isolation of certain core activities (such as planning)?

### *RECOMMENDATION 2: ENGAGING THE “WISDOM OF SENATE”*

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The University of Guelph is a complex organization, so it is difficult for any single or small group of Senators to have the expertise and institutional history to contribute to the formulation of policy without additional opportunities for input and guidance. This is not to suggest that the committees of Senate are

not capable of formulating policy, but rather speaks to the need for forging mechanisms to allow Senate committees to draw on needed resources and expertise to effectively discharge their responsibilities.

In order that Senate can more effectively fulfill its responsibilities for the formulation of educational policy, some committees might well benefit from seeking Senate's input before they arrive at specific recommendations for formal endorsement by Senate. The University of Guelph's Senate has a long history of sponsoring informal sessions to debate contentious or complex issues. This history has provided the benefit of vibrant and candid discussions that can inform strategic directions and policy formulation. Given the success of this practice, Bylaws recommends that committees be supported in the use of this approach when facing the formulation of a major policy. The committee may present the issue, including the context, to Senate as part of its report. The option of bringing a matter to Senate for open discussion and debate before bringing forward a formal motion should be encouraged.

**Recommendation 2: That , as a practice, committees of Senate be encouraged to bring major issues of policy and tentative recommendations to the floor of Senate for general discussion and debate before bringing forward a recommendation for action in the form of a formal motion at a subsequent meeting.**

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#### *RECOMMENDATIONS 3, 4 AND 5: REALIGNING STANDING COMMITTEES*

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The University of Guelph, like all universities in Ontario, has evolved into a complex site of learning and research. Given the mandate of Senate to oversee the forging of viable educational policies for the University and in light of the input received through the Senate Review consultations, all committees of Senate should review their mandates with attention to the current context of university-level education and how best to meet the challenges of addressing the complexities of the internal and external changes. The environmental context has changed significantly since the current committee mandates were established, and this context will continue to be dynamic in the years ahead. The challenge in conducting these mandate reviews will be to make revisions that meet the immediate conditions while also anticipating future environmental changes.

The Working Group, as a result of the consultations, heard expressions of a relatively high level of dissatisfaction from some committee members about the effectiveness of their committee. In attending to those concerns, the Working Group reviewed reports from these committees to Senate, including those provided by the Senate Committee on University Planning, the Senate International Committee, and the Senate Committee on Awards and Financial Accessibility. In most instances, these committees almost exclusively provided reports for information, not action, to Senate. This was a consequence of relaying to Senate reports submitted by other bodies in order to obtain Senate's comments and advice. Rarely were these committees engaged in formulating policy recommendations for Senate.

In its analysis of the data, the Bylaws and Membership Committee, supported by the findings of the Working Group, concluded that these three committees currently have a difficult institutional location because each represents values and strategic initiatives that are crucial to the vitality and viability of the University, yet none of them has an identifiable body that implements policy. The mandates of each of these committees are crucial to the University, yet they overlap with the mandates of other standing committees that formulate policies that have direct implementation through working practices.

The Working Group also examined the role of the Senate Executive Committee. While its name might imply that it is charged with managing the affairs and implementing the decisions of Senate, in fact the committee seldom does more than approve the proposed agenda for each Senate meeting, and ensure the completeness of the materials to be presented to Senate by the other standing committees. Although the Executive Committee does approve the recipients of some awards, this is, by comparison, a relatively minor component of its activities. The Executive Committee should take a more active role in setting priorities and planning for Senate and its committees. It should be the venue for prioritization and planning of the activities of Senate and its standing committees in order to ensure that they can work in a co-ordinated manner in setting annual goals and measuring outcomes. This is not currently happening.

Consequently, the Senate Committee on Bylaws and Membership has formulated recommendations that respond immediately to the serious challenges identified during the review in relation to the Senate Committee on University Planning, the Senate International Committee, the Senate Committee on Student Awards and Financial Accessibility, and the Senate Executive Committee. In each instance, it is recommended that these committees be disbanded. This recommendation is made with the clear undertaking that the strategic directions and policy areas addressed through the mandates of these committees will be integrated with an intentionality reflected in the overall call for mandate renewal of Senate standing committees to ensure that they can be realized effectively as befits the fulfillment of Senate's responsibilities under the Act.

To illustrate the intentions described above, one might observe that internationalism is a crucial aspect of education at the University of Guelph. Consequently, the mandates of those committees charged with overall responsibility for undergraduate and graduate programming, open learning and research should have explicit elements intended to ensure that international initiatives are addressed.

In the case of the Senate Committee on Awards and Financial Accessibility, issues of accessibility and recognition of scholarly achievement are considerations that need to inform the work of a range of Senate committees. Integrating these conditions across committee mandates highlights the University's overarching need for attention to accessibility in its broadest expression. It also signals that recognizing achievement and outstanding contributions as a citizen of the University and the broader community is fundamental to the ethos of Senate.

The recommendation regarding the reformulation of the Senate Committee on University Planning and the Senate Executive Committee is based on the underlying principle that responsibility for planning is core to the activities of all committees of Senate. SCUP members observed that there is a fundamental disconnect between the committee's mandate and what it accomplishes as a committee. It tends to work in a reactive rather than proactive mode, responding to planning proposals and administrative directions, rather than identifying, developing and/or vetting educational policy. Its current mandate, operating practices and structure in relation to other Senate standing committees and, more generally, administrative operations have served to limit SCUP's ability to undertake activities that help Senate focus on its own goals and contributions to planning and, thereby, to integrate Senate's work into the University's overall academic priority-setting and planning activities.

Specifically, these observations have led to the following recommendations:

### Senate Priorities and Planning

A renamed and restructured committee, combining and expanding the role of the Senate Executive Committee and the Senate Committee on University Planning, will set the strategic priorities of Senate in relation to the upcoming issues for the year and against the strategic directions outlined in the Senate-approved document *Making Change: The Strategic Plan for the University of Guelph* (1995). The committee will consider the appropriateness of the priorities in light of the objectives and mandate of Senate, set the overarching goals for Senate and its standing committees for the coming year, and bring these to Senate at its first meeting of the cycle for discussion and input. At the last Senate meeting of the cycle, the committee will report to Senate on the work accomplished over the year, which of the goals have been achieved and what actions are in place to address those goals not achieved. This report will be shared with the wider community. Thus, this committee will determine, of the many issues facing the University at any one time, which should receive the attention of Senate and its committees over the course of each academic year and how the activities of these bodies in addressing these issues will be co-ordinated.

Educational policy and planning are responsibilities that need to be shared across the spectrum of activities undertaken by Senate and its committees. All committees of Senate are charged with planning as part of formulating policy. The existence of a discrete committee for “planning” (i.e. SCUP) suggests that this activity operates in isolation. SCUP’s chief responsibility has been to review and offer comment annually on the University’s budget and the University Integrated Plan for presentation and discussion at Senate. Most recently, SCUP has also approved the Internal Review Reports as presented by the Standing Committee on Internal Review (SCIR). (Refer to Recommendation 7 on the role of SCIR regarding this function.)

It is essential that Senate continue to receive the above information since it necessarily shapes academic directions and priorities for the future. It is also appropriate that Senate retain the prerogative to send its comments to the Board of Governors on these matters. To facilitate the better integration of planning across Senate committees and throughout Senate discussions and decision-making, Bylaws recommends that the responsibilities for supporting University planning, as outlined in the existing SCUP mandate, be reassigned to a new committee responsible for priorities and planning.

**Recommendation 3: That the Senate Executive Committee and the Senate Committee on University Planning be disbanded and their roles and responsibilities reformulated as the new Senate Priorities and Planning Committee. The broad responsibilities of the Priorities and Planning Committee shall include: reviewing the strategic priorities and upcoming issues of Senate; discussing their appropriateness in light of the institution’s objectives and the mandate of Senate; setting the overarching goals for Senate and its committees for the coming year; and bringing these to Senate for discussion and input.**

### Internationalism

One of the strategic learning objectives of the University of Guelph is fostering internationalism, which is a hallmark of initiatives across the University. As a separate committee, SIC currently functions in isolation, which does not allow it to develop policy that has effect. Bylaws endorses international awareness as part of citizenship, but believes that, if this crucial strategic direction is to be realized, all committees of Senate, but particularly the Board of Undergraduate Studies, Board of Graduate Studies, Senate Committee on Open Learning and Research Board should attend to inculcating awareness of the

University's international responsibilities. The responsibility for monitoring issues around internationalism falls to Senate through the Planning and Priorities Committee.

**Recommendation 4: That the Senate International Committee be disbanded and its roles and responsibilities be integrated into the mandates of the Board of Undergraduate Studies, Board of Graduate Studies, Senate Committee on Open Learning and Research Board, as appropriate; these committees shall revise their mandates to include responsibilities for integrating internationalism in all their activities. The responsibility for monitoring issues around internationalism falls to Senate through the Planning and Priorities Committees.**

#### Student Awards and Financial Accessibility

The Senate Committee on Student Awards and Financial Accessibility meets irregularly, and its business chiefly consists of receiving reports for information on undergraduate and graduate awards already approved by its subcommittees. The main task of the committee is to select the undergraduate (Winegard) and graduate (Forster) medal winners each year. The President's and Chancellor's Scholarship Selection and Review Committee also reports to this committee. Issues regarding student financial accessibility are usually tied to provincial government decisions that affect monies available for student financial aid programs and grants, as well as the University budget. These are issues that require the collective input of the community through Senate and are not the responsibility of one committee.

These are issues that require the collective input of the community through a range of Senate committees, with leadership for the integration of the work of each. To this end, Bylaws suggests that issues related to student awards can be effectively integrated with BUGS and BGS. With Senate approval of the overall direction, recommendations for the current subcommittees of SCSAFA will be addressed in a subsequent phase of the review process. The responsibility for monitoring issues around financial accessibility falls to Senate through the Planning and Priorities Committee.

**Recommendation 5: That the Senate Committee on Student Awards and Financial Accessibility be disbanded and its responsibilities integrated into the Board of Undergraduate Studies and Board of Graduate Studies. The responsibility for monitoring issues around financial accessibility falls to Senate through the Planning and Priorities Committees.**

#### *Recommendation 6: Revitalizing Two Standing Committees*

Bylaws recognizes the challenges facing all of the standing committees, particularly relative to goal setting and outcomes assessment, and will charge all of the standing committees to revise and update their mandates as reflected in their bylaws. Two committees were particularly challenged. Specifically, the members of the Senate Library Committee and the Senate Research Board reported that their mandates no longer reflect environmental conditions and complexity affecting educational policies in these areas.

The Research Board struggles with a mandate that is unclear. There has been significant growth in the quantity, scope and intersection of research activities over the past ten years. In addition, government funding agencies are increasingly proactive in setting minimum standards for policies affecting the conduct of research. The University remains committed to its strategic goals for research and most recently has given expression to these goals in its strategic research plan.

The Research Board's mandate is not in line with some of these major shifts in the environment for university research. Further, the operations of the Research Board are observed to be out of alignment with the work of its subcommittees. While the subcommittees are busy processing operational matters (e.g. reviewing and approving research applications), the Board seldom reports to Senate, its subcommittees do not report regularly to the Board (with the exception of the Animal Care Committee and the Research Ethics Board), and over the past several years most meetings have been cancelled for lack of agenda items. The Research Board, with the assistance of the Bylaws and Membership Committee, is directed to review its own mandate with special attention to establishing terms of reference that bring it up to date with the current context.

The Senate Library Committee is also charged to review its mandate in order to update its role and responsibilities. One of the forces that has had an impact on both teaching and research is the explosion of information technologies. Another is the more integrated approach to teaching and learning supported by the library through learning support services. The Committee on Bylaws and Membership recognizes that many of Senate's standing committees attend to the impact of information technologies in their deliberations, but it notes that none of the committees' mandates—save that of the Senate Committee on Open Learning—include explicit reference to information technologies. The current mandate of the Senate Library Committee suggests an understanding of the library that is no longer current within the context of information technologies. While the libraries of the University of Guelph remain a repository of holdings, that is but part of their function. As is true of all academic libraries, the libraries of the University are not simply physical sites but have a vastly expanded role as a conduit for scholarly material disseminated in digital forms and provision of educational support services.

Bylaws and Membership will direct the Library Committee to recognize the impact of technological services and policies affecting the role of libraries in education and also the educational policy framework associated with learning and teaching support services and programs. Indeed, Bylaws and Membership strongly urges all standing committees to consider the recognition of information technologies as appropriate.

**Recommendation 6: That the Senate Library Committee and the Senate Research Board, in consultation with the Senate Bylaws and Membership Committee, revise their terms of reference and committee processes, with particular attention to the changing context in which the library and research activities exist.**

RECOMMENDATION 7: CREATION OF A NEW STANDING COMMITTEE

The University of Guelph Act specifically identifies the “regulation of educational policy” as a responsibility of Senate. The Bylaws and Membership Committee recognizes the public call for greater transparency and accountability in the university system and an increased focus on outcomes assessment as major changes in the post-secondary education environment. It is important that Senate have a formal mechanism for receiving reports to ascertain the effectiveness of the delivery of academic programs.

The Standing Committee on Internal Reviews currently reports to the Senate Committee on University Planning. SCIR's process for accessing academic programs includes units engaging in “self-study” to take stock of strengths and weaknesses, and anticipate how programs might be enhanced in the future to strengthen the learning experience of students. Given the importance of regularly assessing programs to ensure that units are offering the best learning to students under changing and fiscally difficult contexts,

the Bylaws and Membership Committee recommends that the Standing Committee on Internal Reviews be renamed and formally constituted as a standing committee of Senate.

**Recommendation 7: That the Standing Committee on Internal Reviews be renamed as the Senate Committee on Internal Reviews and be constituted as a standing committee reporting directly to Senate.**

### **C) MANDATE AND STRUCTURE**

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When engaging in consultation with Senate, the Working Group considered the following questions which informed the final recommendations from the Bylaws and Membership Committee related to committee mandate and structure:

- Committees tend to function on a meeting-to-meeting basis, without establishing goals, objectives and outcomes for the year. The committees are reactive, not proactive.
  - How should the goals, objectives and outcomes of Senate committees be established and monitored, and who should do it?
- Committees most often provide advice and opinion, although many are supposed to develop policies
  - How can committees strike objectives that forge a balance between developing initiatives and policies and attending to current policies?

#### RECOMMENDATION 8: SETTING GOALS AND ASSESSING ACHIEVEMENTS

While Senate has established various committees with discrete responsibilities to fulfill its responsibilities, in reality, many committee mandates articulate with those of others - as they should, given the responsibility of Senate for overseeing educational policy. However, the current committee structure has resulted in 'silos' that do not serve the University well on at least two fronts.

First, the University's delivery of education necessarily involves intersection of the mandates of the standing committees. The opening of the University's Mission Statement usefully serves to make this point: "The University of Guelph is a research-intensive, learner-centred university". The statement highlights that research and learning are not discrete. Nonetheless, Senate is organized currently with a committee on research, and committees addressing issues relating to undergraduate and graduate curricula, and broadly, education. Practically, there is a need to create a structure of committees that allows the work of Senate to be accomplished through the divisions of responsibilities assigned to appropriate committees. But, equally, there is a need to recognize that the current committee structures are neither natural nor inevitable, but merely useful tools. If Senate is to be effective, its working processes should allow committees to identify when the effective formulation of educational policy would benefit from two or more committees meeting jointly to work on an issue which requires formal policy.

Secondly, in a time when resources are scant, committees meeting to discuss issues that resonate with other committees can become stalled in addressing an issue effectively if the interchange of ideas and information is not facilitated. Lack of leadership in overcoming structural factors and supporting committee interaction can result in wasted time and energy, reported by committee members as "spinning our wheels." The hackneyed adage that "time is money" has relevance; the time of all members

of Senate who engage in unproductive meetings has a financial cost. Although these costs are largely invisible, they are real and need to be taken into account given the fiscal climate of under-funding.

Thirdly, recognition for the work and achievements of Senate must be conveyed more actively both internal and externally through a yearly report to Senators and the wider community.

**Recommendation 8: That, in the interests of maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of Senate and its standing committees,**

**a) Each standing committee identify strategic priorities for the coming academic year and submit them annually through the Priorities and Planning Committee to Senate along with a report outlining the current year’s accomplishments of the Committee;**

**b) The Priorities and Planning Committee provide a summary report to Senate on the work accomplished at the end of each academic year, identifying goals achieved and the recommended priorities for the coming year to address goals not achieved. This report will be shared with the wider community.**

[Note: This recommendation does not preclude the addition of items of business as they arise or develop during the year, nor does it limit the ability of members of the community to bring forward items for Senate’s consideration, as appropriate.]

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*RECOMMENDATION 9: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS*

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The findings suggest that most committees, given the changes outlined above, would benefit from emendation to the charges of responsibility. This broad observation also includes the need to consider the dissolution of some subcommittees that were created to meet a specific need that is no longer relevant or that could be more effectively handled as an administrative task with appropriate reports back to the committee on implementation. (The goal of reports is to assure Senate that existing policies are working effectively and to identify any related emerging policy requirements.)

Bylaws and Membership also urges that standing committees be attentive to their working processes, with particular attention to subcommittees and the terms of reporting. In the course of the review, Bylaws noted that several committees have a host of subcommittees. While subcommittees are appropriate venues for accomplishing ongoing, specific work, it seems that in some instances there is evidence of a lapse in process, particularly around reporting and/ or documentation and account of subcommittee activities.

Commensurately, various committees of Senate face issues which—while crucial—are limited in the scope of their charge; that is, the work circulates around a particular task that has a foreseeable conclusion. These issues should be addressed by working groups that are dissolved when the issues for which they were formulated are addressed.

**Recommendation 9: That,**

- (a) each standing committee, working with the Bylaws and Membership Committee, review its own structure, mandate, and membership, and those of its subcommittees; and,**
- (b) standing committee decisions to maintain subcommittees be limited to those subcommittees with responsibilities that serve the work of a committee of Senate in an on-going way, with no foreseeable conclusion;**
- (c) standing committees utilize a working group (including, as necessary, representatives from outside of the committee as resources) which disbands when the task is completed will be utilized in cases where assistance is needed with a discrete task assigned to the committee.**

All of the above recommendations are based on collegial governance as a foundational principle for governance at the University of Guelph. Over the course of the review, Bylaws has reflected on recent external and internal changes that have affected the relevance of existing committee mandates and the ability of committees to meet these mandates. Existing committee terms of reference have been reviewed and recommendations for a first phase of modifications have been proposed. Bylaws recommends some specific modifications to the existing standing committee structure, and has attempted to develop criteria to assess and improve the effectiveness of all standing committees. Bylaws calls on each remaining committee to review its mandate and subcommittee structure, and will offer whatever support committees may require in terms of the review work.

Pending Senate decisions in response to these recommendations, Bylaws suggests that the implementation of approved recommendations commence in the 2008-09 session of Senate. In preparation, commencing January 2008, each remaining standing committee should be directed to review its mandate to ensure that either it is fulfilling its roles and responsibilities as laid out in the committee bylaws, or to revise and update its mandate according to the current context of the university. Further, Bylaws recommends that each standing committee be required to report on this progress to the Senate Bylaws and Membership Committee by the last meeting of the 2007-08 session (May 2008).

Finally, after the first year of implementation, Bylaws recommends that the Planning and Priorities Committee establish a date to review the implementation.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **I. THE UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH ACT AND THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEES**

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The Standing Committees(s), which Senate itself created to carry out its responsibilities, are shown below. *The University of Guelph Act* which is available on the University Secretariat website at: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/secretariat/> states that:

"The Senate is responsible for the educational policy of the University and, with the approval of the Board in so far as the expenditure of funds and the establishment of facilities are concerned, may create such faculties, departments, schools or institutes or establish such chairs as it may determine, may enact bylaws and regulations for the conduct of its affairs and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, has power,

- to elect the Chancellor [**which falls to Senate's Executive Committee to oversee;**]
  - to control, regulate and determine the educational policy of the University [**which, primarily, is the responsibility of Board of Undergraduate Studies, the Board of Graduate Studies and currently, the Senate Committee on University Planning, receives the internal reviews of programs and academic units from the Standing Committee on Internal Review**]
  - to determine the courses of study and standards of admission to the University and continued membership therein and qualifications for degrees and diplomas [**which falls to Board of Undergraduate Studies, Board of Graduate Studies and the Senate Committee on Open Learning;**]
  - to conduct examinations and appoint examiners [**which falls to Board of Undergraduate Studies, Board of Graduate Studies and the Senate Committee on Open Learning;**]
  - to deal with all matters arising in connection with the awarding of fellowships, scholarships, bursaries, medals, prizes and other awards [**which currently crosses the mandates of four committees: Executive, Honorary Degrees, Bylaws and Awards**]
  - to confer the degrees of Bachelor, Master and Doctor and all other degrees and diplomas in all branches of learning that may appropriately be conferred by a University, [**the responsibility of Board of Graduate Studies and Board of Undergraduate Studies;**]
  - to confer honorary degrees in any department of learning [which falls to the Honorary Degrees Committee;]
  - to create faculty councils or committees and committees generally to exercise its powers, [**the responsibility of the Executive Committee and the Bylaws and Membership Committee.**]
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## 2. EXCERPT FROM: MAKING CHANGE: THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

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**RECOMMENDATION # 15: The Senate Bylaws and Membership Committee should explore a number of options for substantially reducing both the size of Senate and the size and number of Senate committees and present a proposal to Senate by September 1996.**

This recommendation addresses the streamlining of Senate, to which a high priority must be given. In addition to supporting a substantial reduction in the number of Senators (which far exceeds the norm in Canadian universities), the Commission favours a streamlining of Senate's committee structure. The Commission's concern, however, goes beyond Senate to the whole issue of governance and in particular the need to ensure that faculty time spent in committee work (like time spent in teaching or research) is well invested.

A collegial structure has been an essential element of governance at the University since it was created and it is essential that the most positive features of this structure (and its processes) be retained. However, the workload associated with this will in future be borne by a smaller number of faculty and staff. This problem will be accentuated as we enter a period in which it is anticipated that faculty will be spending more time on curriculum review and development and in which the University as a whole will be undergoing significant change. While we recognize that time spent in committees and in consultation is an essential element of a collegial structure and is necessary to achieve a climate of trust and open communication – as well as good decisions – it is also true that in a climate of greater trust, openness and accountability, it should be possible to spend less time in committees.

The automatic response to a problem should NOT be to “throw a committee at it.” In assessing existing and proposed committees, we should also look very hard at the need for representation; while the participation of various constituencies will in some cases be vital, the automatic application of the representation principle can lead to swollen, ineffective committees and an excessive workload for the community as a whole. Part of the answer is making sure that people have ready access to information and to issues under consideration, so that they can contribute ideas and flag matters of concern. Administrators should be allowed to administer, always within the context of full accountability. Committee recommendations should identify responsibility for implementation and should be rejected, delayed, modified, or implemented – and the community made aware of what has happened to them and why. Committee chairs should be responsible for follow-up. It is important for people who have worked hard on committees to know the consequences of their labour and for the institution as a whole to gain a clearer sense of what is and what is not achievable.

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### 3. CURRENT SENATE STANDING COMMITTEES STRUCTURES

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The current Senate Standing Committees, including their subcommittee structures, are listed below:

1. SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
  - Graduation and Ceremonials Subcommittee
    - Ceremonials Subcommittee
    - Convocation Subcommittee
  
2. BYLAWS AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE
  
3. BOARD OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES
  - Executive Subcommittee
  - Program Committees
    - Admissions Subcommittees
    - Academic Review Subcommittees
    - Curriculum Subcommittees
  - Calendar Review Subcommittee
  - Policies and Procedure Subcommittee
  
4. BOARD OF GRADUATE STUDIES
  - Executive Subcommittee
  - Divisions Subcommittees
  - Graduate Studies Subcommittees
  - Sub-committee on Admissions and Progress
  - Sub-committee on Awards
  - Sub-committee on Programs
  
5. RESEARCH BOARD
  - Animal Care Committee
  - Research Ethics Board
  - Grants Subcommittee
  - Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Grants Subcommittee
  - Northern Studies Subcommittee
  
6. LIBRARY COMMITTEE
  - College Library Committees (7)
  
7. COMMITTEE ON STUDENT PETITIONS
  
8. COMMITTEE ON STUDENT AWARDS AND FINANCIAL ACCESSIBILITY
  - University Bursary Subcommittee
  - Editorial Subcommittee
  - President's and Chancellor's Scholarship Selection and Review Subcommittee
  - College Awards Committees (7)
  
9. UNIVERSITY PLANNING
  - Standing Committee on Internal Reviews

10. SENATE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
11. COMMITTEE ON OPEN LEARNING
12. HONORARY DEGREES COMMITTEE

## **APPENDIX 2 - RESPONSES FROM THE SENATE DISCUSSION (JUNE 5, 2007)**

### **A) Related to mandate and structure**

**Committees tend to function on a meeting-to-meeting basis, without establishing goals, objectives and outcomes for the year (reactive not proactive):**

#### **A.1 How should the goals, objectives and outcomes of Senate committees be established and monitored and who should do it?**

- by the committee itself and its membership
- better use of ex-officio members who have appropriate expertise
- the Senate also needs to be aware that “streaming” and “integrating” committees will require an even larger time commitment
- need medium to long term goals to make impact in specific areas
- need to raise sights of committees to less operational and more strategic and policy objectives per UofG Act
- at first meeting in the fall – set annual agenda; if no issues, disband?! or cancel
- teaching, learning, research, honor/awards; four main committees with task groups or subcommittees to focus on subsets of issues
- could tap into Senators with relevant expertise
- isn't this really also a structural issue of university; some activity driven by colleges and others by planning
- what is the value-added of committees? Are they just “rubber stamps”? Can they appreciate impact of policy decisions?
- don't get Senate committees/Senators into staff responsibilities/operational issues; focus on strategic issues to grapple with; e.g. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Curriculum discussion in April 07
- Senate deciding vs. Senate advising; need more clarity on this
- assign distribution of effort to each committee (this should be assigned by the provost)
- some committees are supposed to be reactive
- I think the reactive/proactive issue is one of the most important to address; of the 4 Senate Standing Committees that I have served on, I would describe only one as particularly proactive
- potentially each committee should be asked to generate proactive goals/objectives for the year, submit them to Senate Exec for review/comment prior to bringing them forward to October Senate meeting for general comment and endorsement. This could begin to address the ‘big policy’ issues coming forward and potentially Senate could choose which items merit ‘interim’ thinking to be brought forward prior to final policy recommendations and reports
- potentially the last task of the year for a Standing Committee would be to suggest the next year's goals/objective to help the Chair bring forward a draft for the first meeting of the next year.
- potentially Senate Exec meets to share these suggestions to provide committee Chair with initial feedback
  - A draft report on major strategic directions would be a welcome presentation to Senate, I think
  - Concerning the mandate of the various Senate committees, I wonder if one of the committees (SCUP?) may also have a role in strategizing how cross-college initiatives can

be encouraged and resourced. The Integrated Plan is all about developing important connecting themes across the institution and it would be good to have some strategic input on the mechanics and procedures of how institution-wide initiatives could be organized, administered and reviewed

**Committees most often provide advice and opinion, although many are supposed to develop policies.**

**A.2 How can committees strike objectives that forge a balance between developing initiatives and policies and attending to current policies?**

- no idea
- I say yes... those committees that are proposing policies should first submit their preliminary proposal for discussion and deliberation at Senate. Additionally there should be ample time allowed for a meaningful discussion of the issue. The preliminary proposal could be circulated two meetings before the Senate scheduled discussion. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.
- when a committee of Senate is formulating major policy, would it be useful for the committees to present their preliminary thinking to Senate for discussion before crafting the policy as a report with accompanying motions that are presented to Senate at a subsequent meeting
- I think that it is not necessary for the committee to present the preliminary ideas in person, but rather, that this could be done electronically by referring senators to a website that contains such updated information and then reminding senators by email when the information gets updated. If there were responses or queries about the information, then perhaps that committee might want some time at Senate to discuss the issue. By placing information on the web (and it can be confidential via access through our central computer logins), this allows senators who are interested to look more deeply

**B) Related to membership: Members feel their work is undervalued and under-recognized.**

**B.1 How should the contributions of Standing Committee members be recognized?**

- coffee at the committee meetings, possibly snacks as well
- contribution of Standing Committee members should be recognized based on the achievement of the goals, objectives and outcomes of the committee (set per A-1); for example – if committee achieves the goals set at the beginning of the year, all committee members are awarded a step increase (from a pool of step increases separate from the TAPSI process)
- Standing Committee members should be recognized on T&P where actual hours spent on committee work is demonstrated and numbers of Senate meetings attended
- I doubt committee work will be ever be appropriately valued and recognized (the fraction that don't serve at all or the fraction that serve in name only will likely always be the majority and will never appreciate what it takes to serve on a committee well) ... a thought... maybe 2 or 3 Senators per year could be recognized by Senate for their effort beyond the call (nominated by Committee Chairs ... selected by Senate Exec).
- we have new Senator orientation but we don't do anything for new Committee member orientation
- some committees just require more 'seasoned' (not necessarily OLD members)

- to help less seasoned members become engaged, potentially the subcommittees taking care of the more routine and reactive tasks become populated with the less seasoned individuals (e.g. the Calendar Review Committee ... has members separate from BUGS members to spread the load rather than struggling to persuade BUGS members to sit on additional subcommittees)
- the 3 year Senate term is OK in my mind, given that many choose to seek subsequent terms
- minimum 2 year commitment to committees would help, but you need to ensure that there are at least two if not more members able to handle the role of Chair, I think some committees need Chairs that have considerable experience beyond what a 2 year membership could do (BUGS is just one example)
- I think the committee Chairs for one year should be selected at the end of the previous year
- committee meeting times ... need a time that is different from regularly schedule classes otherwise important voices are lost

**Members are just grasping what their committee is supposed to do after one year's membership.**

**B.2 What should the membership term be?**

- more than 1 year ; say 2 years so there still is movement between committees
- 2 years – 1 for orientation
- 2<sup>nd</sup> for “full participation”
- also need to ensure that if a person is appointed they actually attend; quorum can be a problem
- minimum 3 years; first 3 years in a non-chair role
- maximum 6 years (2 x 3 years)
- need to take 2 years off between re-appointment
- maximum time as a chair 2 years
- must step down as chair for 2 years and then can be re-appointed as chair for another 2 year time period

**Members do not feel knowledgeable enough about their roles as Senators and committee members.**

**B.3 How should Senators and committee members be oriented to their roles?**

- brief orientation at first committee meeting explaining what is expected on the committee, what generally occurs, what issues are generally dealt with, etc.
- should almost be an orientation in September for all new Senators as well
- Senators of all flavours, faculty or students, staff to get some day-long orientation
- 2 hour orientation done by the Senate office covering; purpose of committee (mandate)
  - key issues of importance to the committee
  - what does the committee do?
  - how often does committee meet?
  - what are the current contentious issues?
  - who are the members (names and affiliation in writing!!)

## **C) Related to communication and integration: Currently committees only report to Senate**

### **C.1 How can the work of committees be introduced to Senate to encourage productive debate?**

- bulleted summaries of what happened for each committee (main points; 2 pages max/total)
- better/deeper understanding of background issues that committees make decision on (info to be available)
- provide context for reports
- provide questions for discussion
- provide ample time for Senators to prepare
- provide manual for Senators: re their role
- each committee should identify 1 or 2 creative and proactive tasks to pursue and report on and focus on those (rather than administrative minutiae, clerical checking)
- involve more people in Standing Committee work, to share information about how things are done, to involve more ideas from more contexts
- there should be a highlight or two bullet points of most important decisions/concerns addressed, rather than a litany of individual names or decisions of a mechanical or routine nature

### **The work of Senate and its committees is largely invisible to some constituencies both inside and outside the university.**

#### **C.2 With what constituencies should Senate communicate and how?**

- Senate should inform the entire University committee of its functions through – improved website communication (bullet points/overview, hyperlinking for deeper information)
- alumni
- communicate the importance of Senate to the University as a whole (needs to be done by the Communications officer).

### **Committees operate in functional ‘silos’ with no coordination of knowledge, inputs, or outputs.**

#### **C.3 How can exchange of information among committees be facilitated?**

- exchange information
- provide summaries in ppt mode
- Executive Committee needs to communicate more with Senate members
- University Senate Secretariat should facilitate the information flow
- actual presentation PDF's be presented/placed on website/in package ahead of time
- improve Senate website for clarity/ease of use/brevity
- will follow (or be less pressing if C1 and C2 happen)
- some discussion of upcoming or past Senate discussions or issues should be included at department meetings
- Senate Exec has all of the Committee Chairs and thus has the potential to exchange info and breakdown silos. This would be easier if Senate Exec helped to establish the yearly goals for each committee
- invisible ... this is partially a ‘value and recognition thing’; debate ... bringing forward “thinking stage” will help; a more “proactive” approach within Standing Committees will

- help; more respect for Senate's authority by some would help; reduce the frequency with which something comes forward to Senate and MUST be approved at that meeting to meet some other imposed deadline (often the implication is that Senate has no choice but to approve a motion) will help; motions usually come forward with the arguments in its favour, rarely are the reasons not to support a motion overtly brought forward in the Senate package – bringing forward both the pros and cons associated with a motion would help to foster debate; recognize that SOME don't want debate.
- next steps ... I thought the Standing Committees would be seeing the suggestions before they go forward to Senate? I hope my thoughts are helpful

### **Other Comments:**

- if this was a serious effort to engage Senators, it would not be introduced at 8:10 p.m. for 10-12 minutes; this is part of the problem and why people do not feel engaged
- most of the questions seem to imply more resources
- how can we do what we do more efficiently? Save on efficiency – e.g. terms develop expertise; orientation improves with longer terms
- more productive debate (or even debate of any kind) would be more apt to happen if the academic mission of the University were foregrounded over the management/fiscal issues. The fiscal situation has been such, for such a long time, that most of the Senate's "business" has not been about ideas but about responding to dire \$\$ straits. A second driver of non-engagement, or non-debate, is pressure for time to read everything to be informed/engaged. One very helpful thing we could do would be to move to calendar changes (other than simple editorial ones) only every second year (time to discuss). Similarly, Research Board never tells us about research; BGS gives us lists of faculty approved to serve on examining committees. etc. Management and business are very important, but they need to be leavened with ideas, creativity (e.g. understanding and fashioning interdisciplinary as intellectually worthwhile 1<sup>st</sup>, only (perhaps) fiscally efficient as an afterthought).
- I took part in one of the small group discussions during the last Senate meeting and we wrote down some comments. I will elaborate on those comments in this e-mail: It is my impression that several Senate committees (for example, the Board of Graduate Studies and its subcommittees) work well. In the case of that particular committee, the chair of the committee sets the agenda (mainly bringing forth proposals for new programs or courses, approving list of recommended associated graduate faculty etc.) Sometimes the dean of Graduate Studies initiates the business at hand. I feel this committee (and perhaps several others that carry out the routine day-to-day business of the university and Senate) should continue to operate the way they do now. My only recommended change would be that these committees sit for 2 or more years (possibly with a staggered set of elections to replace some but not all of the members to maintain continuity). I got the impression that other Senate committees (perhaps the majority) are dysfunctional (they do not accomplish much, members are frustrated etc.). I suggest that most of those committees be simply disbanded and discontinued. Instead, perhaps we could have a number of Standing Committees put into place from time to time when needed (at the request of either the Senate as a whole or members of the administration, with approval from Senate). Senate could then set the goals, objectives and outcomes. p.s. the committee that seems to work least well is SIC. I have heard this from at least 5 former members of that committee (including one member of the Senate discussion who happened to be sitting close to me and that was also my past experience on that committee). Perhaps we should replace that

committee with one that has a narrower mandate (e.g. serve as a small advisory committee to the director of CIP to deal mainly with Semesters Abroad and Exchange agreements). Such a committee would work better if its members could sit for more than one year. Separate committees could then be set up with a mandate to come up with a report or do a study of a specific topic (such as how to internationalize the curriculum).

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