

President's Message



David DeVidi, Philosophy

Senate Matters

When I arrived at UW in 1996, I confess, I had no real idea what the business of Senate was, nor could I have told you how it differed from the Board of Governors. But since becoming FAUW President I've had opportunities to talk with people at colleges across the country that are trying to transform themselves into universities, and this has made clear that an appropriately constituted Senate is one of the defining characteristics of a real university. I would like to suggest here that you ought to pay more attention to Senate than you probably do, because the things that happen at Senate have a real effect on your career and how you spend your time.

Simplifying a bit, Senate is the body charged with making decisions governing the academic

life of the university. What is characteristic of a well-designed university Senate is that its structure ensures that academic decisions are, ultimately, in the hands of the academics who work there—not accountants, not the fund raisers in the development office, not the Chancellor, not the President and Vice-Presidents, and not the Board of Governors (though the BOG is charged with maintaining the financial well being of the university, which clearly involves some constraints on just what the Senate can try to put into place). One reflection of this is that the University of Waterloo Act specifies that there must be elected faculty representatives on Senate “equal in number to one more than the total number of all other members of the Senate”, though some other universities have much stronger provisions than that. This is something that separates universities from many colleges, where there is no clear demarcation between the academic role of Senate and the financial responsibilities of the BOG.

Is Waterloo's Senate a Rubber Stamp? I have many times heard colleagues suggest that the real business of Senate at UW is to rubber stamp initiatives hatched in Needles Hall. Attending Waterloo's Senate meetings could certainly leave

you with that impression. Questions are rare; pointed questions are rarer still, and usually come from one of a few pain-in-the-neck Senators (a category, incidentally, I aspire to). Certainly, Senate meetings at other universities involve spending much more time on questions from the floor and challenges to motions that are made. Indeed, at many universities, including prestigious ones like McGill, the faculty representatives on Senate hold a caucus meeting in advance of Senate meetings, where they discuss motions that are coming up so that the implications of items buried in the Senate materials can be made clear to everyone before the vote is taken.

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But the “rubber stamp” impression is unfair to those who sit on Senate. Rather, at Waterloo the operative assumption is that, by and large, by the time something reaches the floor of Senate it is the product of appropriate consultation and has received appropriate scrutiny and approval, often by bodies set up by Senate itself as quality control mechanisms. (Perhaps I flatter FAUW, but I include as an item of quality control that the President of FAUW is automatically a member of the Senate Executive Committee.) It thus can seem that pointed questions involve calling into question the diligence of colleagues in carrying out their tasks, which is one good reason that some people ask them only when something seems particularly inexplicable. Moreover, one’s colleagues seldom appreciate a bunch of questions that extend an already long meeting, and Senate meetings usually take two hours at least.

The Waterloo Way? There are many advantages to this way of running Senate. But *it is only appropriate if the assumption about appropriate consultation and quality control is warranted. This, alas, is sometimes not so clear.* I will mention a couple of important examples.

Program Approval: One of the fundamental roles of Senate is determining what programs are to be offered. In recent times, as the university has been scrambling to increase graduate enrolments, there has been a lot of encouragement for people to come up with proposals for new graduate programs to help meet the ambitious goals for graduate growth. In this

context, appropriate mechanisms for quality control are especially important. (A friend has joked that had similar pressure been in place a decade ago, we’d now be wondering what to do with UW’s program in Y2K Studies.) Happily, within each Faculty there are well-defined procedures for setting up a new graduate program. In the Faculty of Arts, for instance, any proposal for a new graduate program must be approved by the Graduate Affairs Group (made up of graduate officers for all the existing graduate programs), then by Arts Faculty Council, then by the Senate Grad and Research Committee before it reaches the floor of Senate. Obviously, it is the first of these that is where the real action is, as each higher level approval assumes due diligence by those at the previous stage. One readily imagines a typical Senator assuming that problems should have been ironed out at some earlier stage before it reaches the Senate floor. I have been on the Graduate Affairs Group for several years, so I know that this process works very efficiently in the case of well-designed proposals, including for programs that involve more than one university (such as the recently begun MA program involving Classical Studies at Waterloo and Laurier, or the recent MA and PhD programs in Global Governance), or those involving more than one Faculty at Waterloo (such as the recently approved program in Quantitative Finance, which involves both Arts and Math).

However, in the past couple of years some programs have been approved by Senate without having gone through one of the usual faculty-based approval procedures. The two cases in

question are both “joint degrees” with church colleges, and both are essentially theology programs. My present point does not have anything particular to do with the merits of those programs, but with the fact that when Senate approved them they had not been through the usual University of Waterloo approval process for University of Waterloo graduate programs. One of them was first presented to the Graduate Affairs Group in Arts as “for information only” on the grounds that it was being approved by Senate as strictly a church college degree and *not* a Waterloo degree—but later it was changed to a joint UW-church college degree *without* going through the usual Waterloo approval process (one that, incidentally, the Religious Studies PhD went through shortly before that time).

I am not particularly interested in revisiting *those* decisions, but in suggesting that all Waterloo faculty have an interest in ensuring that the way these two programs were approved is not regarded as setting a precedent. If Senators are to be confident that what they’re approving meets reasonable academic standards, then they need to know that the proposal they see has gone through the appropriate hoops. In the present context, I think we all need to worry about anything that might lead to decisions about what programs are on offer being determined mostly by what will sell. I also think that we should be very worried about any suggestion that we want to “streamline” approval procedures for new programs so that, for instance, “no single faculty can stand in the way of the interests of the univer-

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sity”. I’m sure, for instance, that we’d be able to draw in good numbers by offering the prestige of the University of Waterloo for a professional Master’s degree in Faith Healing in Applied Health Sciences, and we might even find a handful of professors somewhere on campus willing to organize the program. If it couldn’t go through the usual AHS approval process, perhaps we could make it joint with another faculty, or a college, and avoid having that faculty stand in the way of the University’s interests? Surely we could find homes for professional Master’s degrees in Transcendental Meditation, or in The Power of Positive Thinking—I’m sure they’d draw students.

The fundamental principle I’m urging is that the academic best interests of the university need to be determined by academics on academic grounds. A couple of badly designed programs that bring the university into disrepute or put us in line for ridicule will devalue every Waterloo degree. We ought not to be fooled by suggestions that there is unnecessary bureaucracy in requiring that programs go through the usual approval processes: as noted, well-designed programs sail through the approval processes, and when something does not sail through it’s probably a matter of faculty members taking the duties of a quality-control position seriously.

Undergrad Program Reviews:

As a second example of material reaching Senate arguably without due consultation or consideration, in January Senate approved revisions to the Guidelines for Academic Program Reviews. While

the revisions as a whole were said to be necessary to implement an agreement among all Ontario universities, Waterloo added two extra conditions of its own that our undergraduate programs ought to meet. One is that “The University of Waterloo intends its graduating students to be able to articulate their learning from experiential or applied opportunities.” This implies that those programs that do not already provide “experiential or applied opportunities” to their students are deficient by Waterloo’s own standards. We are left with two options: either we count, for instance, writing a paper that requires being awake at 3 a.m. asking “What the heck is Socrates going on about this time?” as “experiencing philosophy” and so as experiential learning in the relevant sense—i.e., simply refuse to take the document seriously—or Senate has in effect committed many units on campus to a significant restructuring of their programs, without serious consultation and without any idea whether “experiential and applied opportunities” are the appropriate way to teach undergraduates in those fields.

(An added worry buried in the Guidelines: the Introduction to every Program Review Report must now include an extract from the Sixth Decade Plan announcing that “At the heart of UW’s distinctiveness is a culture of learning that is linked to the ‘real world’”, and much else that is similar. Those whose researches are theoretical or abstract or academic, whether string theory or Elizabethan plays or pure mathematics or Latin love poems, are entitled to wonder why their departments should announce in the introduction to their program re-

views that, whatever is special about Waterloo, *it is not them.*)

So, what’s my point? My goal in writing all of this is to encourage you to pay attention to what is happening at Senate. Important things that will have implications for you that you might simply have ignored include plans to make on-line learning a bigger part of what happens at UW, along with more obvious changes like the proposed new campuses in Stratford and overseas. If some of these issues strike you as important, find out who your Senate representatives are and ask them about these issues. Think hard about who you elect to Senate, and urge the current Senators to ensure that consultation and quality control are in place. Perhaps you should even consider becoming a Senator yourself.

FAUW Forum

The FAUW Forum is a service for UW faculty sponsored by the Association. It seeks to inform members about current Association matters, to promote the exchange of ideas and to foster open debate on issues with a wide and balanced spectrum of views.

Opinions expressed in the Forum are those of the authors, and ought not to be perceived as representing the views of the Association or its Board of Directors unless so specified. Members are invited to submit letters, news items and brief articles.

If you do not wish to receive the Forum, please contact the Faculty Association Office and your name will be removed from the mailing list.

Editorial

David Wang, Electrical and Computer Engineering

In December, I received a very nice letter from the Engineering Development and Alumni Affairs. To my chagrin, it was a letter asking faculty and staff to donate \$500,000 over the next four years for scholarships and infrastructure expansion. As I read this letter, I wondered how RIM employees would react if they were asked to donate money to the corporation for another new building or to be put aside as bonuses to attract new hires. They would probably feel as if they were being used and abused by the corporation. Some may question my loyalty to the University of Waterloo and the Engineering Faculty's Vision 2010 campaign to complain about this request, but, as one professor put it so succinctly, "we have already given our contributions in-kind!" I should make it clear that this professor is a dedicated scholar who, like the rest of us, puts in the usual 50 to 60 hours a week trying to keep their research funded, their classes well taught, and their service duties properly executed. They are doing this with less TA support than five years ago, less research space, a shortage of desks for graduate students, more bureaucracy, fewer support services, and more undergraduate students, most of whom are less well prepared.

Last year, a request went out to all faculty members to increase the number of Canadian or PR graduate students. This was in response to a very large carrot being dangled by the provincial government and we were told that this would bring in a sizable amount of money to our univer-

sity. In some engineering departments, MEng programs were created to increase the number of graduate students. These are non-thesis (i.e., non-research) Masters students who are typically from industry. At no point that I can recall were the consequences of the increased class sizes or increased supervisory load ever discussed.

As well, we found out last year that there is going to be an international satellite campus in Abu Dhabi. This would involve faculty members from our university going overseas to fulfill our teaching requirements and the students from the Abu Dhabi campus coming to the Waterloo campus to finish their last four academic terms and their last two or three work terms prior to graduation. We are told that this will bring millions of dollars into the university coffers. I don't remember hearing any open discussion of the benefits or liabilities of this initiative. Other than rumours about the financial benefits, I don't recall any discussion about the impact that this arrangement will have on academic quality, classroom congestion, teaching loads, co-op, whether there is sufficient interest from faculty members or a myriad of other issues. Are we so desperate for money that we will enter into any agreement with anyone so long as it satisfies our short term need for money?

When we look around, it is hard not to see that we are committed to numerous expansion programs. Just the costs of putting up the new buildings and building additions runs into the hundreds

of millions. I haven't really heard of any significant private donors stepping forward to help with our grandiose vision. Could it be that the "planners" of our fine institution may have committed themselves to these expansions without firm funding in place? Are these commitments why we see an ongoing and persistent annual across the board budget reduction to all the departments?

I feel as if I am no longer, if I ever really was, considered a partner in the academic enterprise but am viewed as a simple employee except when it suits the people making the decisions to let me think I am "a colleague" who should support them in funding the initiatives they have committed my employer to. I can't shake the suspicion that we are working for an employer that is spending wildly and putting everything on credit in the hopes that, if you build it, the money will come. It would surely explain the recent spate of requests to help bring money to our fine institution. I could be totally wrong, of course. If only someone could just reassure me....

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FAUW NEWS

Salary Settlement

David DeVidi

FAUW and the University negotiators have reached agreement on a new two-year salary settlement. The key salary adjustments: on May 1, 2008, a 3% scale increase, plus a \$400 market adjustment increase applied to base salaries; on May 1, 2009, a 3% scale increase plus a \$425 market adjustment increase applied to base salaries; the selective increase unit will be \$3226 in 2008 and \$3334 in 2009. What all this means is made explicit in the Memorandum of agreement, section 13. There is a link to the full settlement on the FAUW website.

The Board is also extremely pleased that FAUW and the Administration have agreed to set up committees to address two long

standing fairness issues on campus: Pay equity for women faculty, and the annual merit review process. I, as FAUW President, and the Provost have had some very constructive discussions about who would be ideal candidates to serve on these committees. The membership on these committees is very important. For instance, the equity committee is free to choose whatever methodology it deems appropriate for answering the question of what salary inequities exist for women faculty at UW, and to determine its recommendations about how to address them, so it is important that the committee include people with relevant expertise that will ensure that a sensible methodol-

ogy is chosen. In each case, the committee is to produce a report in time for changes to be made for the next cycle of merit reviews and pay adjustments.

The FAUW negotiation team was led this year, once again, by the tireless Metin Renksizbulut. The other key member of the team was Jock MacKay. Preparations for negotiations, and the process itself, are very time consuming and stressful, so I want to thank Metin and Jock once again for their dedication to the job. I also want to thank the key negotiators for the University, Bruce Mitchell and Beth Jewkes, who invested similar time and energy into the process.

Equity in Hiring at UW

Susan Leat, Optometry

In November 2007, an ad hoc sub-committee of the FAUW Board was established to review the state of gender equity in hiring. This came about because of questions that arose in the Faculty Relations Committee regarding the University Appointments Review Committee (UARC) and how its work could be made more effective.

As a first step, the committee began by asking the question "How is UW doing now?" I will just summarize the results here. The answer is that we still have a long way to go and are not doing very well in comparison with other universities across Canada.

There has been only a small increase in overall percentage of female faculty at UW from 2002 when there was 20.3% female faculty to the present time when our figure stands at 24%. In 2006 we still had the lowest overall percentage of female faculty (23%) compared to all major Canadian universities (average 35%) and compared to all Canadian universities with the exception of the Royal Military College, the École Polytechnique, École de Technologie Supérieure and the Institut national de recherche scientifique.

Of course, it may be suggested that this low rank is be-

cause of our concentration on Mathematics, Science and Engineering. So the sub-committee undertook a survey to compare the percentage of female faculty in the professorial ranks in UW Science, Mathematics and Engineering departments with comparable departments in other similar, major universities. As far as Mechanical, Electrical and Civil Engineering are concerned, we seem to be in the middle of the pack – the percentages are low in all universities, ranging from 5-25%. But in Science and Mathematics we are behind other universities. Of the universities considered, UW has

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the lowest percentage of female faculty in Biology (13.3%), Chemical Engineering (10.3%), Computer Science (12.8%) and Earth Sciences / Geology (9.5%) and was second lowest in Physics (10.8%) and Chemistry (15.6%). In these areas, we are also not recruiting at the expected rate as compared with the percentage of female PhD students.

There are various reasons why women may not be recruited and retained. There may be inequities in the hiring process, women

may not be attracted to Waterloo, women may be offered less attractive starting salaries and conditions and thus not accept offers, or women may drop out of the system for some reason. It is noteworthy that compared to McMaster, McGill, Queens, Calgary, Guelph, and Western, UW currently has the lowest percentage of women in senior academic positions (9%). To attain equality, it is not just a question of treating people equally in policy, but putting processes in place to redress the differences caused by systemic barriers. The sub-

committee will be making recommendations for ways in which UW can be more effective and pro-active in attracting and retaining female faculty.

As a second part of its study, the committee interviewed a number of past and present members of UARC. We will be making recommendations of ways to make the work of UARC more effective and efficient.

Council of Representatives Renewal

Shelley Hulan, English Language and Literature

At the April Annual General Meeting, a faculty member described the astonishment he felt when he recently heard his Faculty Dean refer to long-range planning at UW as planning that looks two to four years ahead. Policy changes that seriously affect faculty duties and working conditions can be implemented very quickly. More than ever, it's vital that FAUW hear from faculty about the university matters that they consider pressing.

Historically, the FAUW Board of Directors has received faculty response to developments at the university through the Council of Representatives, which includes a member from each department on campus. The Coun-

cil has always functioned as an important intermediary between the faculty and the board, a conduit both for communications from individual faculty members to the board and from the board to faculty in the various departments.

That conduit will soon have more electronic tools at its disposal. To take better advantage of the modes of communication that faculty increasingly use to get in touch with the board, and with the help of a second staff member in the FAUW office, the Faculty Association plans to have a listserv up and running for Council members in the next year. The Association will then have another mechanism for receiving opinions and inviting participation on the various ad hoc committees struck

to consult on issues of pressing concern to faculty (such as campus planning, teaching space, and childcare).

This is the key recommendation of an ad hoc committee. The committee surveyed current Council members, who identified a need for increased communication between the Council, the board, and faculty. Another recommendation is that a board member should act as a liaison between the board and the Council; one of that liaison's first tasks will be to try to fill the department seats on Council that are presently vacant.

The report of the ad hoc committee can be accessed from the FAUW website.

The National Scene

David DeVidi

Twice a year the Council of the Canadian Association of University Teachers meets for several days in Ottawa. The Council is the governing body for CAUT, with the faculty associations present at the meeting having a weighted share of the vote on motions that arrive on the floor. The meetings are also an excellent way to get a feel for what is happening at other universities across the country. In this column I'll briefly highlight a few developments from the Council meetings held in early May. Some of these items will be followed up in more detail in a future issue of the *Forum*.

CAUT Votes to Censure First Nations University of Canada, if satisfactory progress on resolving continuing problems is not made before the next Council meetings in November. The First Nations University of Canada is a small university affiliated with the University of Regina, where the faculty members are represented by the University of Regina Faculty Association. CAUT does not censure universities lightly, and while it has in recent times considered censure in several cases, negotiations have in recent times led to resolutions before matters reach that stage. (It has been decades since a university has been censured by CAUT, in fact.)

CAUT *Procedures Relating to Censure* state that it will be considered "when a university or college administration (including its governing body) acts in a manner that threatens academic freedom and tenure, undermines collegial governance, disregards negotiated agreements, refuses to bargain in good faith, or takes other

action that are contrary to interests of academic staff or compromise the quality and integrity of post-secondary education." In the case of FNUC, *all* these conditions apply, precipitated by some alarming actions by the Chair of the FNUC Board in February 2005. Expect more details in upcoming issues of the CAUT newsletter.

I certainly hope that this case will resolve itself in the way other cases of administrations running roughshod over the rights of faculty have in recent times, by negotiation. A good first step would be some sign of willingness to discuss the issues on the part of the administration of FNUC. If nothing significant happens by November and censure is imposed, members of CAUT will be asked: (1) not to accept appointments at FNUC; (2) not to accept invitations to speak or participate in academic conferences there; (3) not to accept any distinction or honour that may be offered at that institution. CAUT will take a variety of other actions, including refusing to accept advertisements from FNUC, widely publicizing the dispute, bringing the censure to the attention of other associations of faculty associations internationally and asking them to respect the censure, and so on.

Universities entering into questionable arrangements with private education suppliers. Faculty Associations from at least two universities, Manitoba and McMaster, are rightly alarmed at agreements their universities either have entered into or are considering with a private education supplier based in Australia. Essentially, the provider is setting up shop on or near the campuses and offering first year courses to

international students, who are then eligible for enrolment in the university, with second year standing, the following year. The problems with this are legion: classes that should be taught by faculty at the university are taught by employees of the private company instead, which not only eliminates faculty jobs in favour of who knows what sort of jobs with the company, but reduces the ability of the university to control the quality of instruction; there is concern that admission decisions are, in effect, being handed over to the private company as well; in at least one case, there are serious concerns about the university administration entering into this arrangement without approval from the Senate; and more, but I'll stop. Waterloo faculty will want to pay close attention so that similarly clever ideas never find a constituency here.

OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education gives reason for concern. In the increasingly internationalized environment in which universities operate, developments elsewhere can have a significant impact on Canadian universities. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has recently produced a study of "tertiary education" covering Western Europe, Russia and China. It includes a 700 page "synthesis report" that makes various recommendations about what we'd call post-secondary education. There was a very interesting summary of those recommendations presented to

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Council, and FAUW will produce a more detailed story about the matter for a future *Forum*. For now, I'll just note a few "features": they recommend a focus on vocational education; while recognizing that there are social benefits to an educated population, they do not recommend increased government funding in aid of accessibility (instead opting for higher tuitions and income contingent student loans), but do argue for government subsidies for private "education service providers"; they recommend a number of measures to allow "more flexible management" of universities, suggest that the value of tenure is unclear, and argue for the creation of more teaching-only positions (while, inconsistently, arguing that academic careers need to be made more attractive!); and they argue that academic freedom needs to be

reconciled with institutional and system goals. However misguided much of this may be, we can expect business leaders to push similar ideas in Canada.

Academic Freedom and Privacy Issues are always an important matter to CAUT. Some interesting tidbits: (a) CAUT ad hoc investigation is pursuing the alarming suggestion at McMaster that Area Chairs owe a duty not to speak publicly against the ideas of the Dean; (b) CAUT recommends, in light of a recent court decision in the US (essentially, equating your computer to your suitcase), that if you travel there you should take a laptop with no data on the hard drive since border authorities there now have the right to search your computer (or cell phone, or other electronic device), including making a copy of the material on the hard drive; (c) we may want to worry about the freedom of speech rights of

our American colleagues in light of the proposed "Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act", which outlaws "promoting extremist belief systems". Worse, we might worry that similarly loosely worded legislation will show up here. (d) And before you post anything sensitive on venues like Facebook, you may want to take a look at the terms of use. These seem to give access to your personal information to all developers of applications for Facebook, and give Facebook the right to archive your information for its own use. Of course, as you probably already know, you want to pay attention to who your Friends are, since you have essentially no control over what they will do with your content, and some Friends have done some very unkind things to content they have gathered from their professors Facebook pages.

Commentary

Dear Colleagues:

I know that some of you were misled by the wording of Bob Harding's letter of April 10 (<http://www.bulletin.uwaterloo.ca/2008/apr/08tu.html>) regarding David Johnston's potential reappointment. Mr. Harding writes that Mr. Johnston's second term was "truncated" to four years because of the mandatory retirement provisions that were in effect at the time it was granted; this should not be taken to mean that the term was to end when Mr. Johnston reached the former age of mandatory retirement. Mr. Harding could just as well have said that the term was extended to four years in spite of the mandatory retirement provisions that were in effect at the time: Mr. Johnston will be 68 at the end of his second term.

I presume that Mr. Harding raises this point in connection with the need for the nominating committee to present a compelling reason for an unusual third term.

I have discussed the matter with Mr. Harding, who assures me that it was never intended that faculty be misled, and that, on the basis of feedback already received, no clarification is necessary. But I thought I'd nevertheless try to eliminate any ambiguity – in the spirit of "concordia cum veritate."

Sincerely,
John Thistle
Electrical and Computer Engineering