

Senate Council
Minutes of the Friday, January 24, 2025 Meeting

Present: Peter Meehan (Chair), Carol Acton, Michelle Atkin, Veronica Austen, Steven Bednarski, Honor Brabazon, Susan Brophy, Serena Catania, Roberta Cauchi-Santoro, Alishau Diebold, Maureen Drysdale, Jesse Hutchison, Scott Kline, Diana Lobb, Clayton McCourt, Carl Rodrigue, BJ Rye, Yuri Sangalli, David Seljak, Toni Serafini, Mark Spielmacher, Andrew Stumpf, Siobhan Sutherland, Anastasia Tataryn, Cristina Vanin, Denise Whitehead, David Williams, Chad Wriglesworth

Guest: Marlee Spafford, University of Waterloo Special Advisor to the Provost, Student Experience

Recording Secretary: Christine Schwendinger

Absent: Rosina Aiello*, Chris Burris, Andrew Deman*, Fred Desroches, Stephanie Gregoire*, Norm Klassen, Carlie Leroux-Demir*, Carol Ann MacGregor* (Vice Chair), Jane Nicholas, John Rempel, Ryan Touhey, Nikolaj Zunic

On Sabbatical/Leave: Kieran Bonner, Tristanne Connolly, Carm De Santis, Alysia Kolentsis, Sylvia Terzian*, Bruno Tremblay

**regrets*

Note: Thirteen members joined the meeting via the online video conferencing platform, Zoom.

Open Session

Thoughts were raised for the pedestrian struck in an accident outside the University this morning.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement and Prayer/Reflection

V. Austen opened the meeting with a territorial acknowledgement followed by reading a line from the poem "All We Still Carry" by C. Lubrin: "and let a wind lift all that we still carry."

2. WatSEE Initiative

M. Spafford, University of Waterloo (UWaterloo) Special Advisor to the Provost on Student Experience, was invited to Senate Council to give a presentation on the Waterloo Student Experience and Engagement (WatSEE) program. Spafford gave a presentation on this important initiative to the SJU Assembly in the past during the early stages of WatSEE. It is now a major project in the Provost's Office.

The WatSEE program was initiated to support student thriving and was formed under three core ideas: expand understanding, build relations, and develop self. Spafford provided examples of SJU's mission and values that dovetail nicely into WatSEE. Research shows that when students feel they belong, they have a greater sense of well-being, engage more academically and socially, and have better cognitive and relational connections. An [Instructor and Graduate Student Supervisor Toolbox](#) has been created to help faculty and staff with adopting WatSEE (actions a person could do, i.e. adopt pronouns, and resources). Spafford feels people will identify that they are already doing some of the actions and if we make time to adopt one new action each year, we will be shifting culture. Spafford acknowledged that many students (one in three according to a student survey) do not feel they belong here (e.g., co-op students); work is being done to help students with connections (e.g., moving advisors to be within the faculty). We need to get a better sense of what things are associated with and foster a high sense of belonging versus a low sense of belonging. One Senate Council member's research shows that sense of belonging is the number one predictor of student

well-being; only half feel they belong, the one consistent factor being support (peers, professors, staff, services). Spafford agreed that there is no better time to focus on our students and welcomed people to contact her if they have questions or are interested in talking further.

Spafford left the meeting.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair had no remarks and will provide a report later in the meeting.

4. Agenda Review, Declare Conflicts, Additions, Changes

No conflicts or additions to the agenda were declared. One change was requested: the Research Officer asked for more time for the Committee on Research and Scholarship report.

Motion: To approve the agenda as amended.

Moved: S. Bednarski, **Seconded:** A. Stumpf, **Carried.**

Consent Agenda

5. Minutes of the November 29, 2024 Senate Council Meeting

- Page 2, item 6: Senate Council had not voted on the first motion. "Not Carried" was removed and the revised motion identified as a friendly amendment.

6. Vice President Academic and Dean Report

- a. Appointments

Motion: To approve by consent item 5 as amended and to receive for information item 6 above.

Moved: D. Whitehead, **Seconded:** V. Austen, **Carried.**

Regular Agenda

7. Business Arising from the Minutes of the November 29, 2024 Meeting

There was no business arising from the minutes.

8. Academic Committee Report

- a. *Sociology and Legal Studies Course Change:* Changes are being made to the prerequisites and description of SOC 327/LS 327: *Policing in a Democratic Society*.

Motion: To approve the SOC 327/LS 327 course change, to be effective September 1, 2026.

Moved: A. Tataryn, **Seconded:** D. Whitehead, **Carried.**

9. Committee on Research and Scholarship Report

The Committee on Research and Scholarship's annual budget for internal research support remains the same in the renewal Collective Agreement (Full-time Unit). The Committee was given a January 31, 2025 deadline to adjudicate this year's applications to the different grants and it has now completed its work; the Research Officer shared the results.

The Research Officer noted that the Committee faced challenges in adjudicating the new Faculty Research Release Pool (FRRP) and the awarding of six Course Credits. The Committee had been instructed to prioritize applications according to principles of equity, access, and fairness. Applicants used a temporary application form. Given this was the first year of the FRRP, the Committee had decided to award for one year only and not to dip into the following year's allocation (many had applied for two years). One application was incomplete, and the Committee held a lottery for the remaining applications because they did not have assessment criteria.

The Committee will be drafting a FRRP policy for Senate Council's consideration with merit-based assessment criteria. The fund is limited. The Committee was thanked for executing these FRRP adjudications without specific guidelines. Six colleagues have benefited, and the experience will help the Committee's work of creating FRRP parameters/criteria.

10. Vice President Academic and Dean Report

The Vice President Academic and Dean (VPAD) had provided a written report. No questions or comments on the report were heard.

11. President Report

The President highlighted the items in his written report.

The fourth Lectures in Catholic Experience (LCE) this year was on January 9, 2025, with Dr. A. Hussain speaking on his experiences as a Canadian Muslim theologian teaching at a Catholic university. The next LCE will be on February 27, 2025, with Dr. G. Adler presenting, "How Catholics Govern: Examining the Religiosity and Policy Preferences of Local Government Officials."

The President has been working with our Registrar to give presentations at local school board partners in the Diocese of Hamilton. The goal is to familiarize key people on St. Jerome's history, mission, and vision, and to encourage relationships that will feed future recruitment. Next year presentations will also be given at local public schools.

The University of Waterloo (UWaterloo) Associate Vice-President, Academic Operations and the heads of the Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) meet monthly for ongoing relationship discussions. They are now reviewing all aspects of the UWaterloo/AFIW service agreement (we pay UWaterloo for certain services); a representative usually comes to talk about areas of joint concern (e.g., IT). The AFIW heads met recently with the new Dean of Arts to talk about our academic relationship with the Faculty of Arts (SJU's financial relationship is through the UWaterloo Provost's Office).

On February 13, 2025, the Board of Governors will meet with Bishop D. Crosby at his residence in Hamilton, which they do every two years. This will likely be the Board's last meeting with Bishop Crosby as he has submitted his resignation. Bishop Crosby has been an important supporter of SJU.

12. Strategic Plan Update

The President provided an update on the SJU 2022-2027 Strategic Plan where he highlighted the four priorities guiding our work:

- *Strengthen Appreciation and Understanding of our Catholic Mission and Identity:* Robust 2024-2025 Lectures in Catholic Experience series planned this year, ending with Fr. G. Boyle, SJ; feedback excellent so far on Certificate in Catholic Leadership (CCL) (24 participants from various areas in Diocese of Hamilton); new Institute for Religion, Culture, and Societal Futures going well; university messaging group (formed Fall 2024) discussing how to provide clarity, consistency, effectiveness to our messaging, how to speak with same voice; leadership for mission presentations to Administrative Leadership Group (ALG); Campus Ministry and Student Affairs working on initiatives that align with SJU's Catholic mission/identity and objective to work with Indigenous community; Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC) developing outline/plan for Indigenous Strategic Plan for SJU.
- *Foster an Outstanding Culture of Research and Learning that Inspires Commitment to the Common Good:* Continuing work on SJU Start new first-year academic experiential program;

promoting nominating SJU faculty for teaching excellence awards; fostering new micro credential programs (CCL, Sexual Attitude Reassessment) and SJU Summer Institute; investigating SJU research centre for SJU/UWaterloo; creating internal research funding support/processes.

- *Build an Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive and Just Community:* SJU Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Committee focusing on structural deficiencies and creating equitable structure; Sweeney Hall administrative wing washroom converted to gender neutral washroom (lock on door for single use); Campus Master Planning and Green Campus programs continuing; Human Resources creating new non-monetary values-based faculty/staff/contract academic staff recognition program; ALG focused on values exercise training; Campus Ministry focused on theme “that all may be one”; transition to UWaterloo ENS Regroup Mobile for campus safety; Mental Health First Aid training for students, staff, faculty by Wellness Coordinator.
- *Pursue a Sustainable Future:* UWaterloo/AFIW framework agreement about to be signed and now working on service agreement; promoting engagement with high school students with goal to increase co-registered student enrolment; reached two-year fundraising goal and this year roughly halfway to increased goal of \$500,000 with a number of activities to happen by end of year; working closely with University Advancement to direct donors to specific case areas; looking at grant opportunities.

13. Indigenization and Decolonization

The IAC will meet again end of February and will have one more meeting in May or June. Its work on an Indigenous Strategic Plan for SJU should culminate in presentations at the Board of Governors and Senate Council by Indigenous representatives.

On January 29, 2025, United College’s Human Rights program will host a panel discussion on “Transitional Justice and Human Rights” and the screening of the film “Yintah.” The library houses United College’s Human Rights collection in the ASA Reading Room and the two events are advertised by the collection with a display created by one of the library co-op students.

14. Announcements and Events

The DRAGEN Lab will host the next lecture in the Medieval Lecture Series. Dr. M. Cels, Athabasca University, will speak on “Getting Medieval on Modern Anger,” February 4, 2025, 4:30 p.m., SJ2 1004.

The next event of the 2024-2025 Reading Series will be on January 31, 2025, 4:30 p.m., SJ2 1002, with author A.M. Downing reading.

The 12th annual Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies Research Symposium will be on April 7, 2025. The call for papers will go out soon. The keynote speaker will be Professor Neil (social media name).

The cafeteria will be serving a Lunar New Year-inspired menu next week as part of an EDI Working Group collaborative initiative between Student Affairs, the Students’ Union, and SJU’s food services.

15. New Business

There was no new business.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Moved: M. Atkin, **Seconded:** C. Rodrigue, **Carried.**

January 24, 2025

/cs