



646TH MEETING OF SENATE
MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2022
ELECTRONIC VOTE

MINUTES

Chair: Principal Michael Goldbloom

Participated:

Dr. Hafid Agourram, Ms. Reena Atanasiadis,
Dr. Darren Bardati, Dr. Gregory Brophy, Mr. Julien Collin,
Mr. Bruno Courtemanche, Dr. Julie Desjardins, Mr. Alexandre Drouin,
Ms. Tiffany Farouse, Ms. Catherine Lavallée-Welch,
Ms. Genny LeClair, Mr. Gaby Loupiac, Dr. Michele Murray,
Ms. Victoria Perak, Dr. Elizabeth Prusak, Dr. Jessica Riddell,
Dr. Michael Teed, Dr. Jordan Tronsgard, Mr. Nick Veenstra,
Dr. Marianne Vigneault, Dr. Yanan Wang, Dr. Andrew Webster,
Dr. Brad Willms, Dr. Dawn Wiseman

Secretary: Ms. Denise Lauzière

As provided for in the motion passed at the 619th meeting of Senate held on May 22nd 2020, the Interim Secretary General forwarded the text which appears below to all Senators on October 24th 2022 for an E-vote:

Context / Situation:

At the 643rd meeting of Senate, the Academic Standing and Admissions Policy Committee (ASAP) proposed a motion that Senate approve a limited PASS-FAIL option. After much discussion, the Vice-Principal Academic and Research suggested that the motion be tabled – which Senate accepted.

Issue(s):

- *Feelings of being overwhelmed, stressed, anxious, with regards to academic performance, COVID, and workload management are being reported to academic advisors, instructors, peers, and Student Services.*
- *Students who started their studies during the pandemic are expecting the continuation of a "COVID /Workload" accommodation, as this has been in place for their entire period of studies at Bishop's.*

Recommended solution(s):

While there is support for the creation of a limited Pass/Fail (P/F) option of some kind on a permanent basis, there is also consensus amongst the Academic Officers that this option must be framed and regulated in accordance with clearly defined objectives and must be designed to consider specific program requirements and /or academic realities.

It will therefore be necessary to develop a permanent policy, over the course of the current academic year, that could be applied at Bishop's University from 2023-24 onwards. Developing such a policy will require discussions at departmental and divisional meetings and ultimately Senate approval.

In the meantime, ASAP recognizes the current context is one in which students may be confused about the status of a Pass/Fail (P/F) option, due to a lack of clarity / communication. Given the continuing levels of student anxiety, they would also benefit in this regard from a transitory measure until an ongoing policy is in place.

Thus, ASAP proposes that Senate consider the following:

Proposal:

That Senate approves that undergraduate degree seeking students be given the option to substitute a numerical mark with a Pass/Fail (P/F) for one course in each of the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 semesters, prior to the last day of class.

Limitation:

No more than 10% of a student's degree can be converted to a Pass/Fail (P/F). (For example, students in a 120-credit program can substitute no more than a total of 12 credits, or four 3-credit courses, with Pass/Fail (P/F) results).

Exception:

Students who availed themselves of the COVID Alternative Grading Policy in previous semesters and have gone beyond the 10% limit will not be affected. However, they are not eligible to convert additional grades to Pass/Fail (P/F).

Moved by: Dr. Andrew Webster

Seconded by: Dawn Wisemen

(Ms Lauzière informed Senators that Vice-Principal Academic and Research Andrew Webster had proposed the motion and that the first vote in favour of the motion would be recorded as having seconded the motion.)

Senators emailed their votes and comments to the Secretary General.

On October 28, 2022, Dr. Andrew Webster withdrew the motion with the following communication to Senators:

Dear Senators,

The use of electronic votes for the Senate – also known as ‘decisions by circulation’ – is a recent innovation for the university, prompted in response to the restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic. As I understand Senate’s intention when it adopted this method of working, it was to be able to move items forward that could not wait until the next scheduled Senate meeting and where a strong consensus was to be anticipated.

The issue embodied in the proposal circulated on Monday was for Senate to take a decision to offer students the option of substituting a numerical mark with a Pass/Fail result for one course in each of the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 semesters. It was to have been presented to the Senate for debate meeting at its regular meeting scheduled for October 21; as a consequence of that meeting being rescheduled, I felt it ought to be circulated for an electronic vote in order to inform students as early as possible in the current semester what would be the University’s approach on this.

Given the detailed and reasoned comments made by Senators as they have cast their vote this week, and the consequent significant divergence in votes, it is very clear that there are strong opinions of both sides of the question and no consensus over our approach.

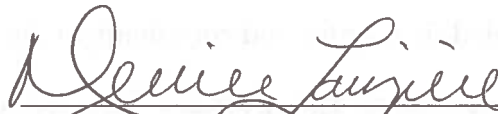
As an issue which it is clear therefore does require a properly deliberative process that allows for a full discussion among the Senate as a whole, I have informed the Chair of Senate that I wish to withdraw the Motion 646.1.

I have requested that instead this item be put on the agenda for the November 4 meeting, so we may follow the collegial process of moving and seconding the motion and then opening the floor for debate followed by a call for a vote.

Motion withdrawn.



Michael Goldbloom, Chair



Denise Lauzière, Interim Secretary General