



*Carleton University acknowledges and respects the Algonquin people, traditional custodian of the land on which the Carleton University campus is situated.*

**Carleton University Senate  
Meeting of April 14, 2023 at 2:00 pm  
Short-notice meeting  
Via Zoom videoconference**

**OPEN SESSION**

**Minutes**

**Present:** K. Al Hammuri, J. Armstrong, B.A. Bacon (Chair), M. Baez, M. Barbeau, H. Becker, V. Bhatia, S. Blanchard, A. Bordeleau, F. Brouard, D. Brown, S. Burges, D. Caratao, W. Chung, E. Cyr, J. Dawson, M. DeRosa, D. Deugo, L. Dyke, S. Everts, R. Goubran, K. Graham, T. Haats, M. Haines, K. Hellemans, D. Howe, J. Kovalio A. Lannon, C. Laurendeau, A. Lettieri, D. Livingston, M. Lundy, B. MacLeod, J. Malloy, L. Marshall, P. Mkandawire, L. Moffitt, M. Murphy, J. Murray, H. Nemiroff, A. North, B. O'Connor, B. O'Neill, H. U. Ozcan, A. Park, M. Pearson, M. Qalinle, J. Ramnarine, P. Rankin, T. Roberts, M. Rooney, D. Russell, S. Sadaf, M. Sanghani, D. Siddiqi, E. Sloan (Clerk), C. Smelser, P. Smith, D. Sprague, K. Taylor, R. Teather J. Tomberlin, C. Viau, J. Wallace, P. Wolff

**Regrets:** B. Campbell, R. Gorelick, L. Hayes, G. Sestini

**Absent:** A Clarke, L. Kostiuk, K. Moss, F. Sepanta, J. Taber

**Recording Secretary:** K. McKinley

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**1. Welcome + Approval of Agenda**

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m. The Chair welcomed Senators to a special short-notice meeting of Senate, which was called by the Senate Executive Committee in response to the *Senate Policy on Academic Accommodations During Labour Disputes*. The Chair remarked that tentative agreements with CUPE 4600 were reached on April 5 for Unit 2, and on April 6 for Unit 1. He thanked the negotiating teams on both sides for their hard work in reaching these agreements.

The Chair briefly reviewed the procedures for online meetings, and reminded observers that they are welcome to observe but must not comment verbally or via the chat function. He also noted that in accordance with the procedures for short-notice meetings (AGU 5.2.7) the meeting will focus only on the issue identified in the agenda. No regular business of Senate will be addressed.

It was **MOVED** (M. DeRosa, B. O'Neill) that Senate approve the agenda for the short-notice meeting of April 14, 2023, as presented.

The motion **PASSED**.

## **2. Recommendation from Senate Executive Committee and Academic Continuity Committee as per the *Senate Policy on Academic Continuity in the Event of Labour Disruptions***

The Provost spoke to this item and provided some context for the recommendations from Senate Executive/ACC.

As per the *Senate Policy on Academic Accommodations During Labour Disputes*, the Academic Continuity Committee (ACC) was officially convened by the Senate Executive Committee on April 6, the 11<sup>th</sup> calendar day of the strike, which also happened to be the last day of the strike. The ACC met to consider potential academic accommodations that might be used in order to achieve a successful end of term for students. After consulting with the Carleton Academic Student Group (CASG), the ACC produced a recommendation that was then brought to a meeting of the Senate Executive Committee on Tuesday April 11<sup>th</sup>. The Senate Executive Committee voted unanimously to bring this recommendation to Senate via a short-notice meeting so that students would be advised of any accommodations that had been put in place before entering the exam period. The proposed recommendations plus an agenda for the meeting were circulated to Senators in advance.

The recommendation brought forward by the Senate Executive Committee, on behalf of the ACC, is to allow flexible and compassionate grading options (SAT/UNS) for students in the Winter 2023 semester.

- All course instructors will submit the earned grades of their students, as usual
- All students will have the option to convert a passing final letter grade (D- and above) in any undergraduate Winter 2023 or full-year (Fall/Winter) course to a grade of SAT.
- F grades will be converted to UNSAT automatically, with the exception of an F that has been assigned as part of an academic integrity violation.

- Any student registered in a graduate Winter or full-year (Fall/Winter) course must contact the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs to determine whether or not the SAT/UNS mode may be used for their courses.
- Grades that were originally assigned will still be available and can be used by the Registrar's Office for other purposes.

It was **MOVED** (J. Tomberlin, A. Lettieri) that Senate approve the flexible and compassionate grading policy for the Winter 2023 term, as presented.

Discussion:

The Chair first addressed the following questions submitted in advance by Senators unable to attend the meeting:

- From my understanding the students will be able to choose whether or not they opt for SAT/UNSAT; could the Chair of the Committee confirm this?
  - Yes, this is true for students in undergraduate courses. Students in graduate courses must apply through FGPA to change letter grades to SAT/UNSAT.
- How do these policies impact the overall CGPA? Is SAT considered once the final grade is calculated, and if so, how? And the same question is for UNSAT.
  - The SAT/UNS does not have any impact on CGPA.
- This option will only apply to classes that were disrupted, but please correct me if I am wrong. Did the committee consider any sort of support policy for the students who also have the rest of the non-disrupted classes' finals? Since the strike ended, students had to catch up with a lot of assignments, readings, papers, and final examinations. All of this added to the other classes that were not disrupted put a high burden and level of anxiety on the students, which obviously negatively impacts performance and mental health. I believe it is very important that Senate considers policies to support the students who are also dealing with the rest of their classes. For example, extending the option of SAT/UNSAT to these other courses would positively help the students.
  - Recognizing the impact of the strike on all students, the flexible grading policy applies to all undergraduate courses. Similarly, requests from students in graduate courses will be considered on a case-by-case basis by application to FGPA.

A Senator remarked that compassionate grading measures were a warranted response to the COVID pandemic, which was an unforeseen emergency, but questioned whether it is appropriate to use these measures in this context. The concern is that this action will impact the future of collective bargaining at Carleton. In response, the Provost noted that under the Senate Policy for Academic Accommodations During Labour Disputes, the ACC was obliged to consider options for

accommodating students and then to bring those recommendations to Senate Executive. The ACC is fulfilling its mandate as per the Senate policy and is considering the interests of students as its primary focus.

Another Senator objected to the re-introduction of SAT/UNSAT grading option, and maintained that students can take advantage of the opportunity to do no work all term, then use the UNSAT option to avoid a failing grade. This impacts their success in subsequent terms and is especially apparent when they are involved in group projects. Later in the discussion other Senators also expressed concern with students “gaming the system.” The Provost acknowledged that this has been experienced during COVID for every university in our sector, but that the mandate of the ACC is to propose measures to accommodate students who were affected by the strike, and not to consider punishing students who may abuse these measures. Later in the discussion a Senator commented that in their experience as a student, it is not that common for students to take advantage of SAT/UNSAT in order to avoid doing any course work.

Another Senator asked how requests for SAT/UNSAT in graduate courses would be handled, since many graduate courses are taught by faculty members (not contract instructors) and do not use teaching assistants. The Dean of FGPA responded that graduate courses would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and in consultation with the faculty member teaching the course.

A Senator asked why the grading options are being applied to all undergraduate courses, and not just those that were taught by Contract Instructors and/or those involving teaching assistants. The Provost replied that this question was discussed extensively at ACC. It was felt that the strike affected all students, especially those at the undergraduate level, and subsequently that the options should be available to all. A Senator noted that in her experience the stress of the strike has affected students’ performance in courses that were not directly impacted by the strike. She added that the SAT option can prevent some students from losing their scholarships.

In response to another question, the Provost confirmed that students should submit the required work for the course and instructors are expected to grade papers and supply the grades in the normal fashion. A Senator asked what options students will have if Contract Instructors are not able to grade assignments due to the payment issues still being resolved. The Provost responded that a communication will be sent to all instructors reminding them of their obligation to grade assignments and papers.

A Senator asked the Provost to comment on potential drawbacks of the proposal, particularly with regards to reputational risk. The Provost replied that potential risks were an essential part of the discussions at ACC, and that the ACC considered the reputational risks to be low. The risk to students regarding how their SAT will be evaluated was also considered to be low, since compassionate grading options were widely adopted during the pandemic and are familiar to the sector. The ACC does not consider that students will be unduly penalized by having a SAT on their record.

In a follow-up question, the Provost responded that he did not know if other universities and/or colleges have used compassionate grading (SAT/UNSAT options) in response to the disruption of labour disputes.

A Senator asked that communications sent out to students regarding the strike be written in clear and simple language that avoids jargon. Some students did not understand terms in these communications such as “collective agreement” or “CUPE 4600.” When these students looked elsewhere for explanations, they encountered mis-information that added to their confusion and anxiety. The Senator added that a clear explanation of the process involved in decision making and proposals coming forward would be beneficial to students. The VP Students & Enrolment thanked the Senator for the comments and agreed with the need for clear and concise language for students.

Several Senators expressed that they were having difficulty disentangling the motion from the context of labour relations, and wondered if the vote would be precedent setting. Another Senator asked how outstanding grading can be completed if Teaching Assistants are not doing it. The Provost responded that Teaching Assistant are back at work and that grading should be completed.

A student Senator expressed appreciation for all of the different perspectives being shared by Senators, but advocated strongly in favour of the motion. She noted that students were not involved in the dispute nor were they the cause of it, but they are the ones most impacted by it, and should have choices that will allow them to complete the term successfully.

The Chair acknowledged that the strike was very difficult for all of the Carleton community, and that coming back from a strike also is not easy as some issues are still being resolved. He thanked Senators for the open discussion on the matter, and called for the vote.

Following questions and comments regarding the voting protocol used in the Chat, the Recording Secretary clarified that the Zoom poll Senate normally uses for online meetings could not be used, because of the large number of observers in the meeting and because there is no way to monitor who votes in the polls. Instead, the protocol Senate had been using since September in its hybrid meetings for online participants was adopted, which asks those abstaining and opposed to indicate so in the Chat while assuming everyone else is in favour. Some Senators expressed concerns with this protocol in the chat. The vote concluded with 8 abstentions, 15 opposed and 41 in favour.

The motion **PASSED**.

- 3. Adjournment** - The meeting was **ADJOURNED** (D. Howe, M. Qalinle) at 3:03 pm.