

## **Report of the Senate ad hoc Committee on Renewal**

May 26, 2016

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The events of April 2015 revealed the degree to which members of the Western community both care about their university and desire a strong voice in its governance. Recognizing this, Western's Senate took the opportunity to examine, reflect upon, and renew itself by creating the ad hoc Committee on Renewal in June 2015. The Committee's mandate has been to examine the status of collegial governance at Western, with a focus on Western's Senate. We were directed to consult widely with the Western community, as well as review Senate's constitutional documents in order to formulate recommendations that would improve our current practices. To provide context for our recommendations, we begin this report with a brief history of university governance and the characteristics defining collegial governance based on our review of the relevant literature. The Committee's consultation and review processes are then described, followed by ten recommendations. The recommendations align broadly with themes identified in our interim report: Transparency, Representation, Structure, and Senate-Board Relations, and are intended to lead to positive changes in Western's governance culture.

### **B. BACKGROUND ON UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE**

Governance<sup>1</sup> in the context of the post-secondary education system refers to the "process of policy making and macro-level decision making within higher education...It is a multilevel phenomenon including various bodies and processes with different decision making functions. Certain entities have authority over specific kinds of decisions." (Kezar & Eckels, 2004, p. 375). As early as 1906, the Flavelle Commission laid the foundation for bicameral or 'shared' governance models in Canadian universities, assigning authority for academic matters to members of the university community (faculty and academic administrators) and authority for the administrative affairs of the institution to a board of citizens (Jones, Shanahan, & Goyan, 2001 p. 136). Provincial legislation established Western's bicameral governance structure (a Board of Governors and an Academic

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<sup>1</sup> Governance is distinct from administration in that the latter pertains to the day to day implementation of policy. Leadership or leadership style should also be distinguished from governance in that it determines the manner in which policy is implemented.

Senate) via a 1923 amendment to The University of Western Ontario Act, specifying that governance at Western is a shared process and responsibility.

Over the last several decades, debates about university governance have intensified in Canada and across the globe. As governments worldwide recognized higher education's role in promoting economic competitiveness in a global knowledge economy (OECD, 2008), provincial governments in Canada renewed their focus on ensuring the quality and accountability of Canadian universities. At the same time, in Ontario, public funding for universities has been regularly reduced, with the resulting financial vulnerability experienced by Ontario's universities posing a potential threat to institutional autonomy.

In 1966, The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC, now Universities Canada) and the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) jointly established the Duff-Berdahl Commission to undertake a review of the governance practices of all universities in Canada. The review was commissioned in response to increasing "demands for more transparent governance processes and greater faculty and student participation" (Jones, Shanahan, & Goyan, 2001, p. 137). Its final report unequivocally endorsed the bicameral governance model, argued for the inclusion of students on senates, and urged universities to scrupulously safeguard their autonomy from the threats posed by undue external influence. While the report confirmed the role of boards of governors in overseeing the fiscal affairs of the university, it specifically argued that senate should function as a "deliberative body" with "substantial powers" and comprise "the central educational forum" of the university (Duff & Berdahl, 1996, p. 28-32). Twenty-seven years later, in 1993, the CAUT established the Independent Study Group of University Governance (ISGUG) because, in its view, many of the concerns that motivated the Duff-Berdahl Report had yet to be adequately addressed. The ISGUG focused on internal university structures and on the university's accountability to governments and the public. The report found that faculty viewed senate as merely a "rubber stamp" for administrative initiatives, and administrators saw senate as slow and often ineffective. The ISGUG made 19 recommendations, among them that the chair of senate should be elected from the floor and should not hold an administrative position, and that all faculty members should be eligible to vote for and serve as senators (Benjamin, Bourgeault, & McGovern, 1993, p. 12).

Much of the academic study on the topic of university governance has focused primarily on the efficiency and effectiveness of governance structures, but some has also focused on the human factors that impact governance (Kezar & Eckel, 2004). Jones and Slonick (1997) conducted the first rigorous study of Canadian university governing boards, examining composition and roles of both board members and the boards themselves. Although there were differences across Canadian universities, findings suggested that additional clarification of the role of governing boards in academic decision-making and in the relationship between board and academic decision-making bodies was warranted. Jones, Shanahan, and Goyan (2004) replicated that study with a focus upon Canadian university academic senates. Surveying senators from 38 institutions, they found that there was:

- a) a lack of clarity among senate members regarding their responsibilities in relation to their boards and their own role in academic decision making,
- b) ambiguity in how academic decisions are defined and understood,
- c) mixed perceptions regarding areas within which senate should play a role and whether it was perceived to be playing a role in those areas,
- d) the challenge of enhancing the representative nature of membership on senate,
- e) discontinuity between incoming and outgoing senators, as well as there being considerable variability in the level of orientation and prior governance knowledge among senators, both of which create problems for achieving smooth transitions,
- f) the belief on the part of many senators that academic decision making was shifting to senior administrators and the boards, and finally,
- g) that few senates devote any effort to assessing their work or performance.

Pennock, Jones, Leclerc, and Li (2013) conducted essentially the same survey and found that many of the same responding universities (including Western) had made some changes to their bylaws and committee structures but many of the concerns that originated in the Duff-Berdahl (1966) report remained. The authors specifically noted that further clarification of the roles and responsibilities of senates and regular reviews of senates' work were needed. Challenges facing university governance identified more than fifty years ago are persistent and common to universities worldwide. Pennock et al. (2015)

concluded that “the road to increased senate effectiveness likely lies in open, frank, and engaged discussions and work in these areas as much as, if not more than through structural changes.” (p. 517).

The ad hoc Committee on Renewal (see [Committee Membership](#), [Terms of Reference](#)) was created in response to similar concerns about our Senate’s effectiveness as a governance body and the perceived lack of university community participation in decision-making processes at Western. The Board of Governors created its own review task force to examine its effectiveness. These were the first reviews of Western’s governance in almost 20 years since a review was last mandated by the UWO Act in 1996.

### **C. CHARACTERISTICS OF COLLEGIAL GOVERNANCE**

Shared governance in higher education depends on collegial interactions among community members, shared decision-making and joint responsibility. Indeed, in 1996, the joint Board/Senate committee review of the UWO Act emphasized that collegial decision-making is consistent with “the University’s character as a public, collegial enterprise” (Final Report of Review of UWO Act, 1996).

Yet characteristics of collegial governance are often implied rather than explicit. Collegial governance entails cultural, structural and behavioural components (Bess, 1988). At its best, it should express the university community’s values and beliefs about what is appropriate for the institution. To accomplish this goal, the institution’s formal decision-making structures — the Board of Governors and the Senate — should then strive to reflect and develop these institutional values so that the university’s culture and structure can guide the behaviour and interactions among members of the community; how each member experiences and expresses the institutional values. For those things to happen, it is crucial that trust be earned and maintained, between individual members of the university community and between members of the community and their governing structures (Bess, 1988; Tierney, 2004). “The governance-trust nexus is therefore a dynamic process whereby parties are involved in a series of interactions in which some risk or faith is required on the part of one or all parties” (Tierney, 2006). Changing cultural and behavioural aspects of governance will, therefore, involve more than simply making structural changes because changing those aspects requires sustained and focused efforts in order to break down ‘status quo’ patterns of interaction (Minor, 2004).

In carrying out its mandate, this Committee adopted the assumption that collegial shared governance expressed in and through the senate is central to the identity and well-being of a university. Especially in times of multiplying external pressures and demands, effective senates are crucial to maintaining the autonomy and success of the university system (Final Report of Review of UWO Act, 1996). The characteristics of good collegial governance include a commitment to values that promote participatory democracy, such as: a) the right to speak without fear of reprisal, b) the requirement to listen respectfully to others, c) the need to respect differences and acknowledge the impact of power differentials where they arise, d) the willingness to act with a sense of shared collective responsibility which entails both accountability to a constituency and to the general welfare of the institution, e) a commitment to inclusiveness, and f) a commitment to collaborative decision-making or advisement through timely access to information and engaged participation (Austin & Jones, 2015; Burnes, Wend, & By, 2014). This Committee's discussions were, therefore, guided by the attempt to create conditions that would enhance Western's commitment to these values.

#### **D. PROCESS**

In order to carry out the tasks assigned by Senate, the Committee determined that two processes were necessary: a review of Senate documents (including The University of Western Ontario Act (1982; 1988) and the 1996 review of that Act, bylaws, and Senate committee terms of reference), and extensive consultations with the university community to determine the lived experience of collegial governance at Western. This review process was consistent with those typically used throughout the university in reviewing programs and units. The Committee reviewed the constitutional documents in August 2015. We also met with Chairs (current and former) of Senate standing committees in March 2016 following a review of our document summaries. A website on the Secretariat homepage was established in September 2015 to serve as a collection point for communications with the Committee. By the beginning of the Fall 2015 academic term, calls for submissions were made through a variety of channels. These included:

- E-mail requests to campus organizations and groups to provide written submissions and follow-up consultation meetings,
- A broadcast e-mail to the community at large,
- Targeted e-mails to current and former Senators, including Principals of the Affiliates,

- Advertisements in *The Western News* and *The Gazette* (print and online) on two occasions,
- Publication of a link to our website in the electronic *Western Alumni News*,
- Open town hall meetings with each Faculty,
- One-on-one consultations with members of the community who indicated an interest in talking with a Committee member,
- Several calls for feedback to Senators following submission of the Interim Report, and
- A final consultation with the Board's Bylaws Committee whose members have been charged with implementing the recommendations from the Board's governance review committee.

The Committee's objective was to provide multiple avenues for feedback to ensure that the voices of all who wished to address the Committee and the issues within its purview would be heard. An [executive summary](#) of the objectives of the Committee, along with an overview of Western's governance structure, was made available to the community as a whole through the Committee's website and was distributed to participants attending town hall meetings. [Consultations](#) were largely completed by the end of November 2015, although several that could not be scheduled prior to that date were held in the Winter term of 2016.

The [interim report](#) was presented to Senate on January 22, 2016. The report focussed on emerging themes regarding the current state of collegial governance and the Senate. The intention was to elicit feedback from Senators and the community regarding recurring patterns identified to that point. Major themes that were identified included: Transparency, Consultation and Communication, Representation, Engagement, and Culture and Leadership. Aside from comments querying the limitations of the conventional data collection strategy we employed, the feedback received supported the Committee's process and thematic interpretations.

During the Winter term, the Committee considered the suggestions and recommendations it had received, and also formulated some of its own. Our literature review of university governance informed these discussions. The following recommendations focus on outcomes that would address as comprehensively and coherently as possible the themes

we identified in the Interim Report. We considered ways of a) improving the community's understanding of Senate, b) communicating Senate decisions and explaining clearly the processes through which these decisions are reached, c) improving community engagement, d) enhancing the effectiveness of Senators, e) improving information flow and the conduct of Senate meetings, f) enhancing the representativeness of Senate, and g) improving specific Senate committees' terms of reference.

## **E. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Senate charged this Committee with the task of recommending ways to establish more robust and transparent decision-making processes based on a review of Senate structures and processes. Thus, many of the recommendations below focus on structural change. If implemented, these structural changes may create the conditions for positive changes in the culture, however, in and of themselves, they are not sufficient to greatly improve collegial governance. As much of the relevant literature notes (Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Tierney, 2004), cultural change is essential, and changing the culture is often quite difficult to accomplish. However, we believe that our recommendations might begin the cultural changes necessary to strengthen collegial governance at Western and, particularly, as it relates to Western's Senate.

Senate also tasked us with listening to the opinions and suggestions from a wide variety of members of the campus community. In doing so, we heard a broad range of perceptions about how Senate operates. For example, some in the community perceived that their questions or comments at Senate were not welcomed, while others feared negative consequences for expressing a dissenting or potentially unpopular position. Some felt their input had not been considered because they could see no evidence of it in the decisions that were eventually taken. As a result of these perceptions, many individuals simply chose to stop talking or participating in governance altogether; they did not feel that their voices counted. While some might argue that these people simply do not adequately understand governance processes, at some level, 'perception is reality' and it is critical that these perceptions be acknowledged and addressed in order for governance at Western to improve.

These feelings and experiences of alienation and disengagement may not directly relate to governance structure, however, they are a commentary on the culture of governance

and leadership. Indeed, throughout our consultations we heard concerns about a top-down leadership style in Senate and in other areas of the university. While the evaluation of leadership is not in our mandate, we would state that collegial leadership is essential to good collegial governance, and effective university leadership necessarily involves a strong commitment to Senate, collegiality, consultation, and transparency.

During the consultation process, members of the community were asked to share not only their experiences of collegial governance, but also potential solutions to the challenges we face. The Committee appreciated the many creative ideas provided by members of the community. We listened and worked to extract the essence of those suggestions during our deliberations. In our many discussions, it became clear that there were a variety of ways to achieve the aspirations behind the recommendations. Thus, we often present a 'package' of actions, which are intended to be viewed as a 'menu' of options for Senate's consideration.

The recommendations that follow are the result of extensive discussion and debate by Committee members. While we did not always achieve unanimous agreement, these recommendations are the result of our best efforts at achieving consensus. The ten recommendations are organized into four categories based primarily on the themes from which they emerged. We also recognize that some of the recommendations are not resource neutral, nonetheless, we do not hesitate to make them because we believe that improving governance is worthy of financial support.

## **I. Transparency, Communication, and Accountability**

**Preamble:** Much of what was revealed during the consultation process spoke to issues of transparency, accountability, misunderstanding, or lack of communication and knowledge about our governance structures and processes, including the role and responsibilities of Senators and the differences between governance and administration. The following six recommendations are intended to address these issues.



**Recommendation 1: Improve the visibility of Senate's decision-making processes**

**Rationale:** In order to improve the transparency of Senate's and its committees' decision-making processes, we suggest that the following actions could increase awareness of Senate's work.

- a. Consistent with collegial governance and with the roles and responsibilities of the position, Senators should regularly communicate with their constituencies, both to consult and inform.
- b. Senate should consider whether committee meetings should be open, either to all members of Senate or to the full Western community.
- c. Reports that come from Senate committees (oral and written) should be annotated to include the context for decisions and the factors considered in decision-making.
- d. The Senate website should be revised to illustrate the flow of information in the decision-making processes, beginning at the local level through Senate committees to Senate itself, and provide links to other key representative groups on campus (such as USC, SOGS, etc.).
- e. Standing committee agendas should be posted so that the community can be informed of the issues that are being deliberated in committees.

**Recommendation 2: Improve efforts to educate and inform the entire Western Community about Senate and university governance.**

**Rationale:** An informed community is critical to good governance. Since many in the Western community are unaware of the role and responsibilities of Senate, efforts to better inform the community should lead to enhanced transparency and accountability. Suggestions below target both initial education of new members and ongoing education for all members of the Western community.

- a. Education should be provided for all new members of the community (e.g., faculty, staff, student leaders) about Senate, its role, responsibilities and processes.
- b. Ongoing education should be provided to units and organizations on campus.

- c. All members of the community should be encouraged to attend a Senate meeting.
- d. Communication of Senate decisions should be enhanced through publishing (1) summary reports following monthly Senate meetings and (2) an annual report to the university community on Senate's activities over the year.

### **Recommendation 3: Articulate the roles and responsibilities for Senators**

**Rationale:** Clearly stating roles and responsibilities enhances governance effectiveness (Kezar & Eckels, 2004), improves accountability and could begin to create conditions for cultural change. Following the principles of collegial governance, such a statement should insist that Senators:

- a. Conduct themselves with a sense of shared collective responsibility.
- b. Are accountable to both their constituency and to the general welfare of the institution.
- c. Prepare more fully prior to Senate and Senate committee meetings in order to make informed decisions at those meetings.
- d. Behave with tolerance and respect toward different views and differences in levels of knowledge.

### **Recommendation 4: Enhance education of and communication among Senators.**

**Rationale:** Consultations revealed that it often took Senators quite a while to understand how Senate worked (for example, what the roles and responsibilities of Senators are) and to feel confident and prepared to become actively engaged in the work of Senate. In addition, it was noted that there was little opportunity for informal interaction between Senators. While addressing these concerns could be challenging with more than 100 Senate members, the following actions are recommended to facilitate conditions for engagement:

- a. Provide a more comprehensive orientation.
- b. Provide ongoing education processes.
- c. Provide opportunities for both informal social and discussion interactions among Senators.

**Recommendation 5: Make Senate a more proactive body by dealing more efficiently with transactional business and increasing time spent in strategic discussion.**

**Rationale:** Prominent among the comments pertaining to engagement in Senate were perceptions of top-down information flow and of Senators merely ‘rubber stamping’ decisions made elsewhere. Since much of Senate’s work is done by its standing committees, it can easily appear as though much of what is done in Senate as a whole is purely transactional and reactive. During our consultations, many expressed a desire for more debate and discussion of substantive issues at Senate. While we recognize that Senate has already expanded its existing question period to allow for more discussion, we offer the following suggestions for actions that we believe will continue to build and support a culture of robust strategic discussions consistent with principles of collegial governance.

- a. Change the information flow such that major institutional issues:
  - i) are brought to Senate first for strategic discussion and initial advice,
  - ii) then are directed to the appropriate Senate or administrative committee for detailed work, culminating in
  - iii) reports brought back to Senate for appropriate action (e.g., approval, transmittal, advice, etc.).

To realize the potential of this change in information flow, a deliberately developed annual plan for strategic discussions would likely be required, recognizing that what issues are considered to be major issues will change over time. This would not preclude the possibility of discussing any issue relevant to the broader university community as it arises. These discussions can be conducted informally during Senate meetings, allowing consideration of strategic issues with the rules of debate relaxed.

- b. Consider adoption of a ‘consent agenda’ in order to free up meeting time for strategic discussions. This would prevent the transactional work from consuming the entire meeting, and increase time for substantive discussion. Consent agendas present items to be acted on as a whole, but at the start of each Senate meeting any Senator would be able to

remove an item from the consent agenda so that it could be discussed separately.

**Recommendation 6: Conduct regular periodic reviews including: a) a full structural review every 10 years, b) an annual Senate performance evaluation conducted collectively and via individual Senators' self-reflection and c) reviews of standing committees' Terms of Reference every three years.**

**Rationale:** Concerns about the accountability of Senate as a whole to the community and of individual Senators to their constituencies were raised frequently during our consultations. Periodic review of the effectiveness of governance structures and processes is an important element of good governance, ensuring the protection of our institutional values in the face of a rapidly changing post-secondary education landscape. These performance reviews could be confidentially conducted, summarized and made a part of an annual discussion in Senate.

## **II. Representation on Senate**

**Preamble:** Since our last governance review 20 years ago, the composition of the university's academic staff has changed significantly, but our structures and processes have not kept pace with these changes. Eligibility to vote and serve on Senate is tied to the rank of Assistant Professor (or higher) in the UWO Act. The Committee spent many hours discussing the mechanisms by which representation on Senate could be enhanced, as well as the ramifications of those mechanisms. Multiple sources were consulted including University legal counsel. Our deliberations led to two possible mechanisms: 1) open the UWO Act, which would then present the Provincial Legislature with the opportunity to insert itself more prominently into the internal governance of the university or 2) create ranks that were equivalent to the rank of Assistant Professor internally through negotiations. Both would be protracted processes with uncertain outcomes. It is, of course, possible that the University's Legal Counsel and the Office of Faculty Relations may be able to find an alternative way to achieve this important objective.

**Recommendation 7a: All individuals who meet the Act's definition of Academic Staff<sup>2</sup> should be eligible to vote for members of Senate. In addition, those Academic Staff who also have at least two years of continuous service should be eligible to run for a Senate seat.**

**Rationale:** All who contribute on an ongoing basis to the academic mission of the university should be able to participate in Senate. This practice would promote a culture of inclusivity and collegiality, and enhance effective decision-making. Two possible paths Senate may consider are:

- i. Recommend that the Board of Governors and Senate debate and discuss opening the UWO Act to reword section 25 of the Act such that the minimum rank of Academic staff eligible for Senate membership be broadened to include lecturers, assistant, associate and full librarians.
- ii. Recommend to the University and UWOFA that, through the process of either constructing a memorandum of agreement and/or of collective bargaining during the next contract negotiation sessions, equivalent ranks to Assistant Professors be created so that those with Academic staff qualifications meet all provisions of the Act for voting rights and membership in Senate (i.e., section 25).

**Recommendation 7b: Members of those constituencies which do not meet the definition of Academic Staff (e.g., post doctoral fellows) or those who do not hold the rank of Assistant Professor should be considered for seats on relevant Senate committees.**

**Rationale:** In order to ensure that all relevant expertise is available for committee deliberations and collegial governance principles of inclusivity are upheld, postdoctoral fellows and other constituencies should be considered for seats on relevant committees. Senate bylaws or committees' terms of reference could be revised to accommodate their inclusion.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 1(a) 'academic staff' means those persons employed by the University whose duties are primarily those of performing and administering teaching and research functions and who are included in the instructor, lecturer and professorial ranks;

**Recommendation 7c: An additional seat on Senate should be created in the administrative staff constituency.**

**Rationale:** Given the increased number of individuals across the university who are in the administrative staff category, the Committee determined that an additional seat on Senate is warranted. The addition of a representative to an existing constituency would require a two-thirds vote of support in Senate and a subsequent request to the Lieutenant Governor in Council in the Provincial Legislature, however, it would not require opening the UWO Act.

### **III. Committee Structures and Processes**

**Preamble:** Our review of committee constitutional documents and multiple consultations revealed that many of the same concerns about collegial governance in Senate as a whole were relevant to standing committees as well. The transparency and accountability of committee decision-making processes, Senators' preparation for and understanding of their role on standing committees, and the adequacy of representation were all of concern, albeit more so for some committees than others. Recommendation 8 pertains to all standing committees (and their subcommittees); recommendation 9 refers to particular committees we felt required specific attention.

**Recommendation 8: The roles and responsibilities of committee members should be specified in all committees' terms of reference. New committee members should be briefed on these at the first meeting of their term.**

**Rationale:** Clarity in roles and responsibilities are essential to committee effectiveness and to enhancing accountability to others on the committee, their constituencies and the community at large.

**Recommendation 9: The Terms of Reference of three standing committees should be revised concerning membership, mandate, and transparency of their operations.**

**Rationale:** Consultations and document reviews revealed significant concerns with the structures and processes of the following committees:

- a. University Research Board (URB): Historically, this committee has served an advisory role to the Vice-President (Research) but, in the 20 years since the last governance review, the prominence of research in the academic life of the institution has grown significantly. The Terms of Reference of the URB should be reviewed with consideration of the following:
- i. The URB's mandate should parallel that of SCAPA. It should be tasked to "formulate, review, and recommend new or revised research policies to Senate for approval." Policy formulation could follow similar subcommittee and administrative committee paths as those followed by SCAPA.
  - ii. A URB subcommittee should be established to provide peer review of internal funding competitions with members elected by Senate and chaired by the VP Research.
  - iii. Membership on the URB should be expanded to include Deans of all Faculties.
  - iv. Membership on the URB should be expanded to include a Senate-elected member from each Faculty, who does not hold administrative responsibilities and has a strong record of research.
  - v. The phrase 'strong record of research' should be defined.
  - vi. With the above-noted expansion of membership, members of the URB should consider whether a designated seat for a senior member or director of a Centre or Institute is still necessary.
- b. Senate Committee on University Planning (SCUP): SCUP serves in an advisory capacity to Senate and its work entails critical appraisal of major policy documents, many of which are detailed and complex. Our consultations revealed that critical appraisal and debate do not always take place during SCUP meetings. We feel that the composition of SCUP and an information imbalance among members may contribute to this situation. While many ex officio members may already be very familiar with the issues and documents SCUP reviews, having participated in discussions and debates during document preparation, elected members are far less likely to be familiar with those issues and documents. SCUP's Terms of Reference should be reviewed so that

they reflect a more balanced representation of elected to ex officio members.

**We recommend the addition of four more elected members, which would bring the elected membership to eight. Doing so would enhance opportunities for debate and add voices of individuals having differing perspectives.**

- c. *Nominating Committee and Related Processes*: There is a perception in the community that slates of nominees for Senate committees have been predetermined by the administration. Further, our consultations also revealed that elected members of the Nominating Committee often did not bring nominees to the deliberations, leaving many slates to be acclaimed at the Committee level. Thus, we recommend consideration of the following menu of actions intended to change both the preparation of committee members for considering nominees and the information made available to Senate and the community at large regarding the parameters used to create slates of candidates:
- i. Any Senators who have put their names forward should be given full consideration by the Nominating Committee in developing nomination slates for Senate.
  - ii. If no nomination for a vacant Faculty seat on Senate has come forward for election once the nomination period has been closed, the need for a candidate(s) should be referred to the Faculty-level Nominating Committee. If a Faculty does not have a Nominating Committee, Senate should require its Faculty Council to create one.
  - iii. Committee members should provide brief statements that describe nominees and the reasons why they should be considered for the position to be filled. Candidates who self-nominate or nominations from a Faculty Nominating Committee should also provide such statements. Doing so would enhance informed voting and potentially diminish the tendency for voting based on name recognition.
  - iv. The Terms of Reference of the Senate Nominating Committee should articulate the parameters/principles used to balance slates of nominees.



- v. Reports to Senate at the time a slate is presented should include a reference to the particular factors that were considered in developing the slate.
- vi. When nominations are made from the floor of Senate, an electronic ballot following the meeting should be conducted so that statements about all nominees can be circulated prior to a vote. The practice of conducting immediate paper ballots should be discontinued.

#### **IV. Senate - Board Relations**

##### **Recommendation 10: Strengthen the connections and cooperation between the Senate and Board of Governors**

**Rationale:** Our committee recognizes that means now exist to improve communication and relations between Senate and the Board, such as the Board providing a regular report of its activities to Senate. Additionally, both our Committee and the Board's Bylaws Committee recognize the need for some joint orientation activities. Senate might encourage the development of additional joint activities, such as an annual meeting between its Operations and Agenda Committee and the Board's Bylaws Committee or an annual invitation to the Chair of the Board to speak to Senate.

#### **F. CONCLUSION**

Universities are expert systems; they rely on trust, reciprocity, clear communication, and transparency mediated through robust processes of collegial governance in order to best thrive. The term "universitas" itself refers to a group of people who govern themselves (Haskins, 1965). Quite simply, there is no 'university' without collegial governance. At Western, Senate is the place where our community's shared values are determined, debated and transformed.

While Western and other universities in Canada face significant external pressures and expectations that often require flexible, timely decision-making, there are significant advantages to the slower, more democratic deliberations required by collegial governance. These advantages include the ability to utilize internal expertise, the promotion of community and trust, and the ability to arrive at better decisions. Most

importantly, collegial governance ultimately strengthens the integrity and quality of the university as a whole.

The recommendations made above attempt to address the challenge of governing Western in a timely and effective manner while, at the same time, respecting collegial governance, including fair representation and meaningful consultation and debate in Senate. We hope that our report is just the first step in Senate's deliberations about how to foster and strengthen its democratic processes. There are many innovative models used at other institutions, such as electing a Speaker or Chair of Senate from the floor, that could be discussed in the future. We strongly encourage Senate to continue the conversation about its purpose and identity on an on-going basis.

At the core of much of what we heard throughout our consultations was the need to reinvigorate a culture of trust and inclusion across the university in general, to bridge the rifts between the various constituent groups, and to empower those groups who have so far been denied the opportunity to participate in governance processes. We are extremely grateful for the insightful contributions of a wide variety of people across Western who took part in our consultations. They spoke passionately about their desire to see Western improve. Listening to their commitment, creativity, and concern inspired us throughout our deliberations, and strengthened our belief in the power of collaboration, consultation, and collegiality.

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