SENATE POLICY COMMITTEE ON SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS AND BURSARIES

January 16, 2017 ~ 10:30 am – 12:00 pm
Maggie Benston Centre ~ Room 3107

MINUTES

Attendees: S. Spector (Chair), M. Bhakthan, M. Chua, D. Coburn, J. Derksen, S. Easton, J. Hinchliffe (secretary), R. Khan Hemani, D. Macalister, C. Percival, K. Stewart, P. Tupper

Regrets: H. Kim

1. Approval of the Agenda

The Chair requested that Agenda item #4 be moved first to ensure a decision is made before the committee moves into discussion of other items.

The Agenda was approved as amended.

Secretary’s note: There was an error in the Annual Report to Senate where columns were transposed; J. Hinchliffe will correct this and forward on to Senate on SPCSAB’s behalf.

2. Approval of the Minutes of November 21, 2016

The minutes were approved as presented

3. New Business

a. Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Fellows (SPCSAB 17-01)

   (i) Graduate Dean Entrance Scholarship

   **Motion1**
   
   It was moved by J. Derksen and seconded by C. Percival

   “that SPCSAB approve increasing the value of a Graduate Dean Entrance Scholarship from up to $18,000 per year to up to $21,000 per year and changing the Terms of Reference to reflect this effective Summer 2017.”

   CARRIED

   D. Coburn gave an overview of the changes.

   There were minor revisions made to the language in the Terms of Reference.
4. Old Business

a. External Review – Major Entrance Scholarship Review

1. Overview of document – discussion of highlights (powerpoint)

M. Bhakthan gave a brief overview of the Major Entrance Scholarship program and the review that was undertaken last year by Alex Usher of Higher Education Strategy Associates. Discussion ensued.

2. Towards Reform

Questions were posed to M. Bhakthan and R. Khan Hemani from the committee members. There was much discussion and each member gave feedback.

In general, the committee felt that there was nothing unexpected in the report, as some recommendations and points made in the report have been discussed at SPCSAB meetings over the years. However, many of the newer members to the committee found it beneficial in providing context to the program, which they didn’t have previously, and describing who and what it supports. Also, the committee found the feedback provided by stakeholders and students as part of the review to be useful.

Overall, the members agreed that as a preliminary report it could inform further discussions towards reform and provide guidance in enhancing the MES program.

It was agreed that allowing for more flexibility in the program to ensure the program could evolve, as enrollment priorities evolve was important.

Where do we go from here? Questions that came up included:

- What does the ideal scholarship program look like?
- What does engagement look like and how do we support it through possible changes to academic eligibility requirements?
- What additional data is required? For example, what are comparative institutions doing? What are the conversion rates of the non-scholarship recipients in comparison to scholarship recipients? What is the renewal GPA distribution of the scholarship recipients?
- What rate of acceptance/renewals do we want to see?
- Are we competitive enough?
- Is financial need a factor? Does the higher value scholarship always win out?
- What’s important to SFU; do we keep our standards or do we just hand out the scholarship money?
- What are the principles of the MES program?
- What type of support is needed for international students?

The members reviewed and discussed the offers/acceptances chart from the report. There were areas of concern such as the automatic entrance scholarships and renewals.

Next steps

- Need to establish principles
- Need to define what success looks like
- Need more data
- Need to make some concrete changes/improvements for the program, to approve program by October 2017, so that it can be in place for applicants entering in Fall 2018.

5. **Other Business**

No other business

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm
Minutes prepared by R. Balletta