

Motion for the Senate Meeting, September, 2015

There is increasing and legitimate concern across campuses about academic-industry relations and how these can have an effect on academic freedom and academic integrity. For example, in 2011, Dalhousie University accepted a charitable donation from Shell Canada (see circulated agreement) that gave the corporation what many on Senate might consider an inappropriate amount of involvement in the education of our students, including Shell Canada being given some authority on certain academic matters taking place within undergraduate classes (e.g. participate in the judging of - and the power to reject - Senior design projects in Mechanical Engineering).

While Dalhousie University should welcome donations from a multitude of sources, it should not do so at the expense of academic freedom within the university. It is essential that the university protects its integrity, autonomy and academic freedom and not accept gifts when a condition of such acceptance would compromise these fundamental principles.

Given:

1. Senate is the university's senior academic governing body and has a responsibility to play a vital role in fostering and supporting the mission and goals of the University;
2. The lack of clarity as to how many monetary gifts Dalhousie University has accepted that have the potential to infringe on academic integrity;
3. That Dalhousie University does not currently have a "Gift Acceptance Policy" that would regulate the stipulations that can be attached to gifts from individual or corporate donors; and,
4. There are no clear mechanisms for Senate to have input into the acceptance of gifts to the University,

it is moved:

- I. That an ad hoc committee of no more than 4 senate members be charged with identifying potential academic integrity issues associated with the acceptance of charitable gifts to the university;*
- II. That this ad hoc committee examine current practices at the university with regard to the acceptance of charitable gifts and academic integrity;*
- III. That this ad hoc committee examine mechanisms that would allow for better communication between Senate and the Dalhousie University administration on this particular issue;*
- IV. That the ad hoc committee prepare a report for Senate to review and discuss no later than February, 2016.*

Submitted by Tarah Wright, Professor in Environmental Science