



Senate Meeting
Alice Egan Hagen Board Room (Rosaria 312)/MS Teams

March 28, 2025
2 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: J. Dickinson (Chair, Items 1-7.7), L. Francis (Chair, Items 8-11), J. Bail, E. Ballantyne, A. Benzaquén, R. Bursey, C. Cameron, A. Card, E. Copeland Solas, P. Crouse, C. Dawson, G. Durepos, M. Eskritt, J. Gahagan, S. Hale Wills, D. Hazelton, E. Henderson, S. Huntemann, K. Jones, S. Kaur, M. McGonnell, C. McLean, M. Minocha, D. Piccitto, B. Russo, J. Sawler, K. Schlieff, G. Sneddon, L. Steele, A. Thurlow, S. Trenholm, J. Valcke, T. Yu

Regrets: C. Barker, M. Gonick, M. Matthews, I. Nault, M. Siddiquee

Observers: G. Batten, J. Keefe, E. Johnson, J. Lamb, L. Mann, L.-A. MacFarlane, J. Neilson, I. Tian

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m.

Observers were identified and welcomed. Procedures to be used during the meeting and while voting on motions were outlined. The President acknowledged the service of John R. Sylliboy, who recently resigned from Senate as the Mi'kmaq member of the MSVU L'nu Advisory Circle.

1. Indigenous Land Recognition

J. Dickinson provided an acknowledgement that the Mount is built on traditional, unceded Mi'kmaq territory and paid respect to the Indigenous peoples of the land on which Senate meets.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by S. Hale Wills, seconded by M. McGonnell, to approve the agenda with the addition of 7.5, Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. CARRIED.

The following numbers under Item 7 will be renumbered.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. February 28, 2025

Moved by C. McLean, seconded by B. Russo, to approve the minutes of February 28, 2025, as circulated. CARRIED.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

No business arising from the minutes was identified.

5. Administration Updates

5.1. President

J. Dickinson provided several administrative updates, including the appointment of the new AVP University Relations and a proposed location for displaying photos of past recipients of the Teaching & Research Awards. She also congratulated MODL student Kevin Hudon for winning the Fenêtre sur la Francophonie Award, as well as the Prix des Alliances françaises de Halifax et Moncton and the Prix du Consulat général de France dans les Provinces Atlantiques.

Regarding provincial government matters, J. Dickinson reported that Bill 12 passed without amendments and highlighted key points of the Bill that could potentially impact the Mount. She also informed Senators that the new bilateral agreement with the province has not yet been received, with the current agreement set to expire on March 31, 2025. Due to this delay, the projected budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is still pending; however, she reassured Senators that the administration is not considering wage or hiring freezes, unlike some other institutions.

5.2. Vice-President Academic and Provost

L. Francis thanked everyone involved in the early advising event, noting its strong attendance from both students and supporters, as well as members of the Mount community. She also thanked those who organized and participated in the research facilities tour with Dr. Brown at the Sheila A. Brown Centre for Applied Research.

L. Francis encouraged faculty Senators to nominate students for awards and valedictorian for Spring convocation.

Regarding updates from IRCC on processes for international students, L. Francis reported that MSVU was one of the few institutions to see a slight increase in international student enrollment, positioning the University with relative strength in the current situation. She noted that changes to PGWP (Post-Graduate Work Permit) eligibility, which now affect some programs at MSVU that were previously eligible, are outside of the institution's control. The University is exploring adjustments to its programming, including new programs in development and ways students can access programming in future years, noting that the changes from IRCC (regarding PGWP) came too late to modify current programming and articulation agreements.

L. Francis also highlighted efforts to mitigate risks for current and incoming researchers, as recent changes from Research NS, such as the loss of matching federal dollars, could significantly impact research funding.

Lastly, L. Francis spoke about attending Chairs meetings where discussions included work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities, an area of growing emphasis by the province and a topic of interest to both current and prospective students.

5.3. Vice-President Administration

I. Nault was not present at the meeting and had no announcements to share.

6. Question Period

T. Yu requested clarification on the acronym "WIL," which L. Francis explained stands for "work-integrated learning" and encompasses programs such as co-op, experiential learning and service learning.

Concerns were raised about heightened security measures at U.S. airports and borders, including device and media searches, and whether plans exist to support faculty members traveling to the U.S. for research or conferences. Additionally, the issue of providing support to researchers who can no longer conduct research in the U.S., particularly for tenure-track candidates, was discussed. Follow-up will be made with relevant departments (AVP People and Culture, I. Nault, Research Office and IT&S) to explore potential support, and J. Dickinson will address the topic of support for researchers at the Council for NS University Presidents, as it is a broader issue. (T. Yu, J. Dickinson, L. Francis, B. Russo)

T. Yu inquired about the release of a new academic plan, noting that the most recent plan is from 2014. L. Francis explained that the past 18 months have been challenging due to government reporting and other key items taking priority. Once the Strategic Alignment Plan is complete, she expects more capacity to focus on an academic plan but also noted a shift towards academic strategic goals, rather than long-term plans, as they can offer more flexibility and responsiveness.

An update was requested on the EDIA committee's full meeting, with Senators raising concerns over the lack of transparency regarding the lack of meetings over the past two years as well as more broad concerns about national threats to EDIA and programming. Additionally, concerns were expressed about potential future threats to EDIA values, with a suggestion to entrench them in legal documents to protect them from future government changes. In response, ongoing initiatives were highlighted, such as *Folia Montana*, AMI, *Atlantis*, increased funding for Indigenous student support and the Kinu Tourism Project. J. Dickinson agreed to pass the concern about the lack of the full committee meeting on to D. Bernard and the EDIA action plan sub-committee. (D. Piccitto, J. Dickinson, L. Francis, B. Russo, J. Sawler)

I. Tian asked for an update on when the financial report regarding our investments will be posted, which was confirmed to be at the end of the fiscal year (March 31).

A. Benzaquén addressed delays in the RTPP process and lack of communication about these delays and also suggested that holding town halls could be a solution for open dialogue on a variety of topics. J. Dickinson explained that the delays are partly due to turnover in key offices and reminded that Campus Exchanges are available to have campus-wide

discussions. L. Francis acknowledged the delay and confirmed that an update will be sent to candidates now that dates have been set for URC meetings.

A. Thurlow raised the need to prioritize rebuilding relationships within the Mount community post-job action. J. Dickinson shared that an update on this topic will be provided in the JBSL report, noting that smaller, genuine efforts are being made to forge meaningful relationships across campus.

K. Schlieff asked for an update on the timing of Fall Reading Week. L. Francis responded that CAPP is actively discussing this, including consulting other universities; she added that the earliest change could occur is Fall 2026, as the 2025-2026 Academic Calendar has already been approved by Senate.

7. Committee Reports (Standing and Ad Hoc)

7.1. Senate Executive

7.1.1. Revision to Senate Bylaw 12.1

J. Dickinson brought forward a Notice of Motion for revisions to Senate Bylaw 12.1.

7.1.2. Revision to Tributes Committee Terms of Reference, Bylaw 14.1.1

J. Dickinson brought forward a Notice of Motion for revisions to the Tributes Committee Terms of Reference, Bylaw 14.1.1.

7.2. Academic Policy and Planning

7.2.1. Report on External Review of Chemistry and Physics

L. Francis noted that the report was included for information only, highlighting the significant progress made by the CHEM/PHYS Department in implementing several recommendations from the external review.

7.3. Academic Policy and Planning and Graduate Studies Program and Policy

7.3.1. New Program Proposal for Graduate Certificate in Nutrition and Aging

Moved by L. Francis, seconded by B. Russo, that Senate approve the new Graduate Certificate in Nutrition and Aging. CARRIED.

7.3.2. New course proposal in new program

S. Trenholm presented items 7.3.2 and 7.3.3 as an omnibus motion.

7.3.2.1. GAHN 6900: Place-based Learning

7.3.3. Change to Existing Program

7.3.3.1. Calendar Revision Applied Human Nutrition

7.3.3.2. Calendar Revision Family Studies and Gerontology

Moved by S. Trenholm, seconded by S. Hale Wills, that Senate approve the new course GAHN 6900 and the calendar revisions for Applied Human Nutrition and Family Studies and Gerontology. CARRIED.

7.4. Graduate Studies Program and Policy

7.4.1. Revision to Graduate Preparatory Program Requirements policy, GSPP 2014.01.

Moved by S. Trenholm, seconded by B. Russo, that Senate approve the revisions to the Graduate Preparatory Program Requirements policy, effective immediately. CARRIED.

7.5. Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

7.5.1. Arts and Science

7.5.1.1. New Course Proposal

7.5.1.1.1. HUMS 1100: Introduction to the Humanities and Social Sciences

Moved by A. Card, seconded by R. Bursey, that Senate approve the new course, HUMS 1100.

C. Dawson proposed a friendly amendment to add “to take effect in the 2026-2027 Undergraduate Academic Calendar, which was agreed to by A. Card and R. Bursey.

Moved by A. Card, seconded by R. Bursey, that Senate approve the new course, HUMS 1100, to take effect in the 2026-2027 Undergraduate Academic Calendar. WITHDRAWN.

Much discussion ensued on this topic, with the following points being discussed:

- Concerns regarding the use of Teaching Assistants (TAs) for tutorials, including the lack of unionization of TAs; potential overlap with lab instructor duties; and the possibility of reduced teaching quality. In response, it was highlighted that faculty members would have the option to lead tutorials, with some faculty and PhD holding staff already expressing interest in taking on this role. Additionally, it was noted that MSVU has a strong precedence for TA use.
- Concerns for the proposed class size (180), which contradicts MSVU's reputation for small class sizes and may introduce a need to accommodate students who struggle in a larger class setting, especially if the course becomes

mandatory. A suggestion was made to pilot the course for several years before making it mandatory for BA students, with regular evaluations to ensure its effectiveness. In response, it was noted that, without a mandatory component, the course might not have the necessary resources and that its broad, co-taught format would foster interdisciplinary exposure for students.

- Lack of clarity regarding decision-making processes and which department would oversee the course.
- Offer from MSVUSU to collaborate with course developers and provide student-centered feedback.
- Faculty collaboration and the exposure of students to diverse perspectives as being beneficial for student learning, particularly in their first year. Additionally, our graduate students would have the opportunity to receive mentorship from faculty members in a teaching context, with the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) offering further support to TAs.

(S. Huntemann, C. Dawson, D. Piccitto, B. Russo, J. Sawler, C. Cameron, L. Francis, E. Ballantyne, A. Benzaquén, T. Yu, D. Hazelton, S. Trenholm, L. Steele, C. McLean)

Moved by C. Dawson, seconded by B. Russo, to refer this course back to UCC for further development. CARRIED.

7.6. Undergraduate Admissions, Scholarships and Awards

7.6.1. Revision to Terms of Reference, Bylaw 14.11

S. Hale Wills presented a Notice of Motion for revisions to the Terms of Reference, Bylaw 14.11.

7.7. Joint Board/Senate Liaison Committee

G. Durepos reported on the March 21 JBSL meeting, which covered two main items: Bill 12 and BoG self-governance review and a request from the Students' Union for an education session on the roles and responsibilities of Senate and the BoG.

G. Durepos spoke about the various impacts Bill 12 could have on the University, as well as the BoG's plans if Bill 12 passed, including the point that the passing of Bill 12

would render the BoG self-governance review moot. G. Durepos also reported that conversations have been had at JBSL regarding rebuilding relationships between the BoG, faculty and the broader Mount community, with many ideas and suggestions being discussed.

8. Other Reports

8.1. FA President's Report on Board of Governors' meeting

As T. Yu was not able to attend the March BoG meeting, she reported on her written report that covered several key points: strike commemoration and rug created by A. Humble; job action self-reflection work and information sessions; training and implementation of the new Collective Agreement; FA's efforts for transparency regarding delays in professional expense reimbursements and RTPP adjudication; promotion of EDIA, University autonomy and academic freedom; EDIA panel; and FA social events.

A. Thurlow reported on the March BoG meeting proceedings, including a presentation of the 14-month BEd program; discussions on the Auditor General's report; Bill 12; update on the budgeting process; enrollment statistics from the Fall 2024 term; reports from the Alumni Association, Students' Union, Faculty Association; and highlights from Senate.

8.2. Students' Union

C. Cameron reported on the hiring of the strategic operations manager and provided updates on several initiatives, including President's Funds applications; a Standard of Excellence grant update; and plans for an event encouraging students to register to vote in federal elections. They also thanked the FA and faculty for supporting students observing fasting during Ramadan.

S. Kaur reported on a financial management event with M. Siddiquee which focused on credit score building and smart saving strategies, as well as an upcoming research seminar series on April 14, thanking L. Mann and C. Barker for suggesting potential presenters.

M. Minocha provided updates on several items, including the community partners project; plans to meet with L. Francis regarding implementing experiential learning opportunities; and a burlesque party hosted by the Pride Centre.

D. Hazelton announced that the MSVUSU AGM is scheduled for April 2.

K. Schlieff thanked those who encouraged students to run in the MSVUSU elections, noting that the current voting period ends on March 30. He also expressed gratitude to student Senators who are graduating.

J. Bail requested that the SU share information with undergraduate colleagues regarding the library research awards.

9. New Business

9.1. Board governance review

This report was covered under 7.7, JBSL report.

9.2. Recruitment presentation

J. Neilson presented on student recruitment, highlighting the following areas: recruitment team; recruitment strategy/approach; performance/trends; market observations; challenges/areas for improvement; and future plans. Following the presentation, J. Neilson opened the floor for discussion and/or questions.

Senators raised concerns regarding recruitment standards and their maintenance, especially in terms of financial commitment, time commitment and language skills. J. Neilson explained that recruiters provide applicants with clear outcomes, including the financial aspects of studying in Canada. He noted that challenges may arise from agents representing multiple institutions but that these agents are directly managed by J. Neilson and undergo annual training. It was emphasized that the IEC communicates multiple messages about the costs of studying and living in Halifax and potential cultural and/or external factors that could influence the funding that students have available to them once they arrive. J. Neilson also shared that the language component is being actively monitored, with increasing pressure on language schools and test providers. Additionally, if agents were found to be unethical, they would be immediately terminated. (B. Russo, J. Neilson, K. Jones, J. Sawler)

Moved by G. Durepos, seconded by S. Huntemann, that the meeting be extended to 5:30 p.m., or a shorter duration, should the agenda be exhausted prior to 5:30 p.m. CARRIED.

D. Piccitto inquired about Recruitment's involvement with exchange students and programs. J. Neilson clarified that this is primarily handled by the IEC and Amy Braye. K. Jones also discussed efforts to develop genuine exchange programs, where our students also have opportunities to study at partner institutions.

9.3. Honorary doctorate nominations (Confidential)

Moved by A. Thurlow, seconded by B. Russo, to move in camera to discuss confidential business. CARRIED.

Moved by S. Trenholm, seconded by M. McGonnell, to move out of the in-camera session. CARRIED.

While in-camera, Senate approved four nominations for Honorary doctorates.

10. Items for Communication

Senate approved:

- Minutes of February 28, 2025
- Graduate curriculum changes
- Revision to Graduate Preparatory Program Requirements policy, GSPP 2014-01
- Four nominations for honorary degrees

Senate received for information:

- Report on the external review of Chemistry and Physics
- Notice of motion for revisions to:
 - Senate Bylaw 12.1, Nomination for Honorary Degrees
 - Tributes Committee Terms of Reference, Bylaw 14.1.1
 - Undergraduate Admissions, Scholarships and Awards Committee Terms of Reference, Bylaw 14.11
- Report from Joint Board/Senate Liaison Committee
- Presentation on recruitment

Senate acknowledged the service of J. R. Sylliboy, whose term on Senate as the Mi'kmaq member of the MSVU L'nu Advisory Circle has ended.

11. Adjournment

As the agenda was exhausted, the meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.