



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

February 27, 2026
2 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: J. Dickinson (Chair), J. Bail, E. Ballantyne, C. Barker, A. Benzaquén, G. Boulet, S. Brigham, R. Bursey, A. Card, P. Crouse, C. Dawson, N. Deal, T. Findlay, L. Francis, J. Gahagan, S. Hale Wills, T. Harriott, E. Henderson, S. Huntemann, K. Jones, M. Matthews, M. McGonnell, C. McLean, M. Minocha, I. Nault, L. Paul, D. Piccitto, S. Reddington, B. Russo, K. Schlieff, G. Sneddon, E. Solas, A. Thurlow, S. Trenholm, J. Valcke, K. Whitfield, O. Wokoma, S. Zegarra

Regrets: J. Ryuzaki

Guests: G. Batten, A. Braye, M. Caswell, D. Fisher, T. Franz-Odendaal, R. Healey, J. Lamb, L. MacFarlane, K. White

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m. Procedures to be used during the meeting and while voting were outlined.

1. Indigenous Land Recognition

E. Ballantyne paid respect to the knowledge embedded in the Mi'kmaq custodians of the lands and waters and to the Elders past, present and future. With reference to a land acknowledgement workshop delivered by Patrick Small Legs Nagge, she noted a connection to the past, the present and the future, exemplified by the Kinu Project and the Business and Tourism Department, collaboration between the Teaching and Learning Centre and Kinu that's resulting in "first voice" video footage related to Two-Eyed Seeing and opportunity to use this footage to provide more opportunities for engagement.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved by S. Hale Wills, seconded by S. Brigham, to approve the agenda as circulated.
CARRIED

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. January 30, 2026

Moved by B. Russo, seconded by C. McLean, to approve the minutes of January 30, 2026, as circulated. CARRIED

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

4.1. Periodic evaluation of indigenizing PsyD Program

J. Dickinson reminded Senate that B. Russo had raised the need for this motion previously and discussion was moved forward to this meeting.

B. Russo summarized the reason for her motion, noting that support for this motion would be a step toward a bigger systemic institutional need and that the new PsyD Program would be a starting point.

Discussion ensued including the following points: concerns about requiring only one program to report; whether Senate is the correct venue for this type of reporting; consistency with accreditation requirements for the PsyD program, the MSVU Strategic Plan and MSVU's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation; and the need for written documentation to show our commitment and accountability. (M. McGonnell, C. Dawson, C. Barker, T. Findlay, B. Russo)

Moved by B. Russo, seconded by S. Huntemann, that the PsyD program, in year three of its existence, provides Senate a written update of their efforts to Indigenize their program. CARRIED.

5. Administration Updates

5.1. President

J. Dickinson informed Senate about the significant cuts to grants to MSVU and across all NS post-secondary institutions recently announced by the Provincial Government: Education PhD programs across three institutions; MSVU scholarship dollars; Continuing Education Early Childhood Education (ECE) Bursary program; and the Professional Learning Support Site Grant.

She further reported that the program that supports businesses who hire Co-op students was cut significantly across the province, with the remaining funds to be directed towards areas which the Government deems labor significant.

J. Dickinson continued that she had already advocated on behalf of continuing students that they be allowed to finish their programs and that a conversation with the Deputy Minister indicated that we should expect additional cuts in the following three years. She referenced cuts to support programs for African Nova Scotians and the Indigenous community. She informed Senate that communication will be sent to the campus community after additional answers are known.

5.2. Vice-President Academic and Provost

L. Francis addressed Senate regarding the cuts to the Education PhD program, explaining the layers of complexity in an inter-university program. She referred to a meeting with the other Provosts, ongoing conversations with the Inter-University Doctorate Administration Committee and additional steps planned to support

students currently enrolled. She noted that providing reassurance to the students who are in the program now has been her focus.

5.3. Vice-President Administration

I. Nault reported that the MSVU financial situation is strained, with a deficit projected for this year. With reference to the Government cuts, she noted that MSVU's focus is on the students and called on the MSVU community to be flexible and work together. She reported that the budget plan will need to be adapted and that a Campus Exchange is planned to share ideas to provide a good student life experience and, at the same time, survive financially. I. Nault suggested that MSVU may need to focus more on core services and defer, or pause for some time, some services and that vacant term and temporary positions are being reviewed. She ended with a thank you to the Senate.

6. Question Period

S. Brigham inquired about students planning to begin PhD programs in the near future. L. Francis responded that information-gathering has begun and that more news will be available next week.

G. Boulet inquired regarding clarification from Administration of the bilateral grant agreement and the Senate statutory role regarding the need for reporting and implementation of timelines and for Senate to be engaged in the development, approval and implementation of any academic changes arising from those commitments. L. Francis responded that Schedule H is not tied to established Senate policy and does not require Senate involvement; however, Senate will be involved, for example, when programs propose new streams, new courses or discontinuation.

During Question Period, additional Senators spoke to discussion and collaboration opportunities: a new standing item on each Senate agenda, when and how Senate will be involved in the Schedule H review and evaluation of academic programs, and a meeting of Senate and the Board to share expertise. (D. Piccitto, G. Boulet, A. Thurlow, T. Findlay)

J. Dickinson noted that Senate members are encouraged to attend the upcoming Campus Exchange, that Senate Executive can discuss this agenda suggestion and that she would discuss with the Board Chair the possibility of a joint Board-Senate meeting. L. Francis added that engagement will be required from the entire campus on this budget issue.

L. Francis noted that MSVU only recently received the guidebook for schedule H and the data and that the plan for completion is being released on March 2 or 3. She confirmed that the process is very specific and that nothing asked goes against Senate policy.

J. Dickinson acknowledged that Administration would look forward to G. Boulet's response after the plan is released.

B. Russo asked what is meant by core services and referenced the International Education Centre position that recently ended. J. Dickinson replied that core services depend on the

breadth of the teams that exist and where money comes from, e.g. whether it is grant-funded or has core program funding.

L. Francis added a comment about the International Education Centre to indicate that providing key, high-impact services for international student advising is important and that the model for accessing and delivering those services is being reframed. On behalf of the Students' Union and as included in the Students' Union report in the agenda package, M. Minocha identified specific concerns regarding the termination of the international Student Success Advisor position, asked for rationale for its removal and advocated for the position to be reinstated. S. Zegarra concurred with the negative results of having only generalized academic support for international students. J. Dickinson thanked M. Minocha and added that a meeting will be scheduled with the SU to further discuss this.

C. Barker asked about external reviews of service departments on campus, particularly IT&S. L. Francis and L. MacFarlane responded that IT&S is scheduled for 2026-27.

O. Wokoma presented a reminder that a meeting is scheduled on March 5 between the SU and the Minister as part of the CFS lobby events and that a meeting with leadership and the SU in advance of that would allow a unified voice on shared issues. J. Dickinson confirmed that a meeting will be scheduled.

D. Piccitto noted a scheduling conflict between the Academic Awards ceremony and Faculty Association AGM and Luncheon on April 10 and requested a change to the time of the Academic Awards ceremony. J. Dickinson acknowledged the error, and L. Francis added that a rescheduled time is in the works. C. Barker noted that a Chairs' Meeting in Arts and Science, also on that day, would need to be accommodated as well.

A. Benzaquén inquired about the New Brunswick government plans and asked for further information. J. Dickinson clarified that the news media had shown ideas, not facts, regarding changes to existing universities and those ideas are now off the table.

N. Deal followed up on differences between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and inquired about the possible end goal of Bill 12 and the schedule H activity. J. Dickinson and L. Francis concurred that discussions are focusing on creative collaboration between institutions and not mergers.

During the above discussion the following motion was made:

Moved: by G. Boulet, seconded by B. Russo, to extend Question Period by ten minutes.
CARRIED

7. Committee Reports (Standing and Ad Hoc)

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

7.1.1. New Program Proposal for Master of Science Natural Sciences (*for Approval*) (L. Francis)

Moved by L. Francis, seconded by M. McGonnell, that Senate approve the new MSc Natural Sciences, effective upon MPHEC approval.

Discussion followed, including these points: Indigenization of curriculum and plans for additional consultation; recommendations for revisions where Math is referenced; revisions to recognize international student enrollments; MPHEC requirements regarding the number of units of coursework; collaboration with Nutrition and Dietetics; and alternative pathways to the degree. (B. Russo, S. Huntemann, C. Dawson, K. Whitfield, M. McGonnell, D. Fisher, L. MacFarlane, K. Schlieff, T. Findlay, L. Francis)

During the discussion, a friendly amendment was made to the motion, which was confirmed to be friendly by L. Francis and M. McGonnell.

Moved by L. Francis, seconded by M. McGonnell, that Senate approve the new MSc Natural Sciences, with the correction/revisions to the identified sections regarding math, effective upon MPHEC approval. CARRIED.

7.1.2. New Course Proposals: Natural Sciences

- 7.1.2.1. GNSR 6600 Graduate Research Methods in Natural Sciences
- 7.1.2.2. GNSR 6601 Thesis I: Research Proposal and Oral Proposal Defense
- 7.1.2.3. GNSR 6602 Thesis II: Thesis Document and Oral Thesis Defense
- 7.1.2.4. GNSR 6603 Advanced Special Topics in Natural Sciences

S. Huntemann noted that Section 7 of GNSR 6603 *Advanced Special Topics in Natural Sciences* should be worded similarly to 7.1.2.1 to reflect “lab sciences” instead of “science.”

Moved by S. Trenholm, seconded by S. Hale Wills, that Senate approve new courses GNSR 6600, GNSR 6601, GNSR 6602, and GNSR 6603. CARRIED.

7.1.3. New Course Proposal: Communication Studies

7.1.3.1. GPRL 6512 Foundations of Science Communication

Moved by S. Trenholm, seconded by S. Brigham, that Senate approve the new course GPRL 6512. CARRIED.

- 7.1.4. New Course Proposal: Psychology
 - 7.1.4.1. GPSY 6100 Advanced Directed Study
Moved by S. Trenholm, seconded by N. Deal, that Senate approve the new course GPSY 6100. CARRIED.

- 7.1.5. Change to Existing Course: Biology
 - 7.1.5.1. BIOL 6100 Advanced Directed Study
Moved by S. Trenholm, seconded by S. Brigham, that Senate approve a new Calendar description for BIOL 6100. CARRIED.

- 7.1.6. Calendar copy for MSc Natural Sciences
Moved by S. Trenholm, seconded by C. Barker, that Senate approve a new Calendar entry for the new Master of Science in Natural Sciences. CARRIED.

- 7.2. Undergraduate Curriculum
 - 7.2.1. Child and Youth Study
 - 7.2.1.1. Changes to Existing Program
 - 7.2.1.1.1. Admission requirements for BA (CYS)
Moved by A. Card, seconded by C. McLean, that Senate approve changes to the Child and Youth Study Department to take effect in the next Undergraduate Academic Calendar. CARRIED.

 - 7.2.2. Cultural Studies
 - 7.2.2.1. New Course Proposals
 - 7.2.2.1.1. CULS 1104: Paint to Pixels: Introduction to Visual Culture
 With reference to this course proposal as an example only, E. Ballantyne noted that the Department does not intend to teach the course online. She informed Senate that an online learning framework document will be required by MPHEC in the coming year and that online offerings will be prioritized. She encouraged UCC and GSPP to engage in conversations to think critically about this topic.

 - In response, several Senators spoke to course planning in general with regard to online offerings, the importance of consultation with the Teaching and Learning Centre when developing a course and the intention of teaching in-person due to the experiential nature of material. (J. Dickinson, N. Deal, A. Benzaquén, and B. Russo)

Moved by A. Card, seconded by S. Hale Wills, that Senate approve the new course CULS 1104 Paint to Pixels: Introduction to Visual Culture. CARRIED.

7.2.2.1.2. CULS 2333: Global Indigeneities

Moved by A. Card, seconded by B. Russo, that Senate approve the new course CULS 2333 Global Indigeneities. CARRIED.

While not specific to this course, M. Matthews offered her Department's Kinu project resources to other departments.

7.2.2.2. Changes to Existing Program

7.2.2.2.1. Requirements for major, combined Major and concentration

Moved by A. Card, seconded by C. Dawson, that Senate approve the proposed changes in requirements for the major, combined major and concentration in Cultural Studies. CARRIED.

7.2.3. English

7.2.3.1. Changes to Existing Program

7.2.3.1.1. Prerequisites for University Study of English

Moved by A. Card, seconded by D. Piccitto, that Senate approve the changes to the prerequisites required for English study. CARRIED.

7.2.4. Tourism and Hospitality Management

7.2.4.1. Changes to Existing Program

7.2.4.1.1. Addition to Calendar description: CATT Tourism Advanced Certificate

Moved by A. Card, seconded by R. Bursey, that Senate approve the addition of the *Canadian Academy of Travel and Tourism* Advanced Certificate as a transfer credit to the Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management. CARRIED.

7.2.5. Women and Gender Studies

7.2.5.1. New Course Proposals

7.2.5.1.1. WOMS 2901: Queer Pleasure, Femme Future

7.2.5.1.2. WOMS 3420: Transnational Queer Studies

Moved by A. Card, seconded by C. Barker, that Senate approve the following courses: WOMS 2901 and WOMS 3420. CARRIED.

7.2.5.2. Changes to Existing Program

7.2.5.2.1. Requirements for major, combined major, combined major with honours degree, honours degree and concentration

7.2.5.2.2. Requirements for Minor in Women's Studies

7.2.5.2.3. Requirements for Minor in Queer Studies

7.2.5.2.4. Deletion of Departmental Women Emphasis Courses

Moved by A. Card, seconded by C. Dawson, that Senate approve the deletion of the Departmental Women Emphasis Courses section. CARRIED.

7.2.6. Changes

A. Card presented the following changes for information:

7.2.6.1. Applied Human Nutrition

7.2.6.1.1. New prerequisite for NUTR 1103

7.2.6.2. English

7.2.6.2.1. New prerequisite for ENGL 2221/WRIT 2221

7.2.6.2.2. New prerequisite and description for WRIT 2222

7.2.6.2.3. New prerequisite for ENGL 2223/WRIT 2223

7.2.6.2.4. New prerequisite for ENGL 2225/WRIT 2225/PHIL 2225

7.2.6.2.5. New prerequisite for WRIT 3211

7.2.6.2.6. New prerequisite for WRIT 3212

7.2.6.2.7. New prerequisite for ENGL 3221/WRIT 3221

7.2.6.2.8. New prerequisite for ENGL 3225/WRIT 3225

7.2.6.2.9. New prerequisite for ENGL 3377/WRIT 3377

7.2.6.2.10. New prerequisite, description and WebAdvisor title for ENGL 2276

7.2.6.2.11. New prerequisite and description for ENGL 3376

7.2.6.3. Tourism and Hospitality Management

7.2.6.3.1. New description for THMT 2299

7.2.6.3.2. New description for THMT 3399

7.3. Nominations

7.3.1. Election of Senator to Reappointment Committee for Associate Vice-President Research

7.3.2. Election of Senator to Reappointment Committee for Dean of Graduate Studies & Professional Studies

7.3.3. Election of Senator to Search Committee for Director, Teaching & Learning Centre

M. McGonnell reported on the call for nominations for three Faculty Senators, one to serve on each of the three committees noted. She then called three times for nominations for all three positions from the floor; no further nominations were received.

Two nominees were acclaimed: K. Whitfield for the Review Committee for the Associate Vice-President Research and N. Deal for the Search Committee for the Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre. A vote was held for the Review Committee for the Dean of Professional Studies and Graduate Studies; A. Thurlow was declared elected.

8. Other Reports

8.1. Students' Union

The first item in the Students' Union report, discontinuing a position in the International Education Centre, was covered during Question Period.

L. Paul presented a rationale for adding a seat for an Indigenous student representative on Senate, noting that Indigenous representation at Mount Saint Vincent University must go beyond symbolic inclusion and work towards transforming into institutional structures and that an Indigenous student representative would be critical to fostering an inclusive and safe university environment, diversifying knowledge within academia, advancing reconciliation and improving outcomes for Indigenous students while benefiting the University community.

B. Russo thanked L. Paul for her suggestion and voiced her strong support for this vital role. J. Dickinson confirmed with S. Zegarra that a motion for this Bylaw change will follow.

9. New Business

9.1. Student Strike

S. Zegarra acknowledged the materials in the Senate package and made the following motions:

Moved by S. Zegarra, seconded by M. Minocha, that Senate formally recognizes the upcoming province-wide student strike (March 16-21, 2026) organized by the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) as an exercise of fundamental freedoms of expression and association. CARRIED.

Moved by S. Zegarra, seconded by M. Minocha, that in recognition of the rights to free association, the Senate considers and approves "Academic Amnesty and Flexibility" to MSVU students during March 16-21, 2026, under the conditions identified in the attachment and that this Amnesty shall require faculty to:

- Reschedule all presentations, in-class assessments or exams scheduled during the strike period for participating students;
- Be flexible in granting extensions on assignments due during this period without requiring medical documentation;
- Refrain from using attendance or participation marks as a disciplinary tool against striking students;
- Ensure that International Students and Graduate Students are provided with specific written assurances that their participation will not be reported as a “failure to pursue studies” or lead to a loss of funding.

Discussion points included the following: asking for a mid-term rescheduling of course materials would be problematic at this point in the term; the University could not ensure the fourth bullet as that is government-related; supporting this motion would compromise academic freedom and conflict with the Faculty Collective Agreements; and time lost due to the proposed student strike would add to the concern of completing course material following the high number of snow days this term. (B. Russo, K. Jones, S. Huntemann, J. Dickinson, A. Thurlow, C. Dawson, T. Findlay, N. Deal)

During the discussion, B. Russo suggested a friendly amendment to change the wording in the motion from “require” to “highly recommend.”

J. Dickinson asked if the mover and seconder would agree to this friendly amendment; they approved.

The above motion was subsequently withdrawn by unanimous consent and replaced by the following:

Moved by S. Zegarra, seconded by B. Russo, that Senate encourages instructors to grant academic amnesty where possible, at the instructor’s discretion, for students who attend the strike during March 16-21, 2026, under the conditions identified in the attachment. CARRIED.

During the New Business discussion, the following motion was made:

Moved by B. Russo, seconded by R. Bursey, to extend the meeting by twenty minutes. CARRIED.

10. Items for Communication

Senate approved

- Minutes January 30, 2026
- A timeline for Senate to receive an update on indigenizing the PsyD Program
- New Program Master of Science Natural Sciences, related new courses and course changes, and Calendar copy
- Undergraduate curriculum changes

- The election of faculty Senators to Ad Hoc Committees:
 - Reappointment Committee for Associate Vice-President (Research): Kyla Whitfield
 - Reappointment Committee for Dean of Graduate Studies & Professional Studies: Amy Thurlow
 - Search Committee for Director of Teaching & Learning: Nicholous Deal
- Motions regarding student strike:
 - Recognizing province-wide student strike March 16 – 21 as an exercise of fundamental freedoms of expression and association.
 - Encouraging instructors to grant academic amnesty where possible, at the instructor’s discretion, for students who attend the strike during March 16-21, 2026, under these conditions:
 - Protections apply only to academic obligations scheduled between March 16-21, 2026;
 - Amnesty applies to students participating in strike-related activities during the recognized dates;
 - Students remain responsible for completing all course learning outcomes and revised requirements;
 - Protections do not extend to conduct involving violence, harassment, intimidation, destruction of property, or obstruction of essential university operations, as defined in university policy;
 - Students seeking accommodation shall notify affected instructors via official university email, preferably at least 24 hours in advance where reasonably possible;
 - Students shall not be required to submit documentary proof of attendance at strike activities.

Senate received for information:

- Undergraduate curriculum changes

11. Adjournment

As the agenda was exhausted, the meeting adjourned at 5:21 p.m.