

### **MINUTES**

**Present:** L. Francis (Chair), J. Bail, E. Ballantyne, C. Barker, A. Benzaquén, G. Boulet, S. Brigham, R. Bursey, A. Card, P. Crouse, C. Dawson, N. Deal, J. Dickinson, T. Findlay, 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, E. Solas, A. Thurlow, S. Trenholm, J. Valcke, O. Wokoma

**Regrets:** J. Ryuzaki, G. Sneddon, K. Whitfield, S. Zegarra

**Observers:** M. Caswell, J. Lamb, L. MacFarlane, K. White, J. Woodworth

*The meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m.*

*L. Francis welcomed new and returning Senators, as well as those in new support roles. Observers were identified and welcomed. Procedures to be used during the meeting and while voting were outlined.*

#### **1. Indigenous Land Recognition**

Since she was attending remotely from Ottawa, L. Francis began with a land acknowledgement recognizing the Indigenous heritage of that region as unceded Anishinaabe Algonquin territory. She then 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. She encouraged Senators to reflect on the significance of these acknowledgements, citing in particular the relevance of Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (e.g., 63.3).

#### **2. Approval of Agenda**

**Moved** by S. Brigham, seconded by B. Russo, to approve the agenda. CARRIED

#### **3. Approval of Minutes**

3.1. November 28, 2025

**Moved** by B. Russo, seconded by J. Bail, to approve the minutes of November 28, 2025, as amended. CARRIED

#### **4. Business Arising from the Minutes**

4.1. Update on periodic evaluation of indigenizing PsyD Program

B. Russo presented an update regarding a motion on indigenization and PsyD that she intends to propose in February 2026. She stated that an information packet on this

motion would be provided to Senators in early February. Having had a discussion with J. Dickinson, B. Russo noted the importance of reform on the matter of indigenization at all levels and in all facets of university operation, stated that efforts in the PsyD program were only a starting point, and expressed her hope to discuss the matter further with other Senators before finalizing her motion.

L. Francis thanked B. Russo for her update and opened the floor to questions.

C. Barker thanked B. Russo for this update and, as somebody working in Psychology but also more generally concerned about the matter on a university-wide level, offered to continue discussing the matter with her.

B. Russo thanked C. Barker and further noted that she has also spoken with M. McGonnell about this issue.

#### 4.2. Printing issues (D. Piccitto)

D. Piccitto reported that printing issues continue following the rollout of new printers and a change of the printer management system in the fall. She expressed concern that none of the notices about these upcoming printer changes had either anticipated potential problems or suggested proactive solutions. She pointed to this situation being indicative of a larger issue about clear communication with respect to technological updates and problems.

An additional issue regarding black and white vs. colour printing was raised, noting how this change affects departmental printing budgets and could have been avoided with clear communication. (S. Huntemann, P. Crouse)

C. Barker suggested that technical issues and communication more generally could be addressed at SCOITS.

I. Nault thanked Senators for their comments and stated that she would relay these concerns to the IT&S team. She noted that the team is attempting to improve in various ways, including better defining their services and expected timelines for tickets. She concurred that communication is the biggest issue and committed to improvement. D. Piccitto thanked I. Nault for her response.

## 5. Administration Updates

### 5.1. President

L. Francis began by stating that she would be reporting on behalf of J. Dickinson. Her report included the following items: the recent 75th anniversary of Caritas Day at MSVU; the Strategic Enrollment Plan launched on January 23, 2026; the recent awarding of the Order of Canada to Mandy Rennehan, an MSVU Honorary Doctorate recipient; the awarding of the Order of Nova Scotia to Jack Fleming, former member of the MSVU Board; and the awarding of the President's awards to C. McLean and

L. MacFarlane and the Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Award to Nouf Saleh in December 2025. She concluded by announcing that next week marks the beginning of African Heritage Month, which will include a variety of celebrations, a conference and a speaker series.

5.2. Vice-President Academic and Provost

L. Francis informed Senators about cuts in the number of provincial attestation letters (PALs) received, a request submitted for additional letters for programs that are on the high labour market need list and changes in the surrounding policy. L. Francis reported that Graduate Studies applicants no longer require PALs, which will provide flexibility for the PALs allocation.

L. Francis provided updates on Schedule H noting that the templates to review programs in categories such as modernization, revitalization, rationalization, and no change have not been provided yet. She reported on a workshop held in December 2025, at which a summary of the types of variables that will be used for the categorization, as well as a program costing model, was provided. She announced that, since then, more information was received from the Province and the University submitted a list with all of the currently offered programs and thus, the first deliverable for Schedule H was met. L. Francis reiterated the importance of Schedule H and is hopeful that it will present an opportunity for MSVU to showcase the value-driven and unique aspects of its programs. She also provided a short report on items included in Schedule G: streamlining completion of the BEd, residence capacity, “two plus twos” in connection to NSCC and activities in experiential learning.

**Moved** by B. Russo, seconded by S. Brigham, to extend the time for administration updates by 10 minutes. CARRIED

L. Francis thanked E. Ballantyne for her work as Acting Director of Teaching and Learning and informed Senators that a call to populate a search committee for this position will be issued soon.

5.3. Vice-President Administration

I. Nault provided a budget update after Q2, stating that, despite all efforts, the projection by the end of December 2026 points to a significant deficit, with the main factor being the lower enrollment numbers. She noted that next year the operating grant will remain at 2% and the NS domestic tuition will still be frozen. I. Nault pointed out that the University will be working on increasing revenue by increasing enrollment and decreasing expenses in a non-drastic way, with a commitment to a balanced budget within four years.

I. Nault also provided a short report on the closing of the parking lot by the Steam Plant, due to ongoing construction work and safety concerns, and confirmed that steps will be taken to increase the parking spots in different locations on campus.

## 6. Question Period

T. Findlay inquired regarding the news that \$600,000 will be withheld by the Province to the Mount because the university residences have not met their target. I. Nault explained that the holdback will affect next year's grant. She provided the information that the Bi-Lateral Agreement has two requirements: 1) to provide beds to 15% of the full-time student population, and 2) to be filled at 95%. While the first requirement was met, the current occupancy is at 89%, so if it reaches 95% before October, the Mount will avoid the monetary holdback for next year. L. Francis added that efforts have been made with the Province to accurately describe the Mount student demographics that are different than those of other universities, e.g. mature and part-time students, B.Ed. students and working teachers, who already live in the community and are in no need of residence. J. Dickinson added that the Deputy Minister was receptive to the information provided by the University. L. Francis referenced our history of working with other universities and the NSCC to provide housing for their students and noted that residence occupancy might also be negatively affected by the changing traffic in this part of the city and the unreliable bus service to the universities in downtown Halifax. (T. Findlay, I. Nault, L. Francis, J. Dickinson)

A. Benzaquén enquired as to why the current meeting is being held online and asked whether meeting in person for some Senators was considered. L. Francis explained that a series of unpredicted occurrences, such as conference attendance and flight changes, necessitated an entirely remote meeting.

G. Boulet asked how to access Schedules H and G. L. Francis pointed out that these are schedules to the Bi-Lateral Agreement and are publicly available.

C. Barker spoke about the aftermath of the sprinkler malfunction in Evaristus and inquired as to what measures will be taken to secure faculty office space in future events and whether more efficient ways to communicate would be considered. I. Nault explained that the notifications went first to the people who were most affected by the incident, while the team was busy mitigating the damage and checking the lab equipment as a priority. She agreed that improving communication remains a priority for such events in future.

J. Valcke shared her disappointment in the way the tragic news of the passing of student Cassidy Marriott-Crawford was communicated in the Campus Bulletin. L. Francis ensured that K. White will take this feedback to the communications team; K. White confirmed she had taken note of this.

B. Russo asked whether anything is being done to prepare for another campus closure due to weather and the impact this will have on classes held on Mondays. L. Francis confirmed that conversations with the Registrar's Office regarding future cancellations were already

happening and safety was identified as the primary driver in taking the decision to cancel classes. She noted that alternative options should be provided to students to make up for the missed classes. M. Matthews commented that, to make up for lost time, her Department is recording the classes whenever possible.

C. Barker interrupted with a point of order, as L. Francis had to evacuate from her hotel room due to a fire alarm. He proposed an emergency motion for either I. Nault or C. Dawson to be appointed as chair.

**Moved** by C. Barker, seconded by B. Russo, that I. Nault be named chair for the rest of the meeting. CARRIED

I. Nault addressed B. Russo's concern by stating that the Registrar's Office will be developing a plan in case of further class cancellations due to the weather.

S. Brigham asked whether such occurrences as the leak in Evaristus might be damaging the University's reputation and asked how the Mount is addressing the campus planning in regard to infrastructure. I. Nault answered that she currently has no information regarding campus planning, but the topic can be brought back to Senate as an update.

Parliamentarian E. Henderson proposed a motion be made to extend Question Period.

**Moved** by B. Russo, seconded by S. Huntemann, to extend Question Period by 10 minutes. CARRIED

S. Brigham further asked whether students submit surveys regarding their satisfaction levels from residence and if creative ways to utilize unoccupied space could be explored. I. Nault pointed out that the Bi-Lateral Agreement prevents the Mount from removing beds, which is the reason why space cannot be used in a different way. K. Jones indicated that a survey is done every year and adjustments are made based on that student input.

S. Brigham asked whether the PALs are being under-utilized in a way that is more cautious than necessary. K. Jones pointed out that all universities are not using the allocated PALs to their full extent due to fewer international applications and that the real issue is the lower demand due to changes made by the government.

B. Russo followed up on S. Brigham's point on residence rooms and asked if the rooms could be used as rentals, following the example of other universities worldwide. K. Jones explained that the residence rooms are not suitable for rentals due to the floor structure and the fact that students cannot be mixed with non-students due to safety and security reasons. I. Nault added that they are considering housing students doing internships or practicums at other institutions.

## 7. Committee Reports (Standing and Ad Hoc)

### 7.1. Academic Policy and Planning

#### 7.1.1. Department Name Change (*for Approval*) (C. Dawson)

##### 7.1.1.1. Women's Studies to Women and Gender Studies

C. Dawson outlined the rationale behind the name change request from the Women's Studies Department.

**Moved** by C. Dawson, seconded by C. Barker, that Senate approve the Department Name Change from *Women's Studies* to *Women and Gender Studies*, effective immediately. CARRIED

S. Huntemann inquired as to whether the Department was also going to change the name of the program that will appear on the diplomas. C. Dawson pointed out that due to the MPHEC regulations, processing such a change could become a lengthy task; therefore, the Department has opted out of that change.

B. Russo inquired about the name of the program that is shown for graduate students. S. Hale Wills explained that at the undergraduate level, the majors and minors do not appear on parchments, whereas on the graduate level the program's name is already Women and Gender Studies as it is a joint degree.

T. Findlay added that the graduate program has always been called Women and Gender Studies.

#### 7.1.2. Revision to Calendar text for Final Examination Policy, CAPP 2022-01 (*for Approval*) (S. Hale Wills)

S. Hale Wills presented a change in the Calendar text in order for it to align with the intentions when the policy was last revised.

**Moved** by S. Hale Wills, seconded by E. Ballantyne, that Senate approve the revisions to the Examination Policy regulation in the undergraduate and graduate Calendars, effective Summer Session I, 2026. CARRIED

### 7.2. Graduate Studies Program and Policy (S. Trenholm)

#### 7.2.1. Education: TESOL (*for Approval*)

##### 7.2.1.1. New Course Proposal

###### 7.2.1.1.1. GTSL 6556/6557: Special Topics in TESOL

**Moved** by S. Trenholm, seconded by A. Card, that Senate approve the new course, GTSL 6556/6557. CARRIED

###### 7.2.1.1.2. GTSL 6366: TESOL Practicum

**Moved** by S. Trenholm, seconded by A. Thurlow, that Senate approve the new course GTSL 6366. CARRIED

7.2.2. Communication Studies (*for Approval*)

7.2.2.1. Changes to Existing Program

7.2.2.1.1. Requirements for MA (Communication)

**Moved** by S. Trenholm, seconded by B. Russo, that Senate approve the changes to the requirements for the MA in Communication. CARRIED

7.3. Undergraduate Curriculum (A. Card)

7.3.1. Applied Human Nutrition (*for Approval*)

7.3.1.1. Changes to Existing Program

7.3.1.1.1. Requirements for professional minor in Applied Human Nutrition

**Moved** by A. Card, seconded by B. Russo, that Senate approve the changes to the requirements for the professional minor in Applied Human Nutrition. CARRIED

7.3.2. Biology (*for Approval*)

7.3.2.1. Course Deletion

7.3.2.1.1. BIOL 4400: Field Biology

7.3.2.2. New Course Proposal

7.3.2.2.1. BIOL 3300: Field Biology

**Moved** by A. Card, seconded by S. Brigham, that Senate approve the deletion of BIOL 4400 and the addition of BIOL 3300. CARRIED

S. Huntemann inquired about the necessity for a change from the 4000 to 3000 level. C. Dawson explained that the change will be beneficial to students who will be able to take the 3000-level course earlier in their program.

7.3.3. Business Administration and Political Studies (*for Approval*)

7.3.3.1. Course Deletion

7.3.3.1.1. BUSI/POLS 3306: Government Administration and Accountability

**Moved** by A. Card, seconded by T. Findlay, that Senate approve the deletion of the course BUSI/POLS 3306. CARRIED

7.3.4. Child and Youth Study (*for Approval*)

7.3.4.1. New Course Proposal

7.3.4.1.1. CHYS 3353: Practicum: Early Childhood 2

**Moved** by A. Card, seconded by C. McLean, that Senate approve the new course CHYS 3353. CARRIED

7.3.4.2. Changes to Existing Program

7.3.4.2.1. Requirements for practicum in BA (CYS)

7.3.4.2.2. Requirements for concentration in Early Childhood Education and calendar description

**Moved** by A. Card, seconded by C. McLean, that Senate approve the changes in requirements for the BA (CYS) practicum and the concentration in Early Childhood Education and calendar description. CARRIED

7.3.5. History (*for Approval*)

7.3.5.1. New Course Proposal

7.3.5.1.1. HIST 4479: Seminar (World History)

7.3.5.2. Changes to Existing Program

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

**Moved** by A. Card, seconded by A. Benzaquén, that Senate approve the new course HIST 4479 and the requirements for the major, combined major, combined major with honours, honours degree and concentration in History. CARRIED

7.3.6. Philosophy/Religious Studies (*for Approval*)

7.3.6.1. Course Deletions

7.3.6.1.1. PHIL 2219/RELS 2219 - Does God Exist?

7.3.6.1.2. PHIL 3301/RELS 3301 - God and Evil: The Current Debate

7.3.6.1.3. PHIL 3351/RELS 3351 - The Nature of Faith

**Moved** by A. Card, seconded by C. Dawson, that Senate approve the deletion of the courses PHIL 2219/RELS 2219, PHIL 3301/RELS 3301 and PHIL 3351/RELS 3351. CARRIED

B. Russo inquired whether CULS was consulted on the removal of the course with the title "Evil" that is cross-listed with CULS. T. Findlay pointed out that this is a different course with a similar title.

- 7.3.6.2. New Course Proposal
  - 7.3.6.2.1. PHIL/RELS 3319 – The Meaning(s) of Life  
**Moved** by A. Card, seconded by S. Hale Wills, that Senate approve the new course PHIL/RELS 3319.  
 CARRIED
- 7.3.6.3. Changes to Existing Program
  - 7.3.6.3.1. Deletion of minor in Philosophy and Religion  
**Moved** by A. Card, seconded by B. Russo, that Senate approve the deletion of the minor in Philosophy and Religion. CARRIED
- 7.3.7. Politics, Economics and Canadian Studies (*for Approval*)
  - 7.3.7.1. Changes to Existing Program (Canadian Studies)
    - 7.3.7.1.1. Changes to Canadian Emphasis Courses list  
**Moved** by A. Card, seconded by T. Findlay, that Senate approve the changes to the Canadian Emphasis Courses list in Canadian Studies. CARRIED
- 7.3.8. Changes (*for Information*)
  - A. Card presented the following changes for information only.
  - 7.3.8.1. Biology
    - 7.3.8.1.1. New prerequisite and description for BIOL 4460 and 4461
  - 7.3.8.2. Child and Youth Study
    - 7.3.8.2.1. New course title for CHYS 2251
    - 7.3.8.2.2. New course title and prerequisites for CHYS 3351
    - 7.3.8.2.3. New course title and prerequisites for CHYS 3352
    - 7.3.8.2.4. New course title for CHYS 4451
  - 7.3.8.3. History
    - 7.3.8.3.1. New course titles for HIST 4480 and HIST 4481
  - 7.3.8.4. Mathematics and Statistics
    - 7.3.8.4.1. New prerequisite for MATH 2208
  - 7.3.8.5. Modern Languages
    - 7.3.8.5.1. Removal of prerequisite and new description for FREN 2254
    - 7.3.8.5.2. New prerequisite for FREN 3315
  - 7.3.8.6. Philosophy/Religious Studies
    - 7.3.8.6.1. New prerequisite and description for PHIL 3300

7.3.8.7. Sociology/Anthropology

7.3.8.7.1. New Cross-listing and prerequisites for SOAN 3651/CANA 3651

7.3.8.7.2. New Cross-listing and prerequisites for SOAN 3652/CANA 3652

7.4. Nominations

7.4.1. Nominations for Senate Committee Vacancies *(for Approval)*

**Moved** by M. McGonnell, seconded by B. Russo, that Senate elect the members listed below, to the respective committees for the indicated terms. CARRIED

Committee	Nominee	Term Begins	Term Ends
Information Technology and Services	Librarian Denyse Rodrigues	When elected	30 June 2028
Executive	Dr. Susie Brigham	When elected	30 June 2028
Research and Publications	Dr. Mike Bowen	When elected	30 June 2028

7.4.2. Election of Senator to Presidential Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee

M. McGonnell explained the call for nominations procedure that had occurred prior to this meeting and announced that while no nominations were received by the deadline, a later nomination for A. Benzaquén had been received. She further explained that she will call for nominations from the floor three times, and if no further nominations are received, A. Benzaquén will be acclaimed.

On the first call for nominations, N. Deal nominated M. Matthews, who accepted the nomination. M. McGonnell called for nominations two more times.

P. Crouse explained the procedure for voting and that she will need additional time to prepare the ballot.

**Moved** by J. Gahagan, seconded by S. Huntemann, that Senate will now take a 6-minute break until 4:25 p.m. while voting is prepared. CARRIED

Due to a technical difficulty in SharePoint, the following motion was made:

**Moved** by C. Barker, seconded by N. Deal, that the vote be moved to Microsoft Forms. CARRIED

P. Crouse shared the voting results. A. Benzaquén was declared elected.

## 8. Other Reports

### 8.1. FA President's Report on Board of Governors' Meeting

C. Barker reported news from the BoG meeting: Claudette Porter's election as BoG Vice Chair; additional funding secured for the Child Study Centre; continued engagement in fundraising for the "Roots and Wings" campaign; and updates about enrollment and operating budgets. On the matter of the budget deficit, C. Barker reported the FA's position that the issue is insufficient income rather than excessive expenditure.

### 8.2. Students' Union

In addition to the SU President's report circulated prior to the meeting, M. Minocha reported on the following: the awarding of a housing bursary to seven students experiencing housing insecurity; an anti-discrimination project to reinforce the message that MSVU is a safe space; a sexual health awareness week; the election process and onboarding of new student representatives; and the finalization of the 2024 financial audit and current work on the 2025 financial audit. M. Minocha noted that the SU is looking forward to collaborating with administration and faculty on the anti-discrimination project and welcomes donations to support the cause.

M. Minocha concluded by emphasizing that the SU wants to ensure proper student representation and continuity across University decision making spaces.

K. Schlieff confirmed that student members were appointed to many committees and hoped that the Chairs of these committees will ensure proper orientation for these student members. He noted that three additional members were temporarily appointed for the Academic Appeals Committee in order to support more flexible academic appeal hearing processes. K. Schlieff reported that the SU is hiring for all of their services and referenced upcoming general elections for all SRC vacancies.

L. Paul experienced technical difficulties and was not able to present her part of the report. K. Schlieff offered that her report could be circulated prior to the next meeting.

**Moved** by B. Russo, seconded by E. Ballantyne, that the meeting be extended until 5:15 p.m. CARRIED

### 8.3. Strategic Plan (J. Dickinson)

L. Francis reported on behalf of J. Dickinson that the strategic plan was an ambitious one and very well represented the values and mission of MSVU. She noted that many significant projects have been moved forward, for example, an updated accessibility plan and the SEM plan, to which many Senators contributed. With congratulations extended to M. Caswell for her work on the plan, J. Dickinson expressed that the plan is a strong reminder that teaching and supporting students remain pivotal for the

University and that she is looking forward to the gains that will be made now that the plan is in place.

#### **9. New Business**

No new business was identified.

#### **10. Items for Communication**

Senate approved:

- Minutes of November 28, 2025
- Department name change from *Women's Studies* to *Women and Gender Studies*
- A change to the final examination policy calendar text
- Graduate and undergraduate curriculum changes
- A slate of nominees for Senate committee vacancies
- The election of A. Benzaquén to the Presidential Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee

Senate received for information:

- Undergraduate curriculum changes

#### **11. Adjournment**

As the agenda was exhausted, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.