



**Senate Meeting**  
MS Teams

March 8, 2024  
2:30 p.m.

### **MINUTES: Special Meeting**

**Present:** J. Dickinson (Chair), K. Allan, K. Blotnicky, S. Brigham, R. Bursey, A. Card, C. Cameron, A. Card, P. Crouse, G. Durepos, M. Eskritt, D. Fisher, L. Francis, T. Franz-Odendaal, J. Fraser, Arsenault, J. Gahagan, R. Gechtman, M. Gonick, S. Goswami, S. Hale, M. J. Harkins, K. Jones, N. Kayhani, G. MacInnis, J. MacLeod, C. McLean, I. Nault, D. Rodrigues, K. Schlieff, C. Schneider, C. Slumkoski, M. Siddiquee, G. Sneddon, L. Steele, J. R. Sylliboy, A. Thurlow, S. Trenholm, J. Valcke, R. Zuk

**Regrets:** M. Coolen

**Observers:** S. Anadkat, G. Batten, K. Crawley, N. Deal, M. Forrest, G. Fraser, K. Gallant, M. Gillis, E. Johnson, J. Lamb, A. Major, A. Matte, M. Matthews, G. Nepean N. Street, J. Thornton

*The meeting was called to order at 2:39 p.m. Observers and guests were welcomed. Procedures to be used during the meeting and for voting were outlined.*

#### **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. Suspension of Normal Meeting Notice**

G. Durepos introduced the following motion to address the decision made to call this special meeting of Senate without the normal meeting notice.

**Moved** by G. Durepos, seconded by R. Zuk, that Senate accept Senate Executive's recommendation to suspend the requirement in Senate Bylaw 6.2.2 for at least three working days' notice for this special meeting to allow Senate to meet on March 8, 2024, to address changes and/or modifications to the academic schedule and/or changes in academic regulations and/or waivers of academic regulations arising from the 2024 labour dispute. CARRIED.

### 3. Approval of Agenda

**Moved** by J. R. Sylliboy, seconded by D. Fisher, to approve the agenda as presented.  
CARRIED.

### 4. Completion of Winter 2024 Semester Following Job Action

L. Francis provided information on actions taken by Senates at other Atlantic universities after recent labour disputes. She reported that, in the longest labour dispute discussed (19 missed class days), the institution cancelled the exam period and implemented a Pass/Fail grade option. L. Francis further shared other actions: converting scheduled study days to class days, condensing the exam period, allowing changes to class delivery method, or implementing a new grade which allowed for an extension to finish course work. L. Francis reported that all of the researched institutions extended their course drop date.

L. Francis presented the following information regarding the impact of the labour dispute at the Mount:

- 11.5 teaching days were lost due to job action
- Most classes taught by part-time instructors were not suspended
- Two storm days in the Winter 2024 term fell on Mondays, resulting in Monday classes having the lowest number of teaching days

L. Francis noted the following areas of flexibility in our Winter 2024 semester:

- Some timeslots of the April exam period are undersubscribed
- Reading Day is scheduled for April 11, 2024
- Easter Monday (April 1, 2024) is not a statutory holiday

L. Francis also noted several areas for Senators' consideration:

- Extending the exam period beyond April 20, 2024, would be challenging due to prearranged travel and other commitments students have made based on the posted exam schedule
- Condensed classes/exams present pedagogical and well-being challenges
- We have both an INC and DEF grade option which provides a longer timeline for the completion of course content
- The start of the Summer I semester is May 6, with some courses beginning prior to this date
- Convocation is on May 16 & 17, 2024

S. Hale also shared that the Registrar's Office would exercise flexibility with grade submission deadlines but noted that grade submissions for students who are graduating in May may need to be prioritized.

L. Francis referred to the meeting materials and the draft motion to address lost class time and opened it for discussion:

Senators inquired about the first bullet and offered suggestions for revisions, while recognizing that students should not be overburdened on this day. (R. Gechtman, K. Allan, J. Dickinson, G. Durepos, D. Fisher, M. Eskritt, C. Slumkoski, P. Crouse, K. Blotnick)

Senators expressed the need for flexibility, such as for courses with common exams and for students who did not want to cross the picket line to attend scheduled part-time classes. (R. Bursey, N. Kayhani, S. Hale)

Possible options to recoup Tuesday/Wednesday classes as well were discussed, such as extending the exam period by a few days, with Senators noting that they are unsure if one extra day of classes will be of a substantial benefit. Extension of the exam period was further discussed, with Senators noting that it would be difficult to extend due to students' prior commitments [such as travel, job placements] based on the posted exam schedule. (R. Gechtman, J. Dickinson, J. MacLeod, L. Francis)

**Moved** by L. Francis, seconded by S. Hale, that in light of teaching days lost to the recent job action and two weather cancellations on Mondays (January 29, 2024 and February 5, 2024), the approved 2023-2024 academic calendar dates be amended as follows to reduce the adverse impact on classes, while also preserving instructor discretion about how to complete the term:

- Allow remote class activities on Monday, April 1 for Monday classes that were suspended during the job action
- End classes on Thursday, April 11 instead of Wednesday, April 10.
- Designate Thursday, April 11 as a “Monday in lieu” class day to allow course instructors in classes that were suspended during the job action an opportunity to make up a missed Monday, if they choose.
- Remove the scheduled Reading Day on Thursday, April 11.
- Adapt the Friday, April 12 exam schedule as follows:
  - Reschedule final exams for Monday classes that were also suspended during the job action to an exam slot later in the scheduled exam period.

Based on the previous discussion regarding the aim to avoid overwhelming students and to emphasize instructors' discretion with bullet 1, two friendly amendments were accepted by both L. Francis and S. Hale. The first amendment, offered by G. Durepos, replaced “remote class activities” with “one synchronous remote class,” and the second, offered by R. Bursey, added the phrase “if instructors choose” after the first bullet point.

**Moved** by L. Francis, seconded by S. Hale, that in light of teaching days lost to the recent job action and two weather cancellations on Mondays (January 29, 2024 and February 5, 2024), the approved 2023-2024 academic calendar dates be amended as follows to reduce the

adverse impact on classes, while also preserving instructor discretion about how to complete the term:

- Allow one synchronous remote class on Monday, April 1 for Monday classes that were suspended during the job action, if instructors choose.
- End classes on Thursday, April 11 instead of Wednesday, April 10.
- Designate Thursday, April 11 as a “Monday in lieu” class day to allow course instructors in classes that were suspended during the job action an opportunity to make up a missed Monday, if instructors choose.
- Remove the scheduled Reading Day on Thursday, April 11.
- Adapt the Friday, April 12 exam schedule as follows:
  - Reschedule final exams for Monday classes that were also suspended during the job action to an exam slot later in the scheduled exam period. CARRIED.

Senators turned their attention to discuss the draft motion regarding course outlines. P. Crouse prefaced that this motion is in accordance with the back-to-work protocols to allow for flexibility in course outline modifications and is in the spirit of Senate’s significant disruption policy.

Senators discussed the vagueness of the term “reasonable efforts,” noting that the use of definitive language could be a challenge as a balance needs to be found between empathy to students and avoiding infringement on an instructor’s academic freedom. (C. Cameron, C. Slumkoski, J. Dickinson)

N. Kayhani referenced a coordinated course with multiple sections, noting that in order to meet the assurances given to students in all sections, some modifications will also be required in courses taught by part-time instructors to keep evaluation methods fair. J. Dickinson validated the need for flexibility, and L. Francis suggested consultation with the Dean as replanning occurs.

**Moved** by K. Blotnicky, seconded by R. Burse that, in keeping with the principles of fairness and academic integrity, instructors of classes that were suspended during the job action be authorized to adjust their Winter 2024 and 2023-2024 full-year course outlines (including deadlines, dates, requirements, methods of evaluation, and modality of delivery) to reflect revised academic dates, to cover and assess learning outcomes, and to make reasonable efforts to meet the needs of individual students impacted by the Winter 2024 job action. CARRIED.

Two draft motions regarding extending specific Calendar dates were entertained. No discussion points were raised on the first motion.

**Moved** by L. Francis, seconded by R. Bursey, that in light of teaching days lost relating to the recent job action, the approved 2023-2024 academic calendar dates be amended such that the last day to drop a course without academic penalty (WF) be moved from March 11, 2024, to April 11, 2024. CARRIED.

K. Jones commented that a change to the exam conflict report deadline would have an impact on Accessibility Services and that, if passed, she will share this decision with the Department immediately.

In response to an inquiry about which courses would be impacted by this extension, L. Francis confirmed that the extension would apply to all courses, not just those affected by the job action, and S. Hale added that the Registrar's Office will work with individual students to reschedule proctors, as required. (N. Kayhani, S. Hale, K. Allan, L. Francis)

**Moved** by S. Hale, seconded by R. Bursey, that in light of teaching days lost relating to the recent job action, the approved 2023-2024 academic calendar dates be amended such that the last day to report exam conflicts and/or exam accommodations to the Registrar's office be moved from March 15, 2024, to March 25, 2024, for the Winter 2024 term. CARRIED.

Senators then voted on the last draft motion in the meeting materials. No discussion points were raised.

**Moved** by L. Francis, seconded by K. Allan, that by reflecting academic rights and responsibilities, students remain responsible for fulfilling requirements in courses that were suspended during the job action, but that students who are unable to participate in academic instruction during rescheduled classes (specifically 7 March, 8 March, 1 April, 11 April, and exams moved from 12 April) shall not be penalized for absence or late submission of work, and shall be given reasonable alternative access to material covered during their absence, and reasonable alternative provision for completing assignments or other requirements. CARRIED.

The Chair noted that all circulated draft motions had been dealt with and opened the floor to further discussion.

Student Senators voiced the need for a motion to delay midterms and the submission date of major assignments until students have had a chance to meet their instructors during their first class back after the job action. The motion that was passed by Senate EX on March 6, 2024, was referenced, with Senators suggesting that the deadline be extended to March 14, 2024. (K. Allan, C. Cameron)

Discussion ensued, with Senators questioning the need for such a motion, and others sharing that they were aware of instances in which instructors had scheduled midterms or required major assignments be submitted on the first class back. Senators were in support

of such a motion in general but suggested that it could negatively impact particular courses. (R. Gechtman, J. MacLeod, K. Allan, M. Eskritt, P. Crouse)

With reference to the Wednesday motion, further discussion revolved around identifying which courses would be impacted, determining what constitutes as “substantial” and clarifying that planning revised dates is not restricted prior to March 14. (D. Fisher, L. Francis, J. MacLeod, L. Steele, P. Crouse)

**Moved** by K. Allan, seconded by D. Fisher, that, since strike protocols did not require that students work during the labour disruption, and while instructors are planning for changes to their due dates, Senate requires instructors of courses that were suspended avoid, until March 14, 2024, holding midterms or requiring submission of assessments that would require a substantial effort from students (e.g. lab reports and major assignments) or where students require consultation time with instructors before submission. CARRIED.

K. Allan then introduced a motion to address the pacing of course content.

Senators voiced concern that this motion would not be able to be enforced in an appeals committee, noting that we already have mechanisms in place to address such issues on an individual basis. (C. Schneider, K. Blotnicky, A. Thurlow, R. Gechtman, N. Kayhani)

**Moved** by K. Allan, seconded by S. Goswami, to encourage instructors of courses which were suspended to exercise responsible pacing of course content and flexibility in the redesign of their course and in line with their pedagogic approaches. CARRIED.

K. Allan then introduced a motion regarding INC grades.

S. Hale provided information on how the INC or DEF grades are currently assigned, noting that it is very rare for an instructor to not support a grade of INC. With this in mind, J. MacLeod spoke against this motion, citing lack of time to study this, the fact that this is a special meeting that was called without proper notice and his view that adopting a blanket policy to adjudicate outlier cases is poor policy.

**Moved** by K. Allan, seconded by S. Goswami, to encourage instructors of courses which were suspended to accept requests for INC grades. DEFEATED.

In relation to SRIQ results, G. Nepean, with support from other Senators, proposed that negative SRIQ results from the Winter 2024 semester should not affect part-time instructors as was agreed upon for full-time instructors in the back-to-work protocols. As course evaluations are governed by the CUPE collective agreement, a meeting was proposed between L. Francis and G. Nepean, Interim CUPE Vice President, to discuss. (G. Nepean, C. Slumkoski, L. Francis)

L. Francis shared that questions had been raised about deadlines for submitting grades. She noted that the deadline of five days following the exam or the last class (for courses not having an exam) is internal practice, not policy, and that the Registrar's Office currently exercises considerable flexibility with this date. S. Hale spoke of the deadlines for grade submission (April 29 for May graduands and April 25 for all other students), noting that the deadline for May graduands and for students completing prerequisite courses for summer semester courses is quite tight. She asked that instructors notify their students and the Registrar's Office if they will not be able to submit grades within the five-day period.

Senators discussed ways that graduating students could self-identify so instructors may be able to submit their grades first. It was noted that, while exam booklets provide a place for students to indicate they are spring graduates, not all students will see an exam booklet. The Registrar offered to communicate with prospective graduates and ask that they inform their instructors if they intend to graduate this spring. Support for the Registrar's offer was expressed. (S. Hale, N. Kayhani, R. Gechtman)

Senators referenced the course outline policy, with P. Crouse noting that the policy states "assessments worth more than 20% cannot be scheduled in the last two weeks of a course." The consensus was that the previous motions implicitly allow for flexibility in this policy statement. (P. Crouse, L. Francis, R. Gechtman, J. Dickinson)

## 5. Items for Communication

In addition to the Secretary of Senate posting Items for Communication to the Senate website this evening, she will also be in contact with the Director of Communications who is working with L. Francis to send a campus-wide bulletin this evening.

### Senate approved:

- Senate Executive's recommendation to suspend Bylaw 6.2.2 regarding notice for this meeting
- Summary of decisions to address the completion of the winter 2024 semester following job action. Motion 1:
  - **Moved** that, in light of teaching days lost to the recent job action and two weather cancellations on Mondays (January 29, 2024 and February 5, 2024), the approved 2023-2024 academic Calendar dates be amended as follows to reduce the adverse impact on classes, while also preserving instructor discretion about how to complete the term:
    - Allow one synchronous remote class on Monday, April 1, for Monday classes that were suspended during the job action, if instructors choose.
    - End classes on Thursday, April 11, instead of Wednesday, April 10.
    - Designate Thursday, April 11, as a "Monday in lieu" class day to allow course instructors in classes that were suspended during the job action an opportunity to make up a missed Monday, if they choose.
    - Remove the scheduled Reading Day on Thursday, April 11.

- Adapt the Friday, April 12, exam schedule as follows: Reschedule final exams for Monday classes that were also suspended during the job action to an exam slot later in the scheduled exam period.
- Motion 2: In keeping with the principles of fairness and academic integrity, **moved** that instructors of classes that were suspended during the job action be authorized to adjust their Winter 2024 and 2023-2024 full-year course outlines (including deadlines, dates, requirements, methods of evaluation, and modality of delivery) to reflect revised academic dates, to cover and assess learning outcomes, and to make reasonable efforts to meet the needs of individual students impacted by the Winter 2024 job action.
- Motions 3 & 4 to further amend academic Calendar dates:
  - Last day to drop a course without academic penalty (WF) be moved from March 11, 2024, to April 11, 2024
  - Last day to report exam conflicts and/or exam accommodations to the Registrar's Office be moved from March 15, 2024, to March 25, 2024
- Motion 5: Reflecting academic rights and responsibilities, **moved** that students remain responsible for fulfilling requirements in courses that were suspended during the job action, but that students who are unable to participate in academic instruction during rescheduled classes (specifically 7 March, 8 March, 1 April, 11 April, and exams moved from 12 April) shall not be penalized for absence or late submission of work and shall be given reasonable alternative access to material covered during their absence and reasonable alternative provision for completing assignments or other requirements.
- Motion 6: **Moved** that, since strike protocols did not require that students work during the labour disruption, and while instructors are planning for changes to their due dates, Senate requires instructors of courses that were suspended avoid, until March 14, 2024, holding midterms or requiring submission of assessments that would require a substantial effort from students (e.g. lab reports and major assignments) or where students require consultation time with instructors before submission.
- Motion 7: **Moved** to encourage instructors of courses which were suspended to exercise responsible pacing of course content and flexibility in the redesign of their course and in line with their pedagogic approaches.

## 6. Adjournment

**Moved** by J. MacLeod, seconded by K. Blotnicky, that the meeting be adjourned. CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.