



Senate Meeting
MS Teams

May 6, 2025
11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

MINUTES: Special Meeting

Present: J. Dickinson (Chair), E. Ballantyne, J. Bail, C. Barker, A. Benzaquén, R. Bursey, A. Card, P. Crouse, M. Eskritt, L. Francis, J. Gahagan, S. Hale Wills, E. Henderson, S. Huntemann, K. Jones, M. Matthews, M. McGonnell, I. Nault, B. Russo, J. Sawler, G. Sneddon, M. Siddiquee, L. Steele, A. Thurlow, S. Trenholm, J. Valcke

Regrets: E. Copeland Solas, C. Dawson, G. Durepos, M. Gonick, C. McLean, D. Piccitto, T. Yu

Observers: G. Batten, K. White, O. Wokoma, S. Zegarra

The meeting was called to order at 11:01 a.m. Observers were identified and 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. Approval of Agenda

Moved by B. Russo, seconded by S. Hale Wills, to approve the agenda as presented.
CARRIED.

3. Administration Update

3.1. Vice-President Administration – Budget Presentation

I. Nault presented the 2025-26 budget for information and discussion. She spoke to the following items in detail:

- Context for the 2025-2026 fiscal planning
- MSVU's obligations under the Bilateral agreement with the Province
- Assumptions for the 2025-26 fiscal year and key potential impacts

I. Nault presented an overview of the proposed 2025–2026 operating budget, noting that while a deficit is projected for this year, our reserve fund can

compensate for this shortfall due to the Mount's track record of fiscal responsibility and responsible investment practices. She outlined key funding sources, major expenditure areas and the forthcoming steps in the budget approval process.

4. Question Period

The impact of Canada's evolving trade relationship with the United States was discussed, with particular attention to budget implications. It was noted that, while the exact impact remains uncertain, units with U.S.-based contracts are already affected by fluctuations in the CAD-USD exchange rate and additional resources have been allocated to these departments accordingly. (B. Russo, I. Nault)

Regarding tuition, it was noted that no increase is proposed for out-of-province domestic students, who constitute a small segment of the MSVU student population. J. Dickinson explained that this decision aligns with a broader provincial stance, recognizing that Nova Scotia's tuition rates are already higher than those in many other provinces. (A. Thurlow, I. Nault, J. Dickinson)

A. Thurlow sought clarification on whether "other income" in the budget included advancement donations. I. Nault confirmed that it does not, noting it reflects revenues from operational units such as the print shop, bookstore, and conference services. J. Dickinson added that most advancement funds are endowed and therefore cannot be applied to operating costs, though they can support student recruitment through scholarships. (A. Thurlow, I. Nault, J. Dickinson)

A. Thurlow asked whether the new Doctor of Psychology and Child Study Centre expansion would be revenue-generating. J. Dickinson clarified that while these initiatives are not expected to generate direct revenue, they are government-funded and provide significant value to students and the broader community.

Research grants from the Tri-Council were also discussed, with it being noted that these are restricted funds and therefore not part of the operating budget. (C. Barker, I. Nault, L. Francis)

Noting that experiential learning is a priority for this government, B. Russo emphasized the need for infrastructure upgrades to support such programs. I. Nault concurred and highlighted ongoing capital projects funded by a portion of the operating grant and a student facilities renovation fee that is charged to students every year. L. Francis added that she is working with the Deans to identify priorities and potential timelines for lab renovations that will require major capital investments.

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) was discussed, with it being noted that the Mount leverages as much as we can for updates to research infrastructure, but it is also a complex space these days with recent changes in Research NS. (B. Russo, L. Francis)

J. Sawler inquired about residence bursaries as a potential student recruitment tool.

K. Jones confirmed that several options for residence bursaries are currently available.

5. Adjournment

As the agenda was exhausted, J. Dickinson adjourned the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 12 p.m.