



Senate Meeting
SAC 407/409/MS Teams

October 27, 2023
2 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: J. Dickinson (Chair), K. Blotnicky, S. Brigham, R. Bursey, C. Cameron, A. Card, P. Crouse, C. Dawson, G. Durepos, M. Eskritt, L. Francis, T. Franz-Odendaal, J. Fraser Arsenault, J. Gahagan, R. Gechtman, S. Hale, M. J. Harkins, K. Jones, N. Kayhani, G. MacInnis, S. MacMillan, C. McLean, M. McGonnell, I. Nault, K. Schlieff, C. Schneider, C. Slumkoski, G. Sneddon, L. Steele, S. Trenholm, J. Valcke, R. Zuk

Regrets: M. Gonick, S. Goswami, J. MacLeod, D. Rodrigues, J. R. Sylliboy, A. Thurlow

Observers: J. Lamb, V. Paul, E. Tran

The meeting was called to order at 2:06 p.m. Observers were identified and welcomed, including V. Paul, recently hired Special Advisor on Indigenous Affairs at MSVU. New student Senators G. MacInnis and K. Schlieff were introduced and welcomed. Procedures to be used during the meeting and while voting on motions 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 S. Brigham, seconded by T. Franz-Odendaal, to approve the agenda as presented. CARRIED.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. September 22, 2023

Minor changes were identified and will be incorporated.

Moved by C. McLean, seconded by M. McGonnell, to approve the minutes of September 22, 2023, as amended. CARRIED.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

None

5. Administration Updates

5.1. President

J. Dickinson acknowledged and thanked Mount community members who were involved with two recent events: Fall convocation and the Conversation with Michelle Obama event, which saw over 700 youth attending cost-free thanks to the efforts of K. Gallant and many more Mount community members. She also updated that the 150th Anniversary Gala on November 2 is sold out, sharing that the proceeds from the event will be invested in the MSVU 150 Fund: Access and Impact.

J. Dickinson thanked the team who launched the microcredentials pilot project, which was spearheaded by S. Trenholm and S. MacMillan, and shared that the one course had over 100 registrants.

J. Dickinson shared several updates regarding government relations items, including that universities province-wide have asked for a 7% increase in provincial funding to allow for a 0% tuition increase, as well as more provincial support for infrastructure renewal; the interest in the Mount establishing a Doctorate of Psychology program, which would include a clinic to serve youth; and investment in the expansion and relocation of the Child Study Centre, noting that a government tour will be happening November 8 at the current centre and proposed new site.

Finally, J. Dickinson reported on a meeting with Dr. Strang, sharing that the province is dealing with all RSVs, not just COVID, and that he still highly recommends that those feeling ill should not come in to work if feasible and to wear a mask. She also reported that international students are eligible for flu and COVID vaccines but they are not eligible to book appointments online.

5.2. Vice-President Academic and Provost

L. Francis echoed J. Dickinson's thanks to all of those who supported the microcredentials pilot, noting that a main lesson learned was how much cooperation is required to support such a project.

L. Francis reported on enrollment numbers, sharing that this October has been our busiest on record for receiving applicants to study at MSVU. She also shared that based on findings in last year's Strategic Enrollment Management report from Academica, M. Caswell has moved into the role of Senior Advisor for Strategic Enrollment Management and will be assisting with the development of a strategic enrollment management plan after consultation and discussion with various Mount community members and groups.

Moved by R. Zuk, seconded by L. Steele, to extend Administration Updates by 7 minutes. CARRIED.

L. Francis reported that memos regarding July 2024 tenure-track positions have been distributed to Chairs and memos regarding limited-term positions will be coming soon.

5.3. Vice-President Administration

I. Nault reported that facilities renovated the accessible ramp for the Assisi building.

I. Nault reported on structural changes within the Human Resources Office, noting that the new position of Associate Vice-President People & Culture has been created to replace the Director of Human Resources position and will oversee the portfolio of human resources, as well as the introduction of an equity office which would house the Indigenous advisor, EDIA advisor, and Harassment & Discrimination advisor. She concluded by noting that the AVP People & Culture role will also focus on areas including retention and training, policy integration and data collection from exit interviews.

6. Question Period

R. Zuk queried about the optimal site for the new Child Study Centre. J. Dickinson responded that an expansion of the Meadows was deemed to be the optimal new site and could expand the seat count by up to 80 if it goes ahead.

T. Franz-Odendaal questioned if the infrastructure cost proposal to government included items from the safety audit report. I. Nault responded that the government had specific categories, most of which were related to environmental resilience and accessibility but that elements of the safety audit report were included within the different categories. She also shared that, regardless of the outcome of the government ask, implementing phase one of the suggestions from the safety audit is expected this year. S. Brigham commented on the seriousness of some of the issues in the report, highlighting the request for a date to have phase one objectives shared. I. Nault further commented that initiatives have already been undertaken to address some of the immediate issues.

T. Franz-Odendaal inquired if Senators could share the safety report with others who have requested to review it. I. Nault responded that it can be shared, but she prefers that the context be shared also, noting that her door is always open to Mount community members for discussion. I. Nault informed Senators of her intent to provide Senate with a priority list and updates on a regular basis.

N. Kayhani reiterated her request for a larger space to hold midterms and final exams, noting the follow-up communication she had received since the last Senate meeting.

L. Francis confirmed that, with the available tables, the MPR can accommodate only 100 students, and S. Hale further shared that we do not have enough individual desks to be

used in the MPR to seat more students. J. Dickinson commented that she recognizes the space issue and will continue to work on solutions.

T. Franz-Odendaal shared that an equity pay gap analysis was previously requested at Senate, to be undertaken by the new Vice President Administration, and she wanted to ensure that it was on I. Nault's radar. T. Franz-Odendaal provided clarifying details on what was previously requested and why. I. Nault and J. Dickinson will follow up on this.

S. Brigham asked a few clarifying questions regarding the new AVP People & Culture role to which I. Nault responded that a draft job description is being reviewed and edited by the search firm. She further shared that the required background is not academic, but not necessarily restricted to an HR professional, that it is currently not a designated position and that the current HR administrative assistant would provide administrative support to the AVP People & Culture.

S. Brigham asked that reports on bargaining in the campus-wide bulletin clearly state which specific group is making the statement and it was agreed to do so.

7. Committee Reports

7.1. Senate Executive

7.1.1. Announcement of Senate Master Graduation List approval

J. Dickinson announced that EX approved 577 students on the master graduation list with 3 on the enabling list. She added that the final list consisted of 579 students from 31 programs, representing 18 countries, 64 of which graduated with distinction or first-class honours and 23 received Senate medals.

8. Other Reports

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

S. Brigham reported on the October 5 Board of Governors meeting, where new BoG members were introduced. She shared that a pre-meeting presentation was provided by the Mount 101 coordinator and student volunteers regarding their social media campaign and the supports that they provide to first-year students.

8.2. Students' Union

C. Cameron reported on the data collection project to identify gaps in MSVU course delivery, services, and resources, with the goal of identifying what truth and reconciliation looks like for students at MSVU. They will also be working with the Health Centre to organize a clinic regarding STI data collection.

9. New Business

9.1. Presentation on MountAbility

C. Schneider gave a presentation to Senators on the MountAbility program, its background, objectives, and achievements.

C. Schneider shared that the MountAbility program allows students who have a disability and who do not meet traditional academic admission criteria to access academic learning and campus life in a participatory audit program. C. Schneider noted that the Mount serves 5 to 6 students per year for up to 5 years of study, with 11 participants over the past 8 years and 4 graduates to date.

Testimonials from MountAbility student participants and from faculty Senators who have had MountAbility students in their classes were shared. (R. Gechtman, L. Steele, P. Crouse, C. Slumkoski)

9.2. Microcredentials

R. Zuk prefaced a motion by noting the lack of transparency regarding the recent microcredential pilot, two inaugural courses, a job competition for a new coordinator position and the costs to registrants. Given the fact that it is a teaching and learning program, she expressed concern that Senate had not received information before its inception.

The process of developing the microcredential program was spoken about, emphasizing that it was a pilot project and the future of the program is unclear even though the pilot was deemed to be successful. The value of the program to the community at large was discussed, noting that programs such as the microcredential pilot are a priority to the provincial government, with our program currently being funded through the Vision 2020 grant the Mount received. (S. Trenholm, S. MacMillan, L. Francis, I. Nault, J. Dickinson)

Discussion ensued with Senators reiterating that the motion was regarding the lack of transparency on the development of the program and emphasized that, as an academic governing body, having a report on record for information would have been useful. Since the microcredential program was likened to earlier continuing education courses, it was noted that information about such initiatives would have previously been shared at Senate through the former Director, Distance Learning and Continuing Education. Other questions were raised about instructors, program oversight and course topic decisions. Senators requested a report on the pilot for the next Senate meeting. (R. Gechtman, R. Zuk, P. Crouse, S. Brigham, N. Kayhani, R. Burse, T. Franz-Odendaal)

Moved by R. Zuk, seconded by R. Gechtman, that Senate be presented with a written report detailing the planning and approval of the microcredential program, and that full information about each course to be developed, including a rationale, a model syllabus, and the selection criteria for instructors, be provided. CARRIED.

9.3. Course Cancellations

R. Zuk noted that course cancellations due to low enrollments have persisted and problems have intensified since having been discussed at Senate last spring. She acknowledged her support for a Senate policy regarding class cancellations and that, if followed, would alleviate frustrations regarding class cancellations.

P. Crouse shared that the policy is pending review at CAPP, with L. Francis confirming that the policy is slated to be reviewed at CAPP's next meeting.

Moved by R. Zuk, seconded by S. Brigham, that CAPP review the 1995 Senate policy on course cancellations. CARRIED.

10. Items for Communication

Senate approved:

- Minutes of September 22, 2023
- A motion to request a written report regarding the microcredential program and courses
- A motion to request that CAPP review the 1995 Senate policy on course cancellations

11. Adjournment

Moved by R. Zuk, seconded by S. Hale, that the meeting be adjourned. CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.