Senate Meeting | September 25, 2026
Alice Egan Hagen Board Room (Rosaria 312)/MS Teams | 2 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: J. Dickinson (Chair), J. Bail, E. Ballantyne, C. Barker, A. Benzaquén, S. Brigham, R. Bursey, A. Card, P. Crouse, N. Davila, T. Findlay, L. Francis, J. Gahagan, J. Guy, S. Hale Wills, T. Harriott, E. Henderson, S. Huntemann, K. Jones, M. Matthews, M. McCoy, M. McGonnell, J.L. McIsaac, M. Motapanyane, I. Nault, P. Otiora, M. Paul, D. Piccitto, S. Reddington, B. Russo, K. Schlief, L. Sobey-Skinner, E. Solas, S. Trenholm, J. Valcke, M. Walls, K. Whitfield

Regrets: N. Deal, L. Paul, S. Sawchuk, A. Sylliboy

Observers: L. MacFarlane, G. Sneddon, K. White

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m.

A roundtable of introductions took place, new Senators were welcomed, and K. Schlief, whose term is ending, was thanked. J. Dickinson announced that the seat for a Mi'kmaq member of the L'nu Advisory Circle has been filled by A. Sylliboy, who expects to join the next Senate meeting. Observers were identified and welcomed. Procedures to be used during the meeting and while voting on motions were outlined.

1. **Indigenous Land Recognition**
   K. Schlief 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 J. Valcke, to approve the agenda as circulated. CARRIED.

3. **Conduct Statement**
   In accordance with Bylaw 16.2, J. Dickinson read the Senate Code of Conduct Statement. No questions or discussion arose.

4. **Approval of Minutes**
   4.1. May 20, 2026 and May 27, 2026
   Moved by B. Russo, seconded by S. Huntemann, to approve the minutes of May 20, 2026, as amended and May 27, 2026, as circulated. CARRIED.

5. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
   No business arising from the minutes was identified.

6. Administration Updates

6.1. President

J. Dickinson extended congratulations on a great student orientation—events were well attended and well received—and thanked those who were involved, including Residence Life and the Students' Union. She highlighted recent research and student successes and encouraged Senators to read the Campus Bulletin for more up-to-date announcements and information. Of note, she referenced four SSHRC Insight Development Grants that have been awarded, which is a 100% approval rate from MSVU applicants, totaling $312K in research funding.

In her update on government relations, J. Dickinson indicated that conversations around the provincial budget have started and encouraged Senators to take part in the consultation process with the public. She noted that University administrators have been consulted and have highlighted student affordability, the need for matched research funds and issues caused by underfunding and that more discussion on the bilateral agreement will be had next week.

J. Dickinson provided an update on Bill-12 and the new University Board Governance Act. She reported that the Province has decided to implement regulations that will apply to all universities, but they will be taking into account MSVU's distinctiveness. She and the Board Chair advocated for the need for robust representation, for Board autonomy and for less stringent quorum stipulations. She indicated that it appears that some of the proposed regulations are being pulled back and that the government is supportive of MSVU's request to install a Chancellor without opening the Act.

Finally, she brought attention to the new Strategic Plan process, for which a call for nominations for a working group has gone out.

6.2. Vice-President Academic and Provost

L. Francis echoed J. Dickinson's sentiments around orientation and research success and added that NSERC awards have also been awarded. She announced that MSVU has been awarded an increase in Canada Research Chairs from four to five, a result of hard work and success, and that more information will follow when the official announcement is made and the search committee is formed.

L. Francis explained that the Registrar's Office is undergoing a substantial project this term, with the introduction of a new admissions portal. She provided an update on the Search Committee for the Dean of Arts and Science, which will be formed soon.

Finally, she discussed quality assurance and the Quality Assurance Monitoring External Report, which was received in May. She noted that, as required by MPHEC, an action plan has been prepared to address the reviewers' recommendations and

CAPP is reviewing the plan, which will be approved at CAPP and then submitted to Senate for information.

6.3. Vice-President Administration

I. Nault updated Senate on multiple cybersecurity attacks that occurred over the summer, noting that Administration is working with the government and other universities and is monitoring the situation closely. She mentioned that IT&S will be issuing a service catalogue this fall, describing the services they offer.

I. Nault highlighted a benefit review currently underway by People & Culture, which includes a survey for feedback from the university community on their satisfaction with the current benefits package.

7. Question Period

B. Russo asked for a status report on the review of the current AVP Research and Dean of Graduate Studies and Professional Studies, as well as the search for the Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre. L. Francis explained that the renewal and search process has been slower than anticipated, but short-term extensions have been granted while the search is finalized.

C. Barker asked about the use of online proctor services regarding the use of personal information, data and privacy. L. Francis clarified that the selection of ProctorU was discussed extensively within CAPP, that faculty members were involved in the decision-making process and that any software or online services go through a detailed privacy assessment from IT&S. S. Hale Wills confirmed that ProctorU met IT&S requirements in September 2025 and while it was a Canadian company when MSVU first made the decision to utilize it, it has since been sold to an American company. S. Hale Wills noted that options for further review and consideration are available while still in the trial period. C. Barker requested the report be shared with faculty so they can be made aware of the review and potential privacy concerns in using this platform.

S. Huntemann asked for a timeline for the search for the Dean of Arts and Science. L. Francis responded that she is working with People & Culture on issuing an RFP and the search will launch mid-term.

Senators asked for clarification on how decisions are made when courses or course sections are cancelled or caps are decreased (e.g. HUMS 1100). Further, information was requested about the Summer Melt program and cancelled courses being reinstated. L. Francis explained that cancellations and cap decreases are context-dependent, but typically enrollment data is consulted, and the Deans work with Chairs, Directors and Program Coordinators to assess what will be needed. Regarding “summer melt”, L. Francis indicated that while the numbers are not yet finalized, it appears that efforts to reduce the melt were more successful this year than in years prior and that a report will be ready next week. (S. Huntemann, D. Piccitto, L. Francis)

B. Russo called attention to the purpose of land acknowledgements and emphasized the need to pay respect to the land we are sitting on and not bring in other cultures.

A. Benzaquén asked for an update regarding staffing requests this year. L. Francis and I. Nault indicated that an update will be sent to Senate once enrollment data for Q2 is confirmed and that this information will give an indication on how the budget recovery plan is working and guide the conversation at CAPP about the likely number of positions that will be available.

T. Findlay asked whether a committee will be involved in determining the focus of the new Canada Research Chair. L. Francis indicated that is the intention.

T. Findlay made the suggestion to have a process of reviewing how well some of the contentious decisions made at Senate over the last year have been working, referencing the course outline policy and HUMS 1100 as examples. L. Francis agreed that would be helpful and proposed working with the Deans to get feedback from Chairs, Directors, and Program Coordinators and communicate that feedback through to CAPP for consideration. She also explained that while policies are on a five-year review cycle, it does not mean they cannot be reviewed earlier.

8. Committee Reports (Standing and Ad Hoc)

8.1. Senate Executive

8.1.1. Announcement of Senate Master Graduation List approval

J. Dickinson announced that the October 2026 Senate Master Graduation List was approved by Senate Executive, comprising 582 names cleared to graduate and an additional 1 name on the enabling list.

8.1.2. Report on Senate Self-Evaluation

D. Piccitto referenced the supporting documents included in the package and invited questions or discussion. In response to the suggestion to change the Senate meeting time, A. Benzaquén clarified that classes are held on Friday mornings.

8.2. Academic Policy and Planning

8.2.1. Report on External Review of CHYS

L. Francis introduced this item for information only, inviting Senators to ask questions. No questions or discussion arose.

8.3. Graduate Studies Program and Policy

8.3.1. Revisions to Graduate Certificates and Diplomas Policy, GSPP 2015 01

S. Trenholm presented for information the minor changes in this policy.

8.4. Information Technology and Services

8.4.1. Summer Microsoft Teams pilot for online classes

G. Sneddon highlighted the report provided to Senators regarding the recommendation to migrate from Collaborate Ultra to Teams by Summer 2027 with the pilot continuing this fall.

Senators raised questions and discussed the following: courses involved in the pilot program; platform functionality including management of class recordings; potential technological migration challenges for faculty and students; enrollment management and increased workload for instructors; information sessions and training documentation; the technical language used in the report provided to Senators; and the necessity of moving to a new platform being more than a cost-saving measure. The importance of communicating avenues through which students can receive technical support—besides through their instructors—was emphasized. (G. Sneddon, E. Ballantyne, B. Russo, P. Crouse, A. Benzaquén, J. Dickinson, S. Huntemann, S. Brigham, M. Matthews, R. Bursey, I. Nault, M. Paul)

G. Sneddon and E. Ballantyne assured Senators that while a learning curve is to be expected by adopting Teams, it would ultimately benefit both instructors and students in the long term. Senators were encouraged to reach out to E. Ballantyne directly if they had any further questions about functionality.

With reference to the work SCOITS has completed regarding an online teaching platform, C. Barker asked if SCOITS could undertake similar research regarding software needs for research purposes.

G. Sneddon stated that he will bring the points and questions raised in this discussion to SCOITS for further consideration as the pilot continues and the migration rolls out.

8.5. Nominations

8.5.1. Nominations for Senate Committee Vacancy

M. Paul asked for clarification on who is being replaced. P. Crouse confirmed that P. Mombourquette took sabbatical early and that this position is for a regular member of the AAC.

Committee	Nominee	Term Begins	Term Ends
Academic Appeals	Dr. Danny Wadden	When elected	30 June 2029

Moved by M. McGonnell, seconded by S. Huntemann, that Senate elect Dr. Danny Wadden to the Academic Appeals Committee, with a term ending June 2029. CARRIED

8.5.2. Election for Strategic Plan Renewal Working Group

M. McGonnell explained that three separate calls had been put forward for nominations to the Strategic Plan Renewal Working Group, with a request for representation from a faculty Senator, an administrative/staff Senator and a student Senator and that one nomination had been received for an administrative/staff Senator (K. Jones).

M. McGonnell called three times for nominations from the floor for a faculty Senator to be nominated by the faculty Senators, with no nominations received.

M. McGonnell called three times for nominations from the floor for a student Senator to be nominated by the student Senators, with no nominations received. M. Paul indicated that the Students' Union is in the middle of a by-election and that the student Senators may be better equipped to make a nomination at the next Senate meeting.

M. McGonnell called three times for nominations from the floor for an administrative/staff Senator to be nominated by the administrative Senators, with no nominations received. Having received no additional nominations, M. McGonnell declared K. Jones acclaimed as the administrative/staff Senator for the working group.

8.6. Research and Publications

8.6.1. Revisions to Standard Operating Procedures

J. Gahagan expressed gratitude to members of CRP for reviewing and updating SOPs, which are brought to Senate for information.

8.6.1.1. Grant Reporting

8.6.1.2. Purpose and Envelopes of Funding

8.7. Student Experience

8.7.1. Revision to Terms of Reference, Bylaw 14.9

K. Jones explained that the updated ToR reflect current titles for various positions on the committee and that this item is a notice of motion for the next meeting.

8.8. University Research Ethics Board

J. Gahagan indicated that the included updates are presented for information.

8.8.1. Administrative Review of Standard Operating Procedures

8.8.1.1. Multi-Jurisdictional Research

8.8.2. New Standard Operating Procedures

8.8.2.1. Low-Risk Research Survey Guidance

8.8.2.2. Researcher Checklist for Low-Risk Research

8.8.2.3. Artificial Intelligence and Research Ethics

8.8.2.4. QuickRef – Artificial Intelligence and Research Ethics

8.8.2.5. Inauthentic Research Participants
8.8.2.6. QuickRef – Inauthentic Research Participants

9. Other Reports

9.1. FA President's Report on the Board of Governors' Meeting

C. Barker reported on the June 25, 2026, Board meeting, highlighting that Governors received the student recruitment plan, received an update on the purchase of Lot Q and reviewed and approved the University's audited statements and confirmed the auditors for the coming year. He further reported that the Board also approved a significant restructuring of the Board Committee structure and reduced the number of required Board meetings to four annually. C. Barker emphasized that JBSL remains the link between the Board and the Senate and encouraged Senators to take part in opportunities for joint meetings.

C. Barker expressed that in his faculty report he brought forward concerns regarding staffing reductions, specifically concerns from the Faculty of Education around consultation and budget transparency, workload, and sustainability of Education programs, emphasizing that decisions impacting faculty and students require engagement and communication.

9.2. Students' Union

M. Paul referenced the report provided to Senators. She emphasized that Orientation has been going well and that more reporting to Senate will be provided. She described collaboration efforts both within the University and externally, citing the SU's Food Security Services and the desire to collaborate more with faculty about SU services faculty can recommend to students.

M. Paul shared some further highlights, including the MOU which was recently signed with Administration and the SU's efforts to streamline internal policies and governance, a project which will be concluded by the end of the term. The areas of improvement she identified included increasing engagement with SU representatives and with volunteers, since many SU services are volunteer run.

D. Piccitto asked for clarification in the report about academic integrity and moving toward a restorative justice approach. M. Paul and L. Francis elaborated by saying the SU is planning a series of campus engagements and discussions around applying restorative structures and frameworks within Senate policies concerning academic integrity at MSVU.

S. Brigham asked specifically about Grammarly as a tool used for accessibility. K. Jones explained that this program is one of various technologies provided to students depending on their specific needs. M. Paul clarified that the report refers specifically to the paid version of the service provided by the government.

10. New Business

10.1. Annual Reports of Senate Committees
All annual reports were presented for information and discussion.

Regarding item 10.1.9, D. Piccitto asked for clarification if lab instructors will be included in the working group. M. McGonnell clarified that they are included in the faculty representation.

Regarding item 10.1.2, D. Piccitto asked for an update on a possible Gen AI working group. L. Francis responded that discussion is ongoing and it remains on the CAPP agenda.

Regarding item 10.1.11, D. Piccitto asked how Senate will be involved in the Academic Integrity revision process. K. Jones explained that initial meetings are being held; however, SE will not be leading the review.

10.1.1. Academic Appeals
10.1.2. Academic Policy and Planning
10.1.3. Appointment, Promotion and Tenure or Permanence for Academic Administrators
10.1.4. Executive
10.1.5. Graduate Studies Scholarships, Assistantships and Awards
10.1.6. Graduate Studies Program and Policy
10.1.7. Information Technology and Services
10.1.8. Library and Archives
10.1.9. Nominations
10.1.10. Research and Publications
10.1.11. Student Experience
10.1.12. Student Judicial
10.1.13. Student Discipline Appeals
10.1.14. Teaching and Learning
10.1.15. Undergraduate Admissions, Scholarships and Awards
10.1.16. Undergraduate Curriculum
10.1.17. University Research Ethics Board
10.1.18. Writing Initiatives

10.2. Annual Report of Joint Board Senate Liaison Committee
S. Huntemann asked for an update on joint Board Senate event planning. J. Dickinson explained that JBSL will meet early October, where this topic will be on the agenda.

10.3. Annual Report of Nancy's Chair Committee
No discussion or questions were raised.

10.4. Annual Report of Advisory Committee for Gail and Stephen Jarislowsky Chair in Learning Disabilities
No discussion or questions were raised.

10.5. Annual Report AMI
No discussion or questions were raised.

11. Items for Communication

Senate approved:

- Minutes of May 20, 2026 and May 27, 2026
- A nomination to Academic Appeals Committee
- Election of K. Jones to the Strategic Plan Renewal Working Group

Senate received for information:

- Report on Senate Self-Evaluation 2025/2026
- Report on the external review of Child and Youth Study
- Revisions to the Graduate Certificates and Diplomas Policy, GSPP 2015 01
- Revisions to SOPs of the CRP
- Notice of motion for revisions to Bylaw 14.9
- New and revised SOPs of the UREB
- Annual reports of Senate-related committees

Senate thanked K. Schlief, whose term is ending.

12. Adjournment

As the agenda was exhausted, the meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.