Senate Meeting | September 26, 2025
Alice Egan Hagen Board Room (Rosaria 312)/MS Teams | 2 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: J. Dickinson (Chair), J. Bail, E. Ballantyne, C. Barker, G. Boulet, R. Bursey, A. Card, E. Copeland Solas, P. Crouse, C. Dawson, G. Durepos, T. Findlay, L. Francis, J. Gahagan, E. Henderson, S. Huntemann, K. Jones, M. McGonnell, C. McLean, M. Minocha, I. Nault, D. Piccitto, S. Reddington, B. Russo, J. Sawler, K. Schlief, C. Schneider, G. Sneddon, S. Trenholm, J. Valcke, O. Wokoma, S. Zegarra

Regrets: S. Brigham, S. Hale Wills, M. Matthews, J. Ryuzaki, A. Thurlow

Observers: G. Batten, M. Caswell, F. French, J. Lamb, L. MacFarlane, K. White, G. Tembrevilla

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m.

New Senators were identified and welcome. Observers were identified 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.

   J. Dickinson also noted that the current land acknowledgement is going to be undergoing an update.

2. **Approval of Agenda**

   As 8.1.3, Announcement of Senate Master Graduation List Approval was added to the agenda.

   Moved by C. Dawson, seconded by B. Russo, to approve the agenda as amended. CARRIED.

3. **Conduct Statement**

   J. Dickinson read the Senate Code of Conduct Statement. No questions or discussion arose.

4. **Approval of Minutes**

   4.1. May 21, 2025

   Moved by B. Russo, seconded by S. Trenholm, to approve the minutes of May 21, 2025, as amended. CARRIED.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

No business arising from the minutes was identified.

6. Administration Updates

6.1. President

J. Dickinson extended thanks to all those involved in Orientation Events, Admissions and Recruitment, highlighting N. Bowes Cashen and team, the Mount Mentors, K. Jones and team, S. Hale Wills and team and J. Neilsen and team.

J. Dickinson updated Senators regarding the impact of last year's IRCC changes, noting that the impact of the changes has been far greater than anticipated. The impacts have been felt nationally, with applications from international students decreasing by approximately 55% and lower conversion rates overall, resulting in both fewer applicants and fewer approvals. She noted that last year, no institution came close to issuing its full allocation of PALs and that feedback suggests that the issue extends beyond the volume of applications to the types of applicants being refused. J. Dickinson updated that the current federal government has expressed interest in addressing process challenges related to PALs and timeline of study permit approval. Additionally, she reported that the federal government remains invested in research—particularly in areas related to technology in the energy sector, defense and sovereignty—and appears open to considering proposals for infrastructure funding to address the deferred maintenance challenges faced by universities nationwide.

J. Dickinson updated Senators on provincial government developments, reporting that most of her current work is centered on Bill 12, including initial discussions with the province's contracted consultant, who has been tasked with conducting an environmental scan and making recommendations. She also highlighted that, along with Dalhousie and Acadia, we are participating in the first round of discussions regarding potential regulations arising from Bill 12.

Regarding Research NS, J. Dickinson reported that through ongoing advocacy efforts, it is likely the organization will continue to provide some level of matched funding. She also noted that the current focus is on research projects that can demonstrate economic impact.

6.2. Vice-President Academic and Provost

L. Francis reported that the PsyD program proposal is progressing through several key committees over the next few weeks and will then move to Senate. She noted that MPHEC has granted permission for the program to advertise and accept applications for the coming year, as they recognize that the application cycle for prospective students is typically from November to April.

Regarding provincial government updates, L. Francis reported that the province is placing significant emphasis on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for academic metrics at universities and engaging with provosts across the province to solicit feedback on proposed KPIs, which currently include items such as graduation rates, time-to-degree, retention rates and the proportion of undergraduate students participating in experiential learning. She noted that the government's focus is primarily on first-degree programs and that Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and experiential learning continue to be key government priorities, with some of the proposed KPIs being directly tied to these concepts; however, the province's current definitions of these programs may not capture all types of WIL and experiential learning activities (e.g., laboratory components).

Additionally, L. Francis reported on Schedule H of our bilateral agreement with the province, noting that every university in the province shares the same Schedule H, which requires each program to undergo an additional review process separate from MPHEC's mandated quality assurance review. She shared that the deadline for this additional review is October 2026 but that the scope remains unclear. The Registrar's Office is currently working to finalize our program list, as inaccuracies were found in the list that was provided.

Moved by G. Durepos, seconded by B. Russo, to extend administrative updates by 10 minutes. CARRIED.

L. Francis continued that while past MPHEC external reviews may be used in this process, the full scope, metrics, and templates for the new review have not yet been shared. She also reported that the government is prioritizing the mapping of CIP codes (Classification of Instructional Programs used by MPHEC and universities) to NOC codes (National Occupational Classification, representing occupations held by graduates) and that it plans to align five NOC codes to each CIP. L. Francis highlighted the variability and limitations inherent in this approach but confirmed that institutions will be provided with their code transfers for review and comment.

6.3. Vice-President Administration

I. Nault reported on a security alert received on July 21 that identified a potential threat to SharePoint servers, prompting the restriction of access to SharePoint sites to on-campus users and those connected via VPN. She shared that some sites have already been secured, with the completion of all remediation measures expected within approximately two weeks.

Regarding infrastructure updates, I. Nault updated that the new Child Study Centre is nearing the ground-breaking stage and that a campus-wide message will be issued once the date is confirmed. She also reported that an architect has been engaged to assess the renovation needs related to the new PsyD program and clinic, which necessitates relocation of the Advancement Office and Deans' Office.

7. Question Period

G. Boulet asked for an update, if any, on the CUPE negotiations, with I. Nault confirming that they were at conciliation yesterday.

B. Russo requested an update on the EDIA committee and L'Nu Advisory Circle, noting that both have not met for quite some time. J. Dickinson reported that for the L'Nu Advisory Circle, nominations for new members are being received and a meeting will be scheduled soon. She noted as well that a new call for an L'Nu representative on Senate will also be issued. Regarding the EDIA Committee, I. Nault noted that the subcommittee's work has informed the EDIA Action Plan and that she will ask the AVP, People & Culture to provide an update to be sent to Senators and will convene all members to review progress. D. Piccitto noted that the committee cannot be convened immediately, as nominations are still required for some representatives. I. Nault acknowledged that the membership list may not be up-to-date and has asked the AVP, People and Culture to restart the process accordingly. (B. Russo, J. Dickinson, I. Nault, D. Piccitto)

C. McLean inquired when Senate can expect to receive the PsyD program proposal. L. Francis responded that the proposal is anticipated to be on the November Senate agenda, with MPHEC submission expected in December or January. She noted that all Clinical PsyD programs nationally operate on coordinated acceptance timelines, noting that prospective applicants will not need to decide on offers elsewhere before April.

Senators discussed the faculty presentations at last spring's convocation, with some expressing their disappointment with how quickly the presentations were delivered and requested that portions of the citation be read aloud during the ceremony, while another Senator noted that long citations can be uncomfortable for recipients. (D. Piccitto, S. Huntemann, G. Durepos)

S. Huntemann inquired about the absence of a dedicated campus security vehicle. I. Nault responded that the previous dedicated security vehicle is no longer operational but that security staff have access to three other vehicles within Facilities Management as needed. She also noted that the team is exploring alternative vehicle options better suited for navigating campus trails, rather than relying solely on a standard automobile.

G. Durepos requested updates regarding MPHEC, specifically their role in the Schedule H program review and whether all committee positions are filled. L. Francis explained that this additional program review does not fall within MPHEC's standard mandate but that MPHEC occasionally undertakes additional consultant work and that the province approached them to manage this process. She noted, however, that it is not yet clear whether MPHEC will directly fulfill the contract, as third-party vendors could be engaged to develop templates and define the project scope. L. Francis also indicated that, to her knowledge, vacancies on the committee remain.

C. Schneider asked for the timetable policy to be reviewed by CAPP, as the timings of afternoon B.Ed. courses are problematic for students with families and other obligations. L. Francis confirmed that the policy is on the list for review at CAPP.

B. Russo raised a question regarding the recently advertised Mental Health First Aid Training and the associated $78 fee. J. Dickinson explained that the fee is set by the third-party organization that issues the certification and that she would investigate why the agreed upon arrangement to cover the fee for faculty was denied.

J. Sawler inquired about Schedule H, specifically who is responsible for the reviews and how the categories are defined. L. Francis noted that, despite repeated requests for clarification, no clear guidance or formal definitions are available.

T. Findlay inquired about Bill 12, particularly about any new developments and collective measures being taken to safeguard the University. J. Dickinson responded that she has no further information at this time but noted that the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents has been advocating on the issue, emphasizing long-term consequences and economic impacts observed in other provinces with similar legislation.

G. Durepos inquired whether external consulting firms might be engaged to assist with the Schedule H review. L. Francis confirmed that this is possible.

B. Russo raised concerns that humanities programs seem to be at a disadvantage given the province's apparent STEM-focused priorities and asked what actions can be taken. J. Dickinson responded that the importance of liberal arts and natural sciences education is being emphasized as foundational to all programs, both internally and externally.

8. Committee Reports (Standing and Ad Hoc)

8.1. Senate Executive

8.1.1. Report on Senate Self-Evaluation

J. Dickinson referenced the supporting documents included in the package and invited questions or discussion.

D. Piccitto addressed the comments concerning student membership on Senate and reaffirmed to the Student Senators that their contributions are welcomed, encouraged and valued.

8.1.2. Graduation List Procedures

P. Crouse referenced the supporting document in the package and highlighted the two changes, inviting Senators to ask questions.

8.1.3. Senate Master Graduation List for Fall Convocation

J. Dickinson reported that EX approved 465 names on the master graduation list for Fall convocation, with an additional 11 names on the enabling list, noting that none were due to financial reasons. Additionally, EX approved the University Registrar to move names from the enabling list should their graduation requirements be met.

8.2. Academic Policy and Planning and Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
L. Francis introduced items 8.2.1 to 8.2.7 for information only, inviting Senators to ask questions or raise discussion points.

8.2.1. Report on External Review of Applied Human Nutrition
No questions or discussion arose.

8.2.2. Report on External Review of Communications
No questions or discussion arose.

8.2.3. Report on External Review of Curriculum Studies

O. Wokoma highlighted student advising challenges outlined in the report and proposed collaboration with the Students' Union on an advisory panel or student "buddy" program. A. Card emphasized the need for a dedicated graduate program advisor/recruiter, noting the complexity of advising at the graduate level, particularly regarding teacher certification requirements.

8.2.4. Report on External Review of Curriculum Studies SLDNE
No questions or discussion arose.

8.2.5. Report on External Review of Educational Technology
G. Tembrevilla thanked A. Card and L. MacFarlane for their consistent support throughout the process.

8.2.6. Report on External Review of Lifelong Learning
J. Bail clarified that librarians remain available to provide in-class instruction on information literacy skills, contrary to the report's indication that such services were no longer offered.

8.2.7. Report on External Review of History
No questions or discussion arose.

D. Piccitto raised a general observation regarding the preceding items, noting that the phrase "outside the scope of the program review process/purview" was frequently used in the reviews, particularly in reference to budgets, facilities, faculty complement and staffing. Discussion followed on how to adopt more constructive and effective language in such responses.
(D. Piccitto, L. Francis, C. Dawson)

L. Francis expressed appreciation to all contributors—including departments, external reviewers, students, CAPP, departmental staff, the Deans' Office, and, in particular, L. MacFarlane—for their efforts and support throughout the external review process.

S. Zegarra spoke broadly about the delivery of graduate-level courses in online versus in-person formats. L. Francis noted that several reviews had addressed this topic and highlighted the need to consider factors such as student study permits. A. Card added that decisions on course delivery modes can pose challenges for programs serving both domestic and international students, particularly where study permits require at least 50% in-person coursework while domestic demand for online learning remains high. This issue is especially significant for programs with enrollments too small to sustain both online and in-person sections. (S. Zegarra, L. Francis, A. Card)

8.3. Research and Publications

8.3.1. Revisions to President's Award for Research Excellence

Moved by J. Gahagan, seconded by B. Russo, that we change the deadline to March 1 to allow for preparation time before convocation. CARRIED.

T. Findlay requested clarification on what is expected of nominees when asked to provide their five most significant research contributions, as defined by the Tri-Agency. J. Gahagan explained that the selection of contributions is left to the candidate's discretion, that guidance is available on the Tri-Agency's website and that candidates without extensive Tri-Agency funding may still submit their own significant contributions.

8.3.2. Revisions to Standard Operating Procedures

J. Gahagan presented the following revisions for information only.

8.3.2.1. Deadlines
8.3.2.2. New Scholar Grant
8.3.2.3. NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awards

8.4. University Research Ethics Board

8.4.1. New Standard Operating Procedures

J. Gahagan presented the following for information only.

8.4.1.1. Translation of Informed Consent, Tools and Results
8.4.1.2. Waiver or Alteration of Informed Consent
8.4.1.3. Capacity to Consent

8.4.2. Reformatted documents

J. Gahagan reminded Senators that the following documents were in SharePoint only and were presented for information only.

8.4.2.1. REB Glossary of Terms
8.4.2.2. References
8.4.2.3. Application of US Regulations
8.4.2.4. Visitors to REB Meetings
8.4.2.5. Categories of Review by Application
8.4.2.6. Faculty and Staff Submission Process
8.4.2.7. Graduate Student Submission Process
8.4.2.8. Undergraduate Student Submission Process
8.4.2.9. Ongoing Ethics Review Guidance
8.4.2.10. Modification Request
8.4.2.11. Revisions and Clarifications
8.4.2.12. Demographic Questions in Research
8.4.2.13. Suicidal Risk and Ideation
8.4.2.14. Current Human Research Participant F2F Status COVID-19
8.4.2.15. Researcher Procedures for Resuming F2F Research
8.4.2.16. Sensitive Data
8.4.2.17. Use of On-Line Surveys
8.4.2.18. Use of Bonus Points as Participant Incentives
8.4.2.19. Confidentiality Agreement
8.4.2.20. Confidentiality Agreement
8.4.2.21. Audio Consent
8.4.2.22. Audio Consent
8.4.2.23. Video Consent
8.4.2.24. Video Consent
8.4.2.25. Photo Consent
8.4.2.26. Information Letter COVID-19
8.4.2.27. Digitization of Research Records

E. Ballantyne discussed the accessibility-related rationale for the reformatting and inquired about the process for reviewing the documents through an accessibility lens. J. Gahagan clarified that the changes are compliance- and regulation-driven, based on Tri-Agency requirements.

8.4.3. Administrative Review of Standard Operating Procedures
J. Gahagan reminded Senators that the following documents were in SharePoint only and were presented for information only.
8.4.3.1. Authority and Purpose
8.4.3.2. Research Requiring REB Review
8.4.3.3. Training and Education of REB Members and REB Office Personnel
8.4.3.4. Management of REB Office Personnel
8.4.3.5. Conflicts of Interest - REB Members and REB Office
8.4.3.6. Conflicts of Interest - Organization
8.4.3.7. Signatory Authority

8.4.3.8. Uses and Disclosures of Personal Information (PI)
8.4.3.9. SOP Maintenance
8.4.3.10. Addendum for US-Regulated Research
8.4.3.11. Departmental Research Ethics Boards
8.4.3.12. Composition of the Board
8.4.3.13. Management of the Board
8.4.3.14. Duties of REB Members
8.4.3.15. REB Office Personnel Serving as REB Members
8.4.3.16. REB Submission Requirements and Document Review
8.4.3.17. Documentation and Document Management
8.4.3.18. Delegated Review
8.4.3.19. Initial Review – Criteria for REB Approval
8.4.3.20. REB Review Decisions
8.4.3.21. Ongoing REB Review Activities
8.4.3.22. Continuing Review
8.4.3.23. Completion of Research
8.4.3.24. Suspension or Termination of REB Clearance
8.4.3.25. Full Board Review Process
8.4.3.26. Multi-Jurisdictional Research
8.4.3.27. Reconsideration and Appeals
8.4.3.28. REB Review During Publicly Declared Emergencies
8.4.3.29. Scholarly Review
8.4.3.30. Communication - Researcher
8.4.3.31. Communication - Research Participants
8.4.3.32. Consent Updates and Ongoing Review
8.4.3.33. Researcher Qualifications and Responsibilities
8.4.3.34. Quality Assurance Inspections
8.4.3.35. External Inspections or Audits
8.4.3.36. Non-Compliance
8.4.3.37. Glossary of Terms
8.4.3.38. REB Glossary of Terms
8.4.3.39. Reference Documents for REB SOPS
8.4.3.40. Conflicts of Interest - Researcher
8.4.3.41. REB Meeting Administration
8.4.3.42. Reporting Adverse Events (AE)/Serious Adverse Events
8.4.3.43. Free and Informed Consent

9. Other Reports

9.1. Students' Union

S. Zegarra provided updates on multiple initiatives, including the Cookbook Project, Housing Bursary, Fall By-Elections, an RBC grant supporting food security, the technology access loan program and a successful Food Bank Canada grant proposal. She also reported on the increased number of student appeals going to the AAC, onboarding support for SU executive members to assist students through the appeal process and successful Orientation Week events, with thanks expressed to VP Student Life G. MacInnis and VP Graduate Affairs O. Wokoma.

M. Minocha updated Senators on SU services, including The Rook, Pride Centre, the HUB, Fountain Play Centre, the soup kitchen and the food bank (noting steady usage and requesting assistance with donation transport). J. Dickinson asked for further details on the food donation transportation. S. Zegarra explained the use of the Second Harvest app for last-minute pick-up notifications and invited volunteers to contact her. Regarding the SU vacant seats, it was confirmed that the seats for Mature, Education, Indigenous and Arts representatives are currently vacant. (M. Minocha, J. Dickinson, S. Zegarra)

J. Gahagan reported that MSVU partners with GeoNS to provide low-income students with affordable internet packages, phone and internet bundles and tablets and provided Student Senators with the internal contact.

J. Sawler asked whether the financial literacy sessions planned for last year would be offered, noting that he had volunteered to assist with the workshops. S. Zegarra will follow up with the SU's CFO to facilitate a connection with J. Sawler directly.

C. McLean inquired about promotion of the laptop donation program, with it being shared that further promotion will take place once logistics are finalized. P. Crouse asked whether Windows 10 laptops could be accepted given Microsoft's discontinuation of Windows 10 support; this is still under review. (C. McLean, S. Zegarra, J. Dickinson, L. Francis, P. Crouse, R. Bursey)

T. Findlay commended the SU on its report and confirmed that food bank donations are still accepted at Senate. P. Crouse noted an updated donation list had been circulated with the agenda email. S. Zegarra added that an after-hours drop-off space is available outside the food bank. In response to R. Bursey's question about perishable goods, S. Zegarra stated that donations can be received Tuesday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., with the soup kitchen (Monday/Wednesday) also able to accept donations.

10. New Business

10.1. Annual Reports of Senate Committees

The annual reports were presented for information and discussion.

- 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

J. Dickinson invited questions or comments regarding the annual reports presented under item 10.1.

Regarding item 10.1.15, J. Sawler raised concerns about the unequal distribution of scholarships across disciplines, programs, and individual courses, referencing formulas he proposed six years ago as a potential solution. L. Francis noted that a UASAC report to CAPP indicated that the formulas would not significantly affect the current data, with the primary barrier being the faculty nomination process and that changes to the nomination process are the first step recommended by UASAC. A request was made for scholarship distribution data by program to be presented to Senate, with discussion regarding the appropriateness and feasibility of doing so. J. Dickinson suggested that further questions be directed to the Registrar. The inclusion of the B.Ed. program was also noted as a factor that influenced previous data outcomes. (J. Sawler, L. Francis, J. Dickinson, P. Crouse, A. Card)

Regarding item 10.1.7, S. Huntemann inquired why the committee did not meet last year, particularly concerning the rollout of Windows 11. G. Sneddon and E. Ballantyne, new committee members on SCOITS, noted that the first meeting is scheduled in two weeks to select a Chair and invited Senators to submit questions for discussion. J. Valcke, former Chair of SCOITS, highlighted the need for a clearer transition process when a Chair steps down, as occurred during her sabbatical. C. Barker noted that the FA received multiple reports about issues with electronics procurement and Windows 11 updates and requested an update at the next Senate meeting. Additionally, it was asked if mechanisms exist to ensure committees meet regularly, with P. Crouse responding that while the Terms of Reference specify the required number of meetings, compliance is currently not tracked. She noted as well that, when a committee's former chair is no longer on the committee, a procedure is in place for calling the first meeting of the year. (S. Huntemann, G. Sneddon, E. Ballantyne, J. Valcke, C. Barker, P. Crouse)

Regarding 10.1.8, S. Huntemann requested an update on the collections librarian position. L. Francis will be providing an update to J. Bail soon.

Regarding 10.1.1, E. Ballantyne noted the increased number of academic appeals and inquired how many may be related to GenAI. Further details will be requested from AAC in a future report.

Regarding 10.1.6, O. Wokoma expressed appreciation to the committee for their work in addressing and supporting student concerns. Secondly, regarding 10.1.17, O. Wokoma inquired about the differences between student and faculty research ethics applications. J. Gahagan clarified that UREB versus departmental ethics processes differ, with faculty supervisors typically submitting the ethics clearance on behalf of students.

10.2. Annual Report of Joint Board Senate Liaison Committee

T. Findlay inquired if there were any further updates regarding the governance review. J. Dickinson responded that the matter is now moot due to Bill 12.

R. Bursey asked about the asterisk next to Heather Hanson's name. J. Dickinson clarified that her tenure on JBSL concluded prior to the last meeting.

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

A. Card highlighted that J. Metsala was awarded the King Charles coronation medal.

10.5. Annual Report AMI

D. Piccitto noted that the change to the Terms of Reference had not been presented to Senate for approval. J. Dickinson confirmed that she is already following up on this matter.

10.6. Annual Report *Atlantis*

D. Piccitto inquired why the position of University Liaison to the journal was disbanded. B. Russo clarified that the position was left vacant following T. Harrison's passing, rather than formally being discontinued. L. Francis added that the University is reviewing the obligations of the liaison role, noting that *Atlantis* has an external editorial board that needs to be considered.

11. Items for Communication

Senate approved:

- Minutes of May 21, 2025
- Revisions to President’s Award for Research Excellence

Senate received for information:

- Report on Senate Self-Evaluation 2024
- Revisions to graduation list procedures
- Reports on external reviews:
  - Applied Human Nutrition
  - Communications
  - Curriculum Studies
  - Curriculum Studies: Supporting Learner’s with Diverse Needs & Exceptionalities
  - Educational Technology
  - Lifelong Learning
  - History
- Revisions to SoPs of the CRP
- New and revised SoPs of the UREB
- Annual reports of Senate-related committees

12. Adjournment

Moved by B. Russo, seconded by S. Trenholm, that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.