

## MINUTES

Present: M. Bluechardt (Chair), P. Barry Mercer, A. Benzaquén, K. Blotnicky, C. Broughton, P. Cantelo, E. Church, P. Cormier-MacBurnie, P. Crouse, R. Farmer, T. Findlay, M. Forrest, J. Fraser-Arsenault, M. J. Harkins, T. Harriott, N. Jamieson, B. Jessop, G. MacDonald, S. MacIntosh, J. MacLeod, M. MacMillan, S. MacMillan, C. Matta, M. McGonnell, S. Orlov, J. Sawler, S. Seager, D. Shiner, B. Taylor, R. Zuk

Regrets: K. Brooking, A. Cuming, T. Harrison, K. Kienapple, J. Sharpe

Guests from the MSVUSU Students' Representative Council: Azzam Al-Ghamdi, William Brewer, Christine DiGiosia, Michael Fong, Ashley Fudge, Jon Grant, Tricina Morash, Erin Murray, Alex Roy, Evelyn Sabine

Guests from MSVUSU (Students at Large): Catherine Chamberlain, Aidan McNally, Jennifer O'Keefe

*The meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m. New student senator, Karley Brooking, was acknowledged.*

1. Indigenous Land Recognition  
M. Bluechardt provided an acknowledgement that the Mount is built on traditional Mi'kmaq territory and paid respect to the Indigenous peoples of the land on which Senate meets.
2. Approval of Agenda  
It was agreed that SCOITS Terms of Reference (item 4.6) be moved to 4.1 and all other items renumbered accordingly.  
  
**Moved** by S. Orlov, seconded by R. Farmer, to approve the agenda as amended.  
CARRIED
3. Approval of Minutes of September 27, 2017  
**Moved** by K. Blotnicky, seconded by P. Barry Mercer, to approve the meeting minutes of September 27, 2017, as circulated. CARRIED

#### 4. Business Arising from the Minutes

##### 4.1. Revisions to Terms of Reference, SCOITS, Senate Bylaw 14.5

The proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference for SCOITS, outlined in the memo dated July 21, 2017, were summarized.

**Moved** by S. Orlov, seconded by P. Barry Mercer, that Senate approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Senate Committee on Information Technology and Services, Senate Bylaw 14.5. CARRIED with two abstentions

##### 4.2. Editorial Changes to Policy on Policies

Senate members were updated on additional revisions made to the “procedure” section of the “Policy on Policies” based on discussions at the September Senate meeting; the revised version of this section was reviewed and discussed. Two friendly amendments were proposed, and accepted, to remove “and will not alter the intent of the policy,” and to add wording to specify that the changes would be limited to existing names and titles. The section now reads:

*The Secretary of Senate, in consultation with the Chair of Senate, and with the approval of Senate Executive, shall be authorized to make editorial changes to policies to reflect changes to existing names or titles. The Senate Executive shall notify Senate of all such changes.*

**Moved** by K. Blotnick, seconded by D. Shiner, that Senate approve the addition to the “Procedures section” of the Policy on Policies, effective immediately. CARRIED with two opposed and one abstention

##### 4.3. Editorial Changes to Senate Bylaws

K. Blotnick introduced the motion about the addition of Bylaw 13.3 regarding editorial changes to the Senate Bylaws.

R. Farmer questioned whether Senate should relinquish its right to make changes to the Bylaws. A discussion ensued regarding the amount of work involved in the process of making changes and the justification for the proposed revision to the Bylaws. Clarification was provided, and several scenarios were discussed where public content (changes to names and titles) required updating but could not be completed until the committee responsible submitted the changes as a Senate agenda item and Senate met to approve the changes. (M. Forrest, P. Crouse, E. Church)

A friendly amendment was proposed, and accepted, to reword the revision to the Bylaws to reflect language used in the motion regarding editorial changes to the Policy on Policies. The section would now read:

*The Secretary of Senate, in consultation with the Chair of Senate, and with the approval of Senate Executive, shall be authorized to make editorial changes to the by-laws to reflect changes to existing names or titles. The Senate Executive shall notify Senate of all such changes.*

**Moved** by K. Blotnicky, seconded by E. Church, that Senate approve the addition of the Senate Bylaw 13.3 as amended, and to be effective upon Senate's approval.

After the motion was announced as Carried, a further review of the voting results was requested, and the motion was declared Defeated. (16 Senators in favour of the motion, 9 Senators opposed, and 2 abstentions)

- 4.4. Revisions to Senate Bylaws—Senate Membership, Bylaw 1  
K. Blotnicky spoke to the proposed changes to Senate Membership, Bylaw 1, outlined in the memo to Senate dated September 18, 2017. A friendly amendment was proposed, and accepted, that the Bylaw be further revised to include the change in the Vice-President Academic and Provost's title.

**Moved** by K. Blotnicky, seconded by E. Church, that Senate approve the proposed changes to Bylaw 1, effective immediately. CARRIED with three abstentions.

- 4.5. Revisions to Terms of Reference, CAPP, Senate Bylaw 14.3  
E. Church summarized revisions to the Terms of Reference for CAPP as outlined in the memo dated July 31, 2017. There were no questions or comments.

**Moved** by E. Church, seconded by K. Blotnicky, that Senate approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Committee on Academic Policy and Planning, Senate Bylaw 14.3, effective immediately. CARRIED with two abstentions

- 4.6. Revisions to Terms of Reference, GSAA, Senate Bylaw 14.12  
B. Taylor, in the absence of K. Kienapple, summarized the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for GSAA as outlined in the memo dated September 1, 2017.

A question was raised with regard to motion effective dates; clarification was provided that while motions do come into effect the following September, matters related to terms of reference, committee membership, and other items requiring immediate action are effective based on the date within the motion approved by Senate.

**Moved** by B. Taylor, seconded by D. Shiner, that Senate approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Graduate Scholarships, Assistantships and Awards Committee, Senate Bylaw 14.12, effective immediately. CARRIED

4.7. Internal Research Funding (G. MacDonald)

G. MacDonald advised senators that the feedback received at the last Senate meeting regarding Faculty Release Time Awards is being considered at CRP; the outcomes of those deliberations will be forthcoming at a future Senate meeting. Senate members were asked for any additional questions they might have.

The circumstances in which items come forward to Senate for approval versus those that come for information purposes was questioned. Clarification was provided to indicate that procedural changes are brought to Senate for information, while policy changes are brought to Senate for approval. Revisions to funding levels of grants, contained in one of the “For Information” documents that came to Senate at the last meeting, was questioned. Clarification was provided that the approval of grants within the document is the responsibility of the CRP and does not require the approval of Senate. Information was also provided on the number, level and frequency of grants for this fiscal year.

A question also arose with regard to giving priority to researchers who are identified as principal researchers; this item is part of the feedback being considered at CRP and will come forward to a future Senate meeting.

4.8. Revisions to Terms of Reference, CRP, Senate Bylaw 14.8

G. MacDonald outlined the proposed changes to the Committee’s Terms of Reference, identified in the memo dated June 30, 2017.

A question arose regarding the inconsistency in how committees write their terms of reference. Clarification was provided on the process; templates are not used in the preparation of terms of reference. The following motion was made.

**Moved** by G. MacDonald, seconded by M. J. Harkins, that Senate approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Committee on Research and Publications, Senate Bylaw 14.8, effective immediately.

S. Seager questioned the changes to the Committee’s “Purpose” including the deletion of the word “and” before the last item in the series. A friendly amendment was proposed (and accepted) that the word “and” not be deleted.

Secretary of Senate, P. Crouse, questioned the proposed wording of the Committee membership and, following consultation with B. Gagne from the Research Office, suggested alternate wording for clarity: “Eight members from the Eligible Faculty Complement to include one professional librarian and at least one from each of the following disciplinary areas: ...” G. MacDonald agreed with the change to the wording.

A discrepancy between the clarified interpretation of the membership and that of the covering memo was also noted.

It was agreed that the motion be deferred until the CRP can address the questions raised by Senators.

Concern was expressed, and a discussion held, on increasing the number of faculty on committees, given there are fewer faculty members and more committees than in the past.

4.9. Revisions to Terms of Reference, SCOTL, Senate Bylaw 14.10

E. Church spoke to the proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference for SCOTL, outlined within the memo dated September 5, 2017.

A friendly amendment was proposed, and accepted, to not delete "Senate" as one of the bodies to be informed of such developments (2<sup>nd</sup> bullet, Functions). A second friendly amendment was proposed, and accepted, to revise the title of "Vice-President Academic" to "Vice-President Academic and Provost."

**Moved** by E. Church, seconded by K. Blotnicky, that Senate approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning, Senate Bylaw 14.10, to be effective immediately. CARRIED

5. President's Announcements

M. Bluehardt spoke to senators about the incident that took place on campus overnight; the matter is being taken very seriously. Administration is following University protocol and is working in collaboration with the police and with the Students' Union on the matter. She summarized updates provided throughout the day and indicated that updates will continue. She articulated the supports in place; Senators were encouraged to direct anyone (themselves included) needing support, to support services available on campus.

Senators were cautioned that, while social media is being monitored, the University does not have the ability to control it or any comments made through it. M. Bluehardt cautioned the need to be respectful of the privacy of all involved.

The President also provided an overview of her recent trip to Universities Canada where inclusive excellence principles for Canadian universities were approved; the action plan includes seven principles around inclusiveness that Canadian universities will report on.

As well, senators were advised that the first of three town halls is being held on November 14; they were encouraged to send their top two suggestions for discussion to J. Peckham, Public Affairs. A question arose and clarification provided on the process for choosing dates/times for the scheduling of the town halls; Public Affairs does try to schedule the sessions on alternating days of the week and in various locations to provide opportunity for all campus community members to attend.

## 6. Question Period

S. MacMillan requested an update on discussions at the last meeting regarding the additional funding some universities are receiving from the Government. B. Jessop advised that the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP) is working with university vice-presidents on a financial review of the past 8-10 years to help the new Labour and Advanced Education Minister understand the impact that the 10% reduction in funding had on all universities and to illustrate where universities currently are financially. Once prepared, CONSUP will determine how the information will go forward to the Minister. The report is expected to be provided to university presidents by month end; at that time, the university presidents will have the opportunity to review the document and provide feedback on how to proceed.

Concern was shared about an article within the media outlining a \$7M forgivable debt (SOFI Fund) and a \$3.5M per year grant for Acadia University from the Government. The article names the Mount as one of three universities who also requested an extension to the SOFI loan repayment deadline; concern for the financial reputation of the University was highlighted. B. Jessop spoke to the article, the initial indication the University was given that an extension would be a possibility, and the misrepresentation of the University's financial position within the article. He noted the frustration expressed by the other NS universities at the lack of transparency and of the report developed to articulate these concerns to the Provincial Government. (R. Farmer, D. Shiner)

With regard to the sexual assault incident reported on during the President's Announcements, the following questions were raised:

- Does the Mount publicly report on sexual assault incidents on campus?
- What kind of training is available/provided to those departments/employees who provide support to anyone on campus experiencing trauma and crisis?
- How frequently is training updated for these support staff?
- Why did the Campus community find out about the incident from the police rather than the University?
- Was it the survivor's choice to have the incident made public?
- Did the survivor give consent for this to be made public, and if not, why was it made public? Why was media given priority over students?
- Has the University spoken to the Halifax Police about their tweeting of the incident?
- In the future, if something like this were to happen again, would the University work more closely with the police to ensure that kind of information is not released?
- When will the University issue an apology to the victim for the incident given that it happened on University property during a University activity?
- Should the University be interfering with a police investigation?

(C. Broughton, E. Murray, C. Chamberlain, N. Jamieson, S. McIntosh, S. Seager)

In addition to the questions above, the following concerns were articulated:

- Students want to ensure that incidents like this don't happen again and are not swept under a rug;
- Students believe that flaws exist in the current Sexual Assault policy as it stands and that it needs to be reviewed;
- Section 8.02 of the Sexual Assault Policy needs to be removed as it is seen to disempower survivors and doesn't allow them to make decisions for themselves;
- While the intentions behind the Sexual Assault policy were probably good, some students are not willing to make a report because of section 8.02;
- A consent talk must be mandated into Orientation Week; most sexual assaults on campus happen in the first few months of school and there is a lot of uncertainty about consent;
- Commitment and support is needed from RAs in ensuring their students attend Sex Talk events and receive information on consent;
- The Campus must be more representative of a dedication to consent culture and oppression of rape culture;
- With regard to the Halifax Police, the Students' Union appreciated their involvement, but it was inappropriate for the police to be tweeting about the incident; the University should speak to the police about their actions on campus;
- Though there was an explanation about why communication about the sexual assault incident was sent to the campus community, it was suggested that if the victim did not give consent, such communication could be very detrimental to the victim's recovery;
- The University should take the opportunity to review its communication strategy on significant events on campus;
- Signage will be added to Vinnie's to speak to rape culture and how to stop it. The signage is meant to let people know that that type of behaviour will not be tolerated;
- The role of Security on campus and the question of whether additional security is warranted was raised;
- Despite the length of the conversation, it was suggested that discussions continue until all students and others in attendance have the opportunity to speak and raise questions;
- A separate meeting to continue discussions on the incident was suggested.

(E. Murray, C. Chamberlain, C. Broughton, N. Jamieson, R. Farmer, S. Seager, J. Sawler, T. Findlay)

E. Murray delivered a statement on behalf of the Students' Union regarding the on-campus sexual assault incident. She spoke to the fact that the Students' Union has been doing ongoing work to combat sexualized violence on campuses across Nova Scotia for years, expressed deep disturbance on behalf of the students regarding the incident, and noted that students need support to fight back against rape culture. She spoke of students who have expressed their own experiences of sexual assault and what they feel are inadequacies within the University's current policy to support

survivors and respect their wishes. She suggested that the onus to address rape culture must not be on the students and questioned whether the Frosh Leaders were actually trained by Avalon. She further suggested that the University must prioritize combating rape culture on campus.

She stressed the fact that sexual assaults are very prevalent on university campuses. She noted that the strong presence of the students in attendance at the meeting is a demonstration for the need for the University to be doing more to address the issues on campus. She suggested reassessing the current policies and taking steps to ensure that all students feel safe on campus. She finished by noting that these discussions are happening daily within the Students' Union and that the University must join the Students' Union to support survivors.

In response to questions, concerns and the statement above, the following information/discussion was captured:

With respect to the police investigation, while it did begin at about 4:30 a.m., the University was not notified that it had taken place and only discovered that it had when police presence was noticed on campus; because the call was received by police as a 911 call, it is treated as a police investigation. Administration, like the students, was surprised that the police had tweeted that a sexual assault incident had taken place on campus. The University is working with a community liaison from the Halifax Police Department to determine how notification of the incident and investigation could have taken place more appropriately. The University will do its utmost to convey expectations associated with the Halifax Regional Police and how their communication to the University could have been undertaken differently.

To avoid having students hear about the incident from the media, the decision was made to advise the campus community. Notification of the incident, based on what was known at the time, was sent to students, staff and faculty at 8:48 a.m. Though the statement reported that the incident happened on campus, it has not yet been substantiated that it was on University property. The University is not part of the ongoing investigation so doesn't have all of the details at this time. The University is focusing on support for the victim and the community. Media interviews were completed this afternoon to promote the supports, communication and services available to students; classes were not cancelled as there did not appear to be a threat to campus.

Support available to the University community included the Mount's registered psychologists and two peer support workers from the Mount's Stay Connected Mental Health Project who would have received substantial training; this training is renewed annually. In addition, resident assistants and Frosh Leaders would have received training from Avalon (Sexual Assault Centre). Senators and students were encouraged to direct those who may need support to support services on campus.

It was agreed that consent education is important. There has been dialogue within Student Experience around bringing consent education more explicitly into orientation week; however, it has not been brought to the Orientation Committee at this time. The Committee is very open to the idea but wants to ensure that it is done in an authentic way.

Unlike a number of its sister universities, the Mount does have a policy to prevent sexual violence or to respond to sexual assault. Student Experience has reached out to N. Jamieson and C. Chamberlain to form a Sexual Violence Prevention Advisory Committee on campus. This committee, which includes students and faculty, is scheduled to meet for the first time in the near future.

The students were thanked for bringing forward their concern for section 8.02 of the Sexual Assault Policy, and it was reiterated that the University does take a survivor-centered approach. This section was included for cases where a survivor chooses the informal reporting mechanism and the University is aware there is a chance other students might be at risk. The University wants to retain the opportunity to act. The Mount's current Sexual Assault Policy was developed in 2015 and is slated for review. There are several committees that have input on the policy; constructive feedback from senators and students is welcome.

Responsibilities related to Security personnel were outlined; the current level of security on campus is deemed adequate and is meeting the needs of the campus.

The Mount is working with the Atlantic Association of Universities (AAU) to develop a reporting process that will allow universities to report sexual assaults on campuses in a uniform way. (P. Barry Mercer, B. Jessop)

M. Bluechardt expressed appreciation to Senators and students for their concern and advocacy; they were assured that the University takes sexual assault very seriously and is very committed to ensuring a safe campus. A meeting will be scheduled in order to provide a forum for further discussion on the sexual assault incident.

## 7. Committee Reports (Standing and Ad Hoc)

### 7.1. Senate Executive

#### 7.1.1. Announcement of Senate Master Graduation List Approval

M. Bluechardt announced that Senate Executive met to approve the Master Graduation List; a total of 354 graduates were approved with 17 on the enabling list. Senators were encouraged to attend the upcoming Convocation ceremonies.

### 7.2. Academic Policy and Planning

#### 7.2.1. Revision to New and Modified Academic Programs Policy

E. Church summarized revisions to the New and Modified Academic Programs Policy as outlined in the memo dated September 27, 2017.

**Moved** by E. Church, seconded by B. Taylor, that Senate approve the revised Policy and Procedures for the Development of New and Modified Academic Programs, effective immediately. CARRIED

### 7.3. Student Experience

#### 7.3.1. Revisions to Terms of Reference, Senate Bylaw 14.9 (Notice of Motion)

P. Barry Mercer notified senators that a motion will come forward to the next Senate meeting to approve revisions to the SE Terms of Reference.

## 8. Other Reports

### 8.1. Students' Union

N. Jamieson reported on Students' Union initiatives through the lens of:

- Advocacy: Working with several external partners to address growing food insecurity on campus, joining community partners in addressing the implications of Bill No. 8 (the Pre-Primary Education Act), and monitoring the lack of regulations and rising tuition in NS
- Academic Work: Analyzing the rising cost of student debt and its contributing factors such as textbooks, expanding the tutor database, and drafting an ethical tutoring guide for potential users of MSVUSU's tutor portal
- Solidarity Work: Issuing solidarity statements, standing with MSVU faculty to support El Jones, and joining others across the country in recognizing the autonomy of a students' union vs. the university institutions

## 9. New Business

### 9.1. Nominations for Honorary Degrees (Confidential Business)

**Moved** by M. J. Harkins, seconded by K. Blotnicky, to move *in camera*. CARRIED

**Moved** by B. Jessop, seconded by R. Zuk, to move from *in camera*. CARRIED

The *in camera* session was used to consider dossiers of Honorary Degree nominations and to vote (by secret ballot) on the nominees; both nominations reviewed were approved. Senators were reminded that the names of the nominees and the outcome of the voting process are confidential.

## 10. Items for Communication

G. MacDonald, an executive member of the Alliance of Canadian Comprehensive Research Universities (ACCRU), informed senators of her meeting with the staff of Minister of Science, Kirsty Duncan. ACCRU has been asked to communicate directly with the Minister in terms of pushing the agenda forward on the Fundamental Science Review. She spoke positively about the Review report and agreed to provide a progress update to Senate at a future meeting.

Senate approved:

- Minutes of the September 29, 2017, meeting
- Revisions to Policy on Policies
- Revisions to the Policy and Procedures for the Development of New and Modified Academic Programs

- Changes to Senate Bylaw 1
- Changes to the Terms of Reference of CAPP, GSAA, SCOITS and SCOTL
- Two nominations for honorary degrees

Senate received for information:

- Report on the Senate Master Graduation List for Fall 2017
- Notice of Motion re changes to the Terms of Reference of Student Experience

11. Adjournment

**Moved** by G. MacDonald, seconded by K. Blotnicky, that the meeting be adjourned.  
CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.