



Senate Meeting

Alice Egan Hagen Board Room (Rosaria 312)/MS Teams

November 29, 2024

2 p.m.

MINUTES

Present: J. Dickinson (Chair), J. Bail, C. Barker, K. Blotnicky, R. Burse, C. Cameron, A. Card, P. Crouse, C. Dawson, G. Durepos, M. Eskritt, L. Francis, J. Gahagan, S. Grant, M. J. Harkins, S. Huntemann, S. Kaur, M. Matthews, M. McGonnell, M. Minocha, I. Nault, D. Piccitto, B. Russo, J. Sawler, K. Schlieff, M. Siddiquee, G. Sneddon, L. Steele, A. Thurlow, S. Trenholm

Regrets: A. Duquette, R. Gechtman, M. Gonick, S. Hale Wills, K. Jones, P. Kaur Johal, C. McLean, J. R. Sylliboy, T. Yu

Observers: E. Jones, J. Lamb, J. Smith III, I. Tian, H. Yao

The meeting was called to order at 2:12 p.m.

Observers were identified and welcomed. Procedures to be used during the meeting and while voting on motions were outlined. Senators whose terms are ending were thanked: K. Blotnicky, M. J. Harkins and R. Gechtman.

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 C. Barker, seconded by R. Burse, to approve the agenda as presented. CARRIED.

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1. October 25, 2024, 2024

Moved by M. Eskritt, seconded by L. Steele, to approve the minutes of October 25, 2024, as amended. CARRIED.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

No business arising was identified.

5. Administration Updates

5.1. President

J. Dickinson reported on Universities Canada's campaign aimed at enhancing Canada's reputation as a top destination for international students, highlighting similar efforts focused on Nova Scotia.

J. Dickinson extended congratulations to those celebrated at the MSVU long service awards luncheon.

Regarding the provincial government's request to amend the admission requirements for the B.Ed. program, J. Dickinson reported that no updates have been received. Additionally, she shared that the Auditor General has initiated an audit of provincial spending in advanced education, noting that while MSVU will contribute information to the audit, we are not being audited ourselves.

5.2. Vice-President Academic and Provost

L. Francis shared several quality assurance updates, including external review site visits, self-study reports, the B.Ed. accreditation site visit and the success of open campus day.

Regarding changes from IRCC, L. Francis reported that no details have been received on the implementation of the expanded PAL process, emphasizing the new requirement for graduate applicants to obtain a PAL, with 12% of PALs provincially allocated to graduate applicants. She noted that internal planning and adjustments are already underway to address these changes.

L. Francis also shared that progress continues on the application portal and that three successful SEM workshops were held, with outcomes reported to the SEM Steering and Planning committee.

Lastly, L. Francis announced that the academic staffing plan has been approved by the Senior Executive Leadership Team, with memos to be distributed soon.

5.3. Vice-President Administration

I. Nault reported on several facilities management renovation projects including the food lab in Evaristus, generator for Evaristus and the Child Study Centre.

I. Nault also reported on the status of six ongoing searches: Governance Secretary and General Counsel, AVP University Relations, Executive Director Advancement, Strategic Advisor and Executive Assistant to the President's Office, Special Advisor in Indigenous Relations and Harassment and Discrimination Advisor.

6. Question Period

J. Sawler raised concerns about the seemingly growing number of international students attending MSVU primarily for immigration purposes rather than seeking a high-quality education. He inquired about the approach taken by MSVU recruiters and the steps MSVU is taking to ensure applicants are committed to their education, as well as how expectations are being communicated to them.

J. Dickinson confirmed that MSVU recruiters focus on attracting students genuinely interested in education, not visa-seekers, and proposed that J. Neilsen present a recruitment update at a future Senate meeting. L. Francis added that other institutions are offering programs aimed at fulfilling post-graduate work permit requirements with minimal study time but emphasized that MSVU does not participate in this. She clarified that international applicants to MSVU are applying to Senate- and MPHEC-approved programs, and once they meet admission criteria, they are treated the same as any other applicant.

Much discussion ensued on this topic, with Senators sharing their perspectives and experiences. Topics of discussion included absenteeism in the classroom, the financial burdens on international students, the need for more support and orientation regarding academic expectations and the importance of engaging both domestic and international students. Further, the increased use of AI among students was discussed, with Senators noting the increase in instructors' workload and possible deterrents that could be implemented. Turnitin as a possible deterrent was discussed, but given the ethical concerns surrounding Turnitin, L. Francis suggested that an environmental scan be conducted to determine if more ethical alternatives are available. (J. Sawler, J. Dickinson, L. Francis, I. Tian, B. Russo, D. Piccitto, M. Minocha, C. Barker, R. Burse, M. Matthews)

I. Tian requested an update on the disclosure of investments. J. Dickinson reported that two motions were brought to the Board Investment Committee: one to disclose investments annually and another to release a statement confirming compliance with policy guidelines. Both motions passed unanimously and will be presented to the Board of Governors next week. I. Nault added that the annual disclosure is expected to be released on March 31st, marking the end of the fiscal year.

Senators sought clarification on whether the report would include a detailed list of investments and compliance for the year. J. Dickinson confirmed that it would and that the report would be made public. H. Yao suggested that the first disclosure date be moved up from March 31st, noting that other Atlantic universities have already disclosed their investments. J. Dickinson agreed to raise this request with the BoG. (I. Tian, J. Dickinson, I. Nault, D. Piccitto, H. Yao)

C. Barker sought an update on a JBSL committee meeting, with J. Dickinson sharing that all members have been contacted and a meeting will be scheduled for early January.

C. Barker inquired about plans to rebuild relationships on campus following the labor dispute. J. Dickinson responded that significant attention has been given to this issue, emphasizing that any plans should involve the entire campus community. She mentioned that efforts would likely begin with engagement and gathering input from various constituency groups. Additionally, she highlighted ongoing initiatives such as Campus Exchanges and noted that more intentional work will follow once the collective agreement is signed.

Moved D. Piccitto, seconded by C. Barker, to extend question period by five minutes.
CARRIED.

In reference to the previous discussion regarding AI, B. Russo spoke about a disconnect between the workshops TLC is offering and the experiences of instructors in the classroom.

7. Committee Reports (Standing and Ad Hoc)

7.1. Graduate Studies Program and Policy

7.1.1. Applied Human Nutrition

7.1.1.1. Changes to Existing Programs

7.1.1.1.1. Required and elective courses for MAHN and MScAHN
Moved by S. Trenholm, seconded by C. Cameron, that Senate approve the changes in required and elective courses for MAHN and MScAHN. CARRIED.

7.2. Undergraduate Curriculum

7.2.1. Applied Human Nutrition

7.2.1.1. Changes to Existing Program

7.2.1.1.1. Requirements for BScAHN and BScAHN Dietetics
Moved by A. Card, seconded by S. Trenholm, that Senate approve the change in requirements for BScAHN and BScAHN Dietetics. CARRIED.

7.2.2. Chemistry and Physics

7.2.2.1. New Course Proposal

7.2.2.1.1. PHYS 2214: Introduction to Differential Equations
Moved by A. Card, seconded by S. Huntemann, that Senate approve the new course PHYS 2214.

M. McGonnell questioned whether the course was intended to be cross-listed with MATH 3314.

Moved by A. Card, seconded by L. Francis, that 7.2.2.1.1 be referred back to UCC for clarification.
CARRIED.

7.2.3. Communication Studies

7.2.3.1. Changes to Existing Program

7.2.3.1.1. Course Failure Description for BPR

Moved by A. Card, seconded by A. Thurlow, that Senate approve the change in course failure description for BPR. CARRIED.

C. Barker inquired about the rationale behind the change to the regulation. A. Thurlow clarified that the regulation itself has been in place for many years;

however, the change involves a revision of language to ensure consistency between COMM and PBRL courses.

- 7.2.4. Political and Canadian Studies and Women's Studies
 - 7.2.4.1. New Course Proposal
 - 7.2.4.1.1. POLS/CANA/WOMS 3410: Military Cultures and Social Justice
Moved by A. Card, seconded by C. Dawson, that Senate approve the new course POLS/CANA/WOMS 3410. CARRIED.
 - 7.2.5. Politics, Economics and Canadian Studies
 - 7.2.5.1. New Course Proposal
 - 7.2.5.1.1. ECON/POLS/CANA 2415: Wealth and Power in Canada: An Introduction to Political Economy
Moved by A. Card, seconded by J. Sawler, that Senate approve the new course ECON/POLS/CANA 2415. CARRIED.
 - 7.2.6. Changes
 - A. Card presented the following changes for information only.
 - 7.2.6.1. Biology
 - 7.2.6.1.1. New prerequisite and description for BIOL 2205
 - 7.2.6.1.2. New course name, prerequisite and description for BIOL 2222
 - 7.2.6.1.3. New course name and WebAdvisor name for BIOL 2260/PSYC 2260
 - 7.2.6.2. Business and Tourism
 - 7.2.6.2.1. New course name and description for BUSI 2231
 - 7.2.6.3. Mathematics and Statistics
 - 7.2.6.3.1. New description for MATH 2209
 - 7.2.6.3.2. New prerequisite for MATH 2283
 - 7.2.6.3.3. New prerequisite for MATH 2284
 - 7.2.6.3.4. New prerequisite and description for MATH 3303
 - 7.2.6.3.5. New prerequisite and description for MATH 3304
 - 7.2.6.3.6. New prerequisite for MATH 3307
 - 7.2.6.3.7. New prerequisite for MATH 4407
 - 7.2.6.3.8. New short title, prerequisite and description for MATH 3314
- 7.3. Nominations
 - 7.3.1. Nomination for Senate Committee Vacancy
Moved by M. McGonnell, seconded by D. Piccitto, that Senate elect the following faculty member to the indicated committee for the indicated term. CARRIED.

Committee	Nominee	Term Begins	Term Ends
University Research Ethics Board	Dr. Jamie Leach	When elected	30 June 2027

7.4. Research and Publications

7.4.1. Revised Annual Report 2023-2024

J. Gahagan presented the revised 2023-2024 annual report for information, highlighting the changes that were made.

7.5. University Research Ethics Board

7.5.1. Revisions to Terms of Reference, Bylaw 14.13

J. Gahagan brought forward a Notice of Motion for revisions to the Terms of Reference for UREB, Bylaw 14.13.

M. McGonnell asked about an addition under membership and the acronym ORE. J. Gahagan clarified that the acronym refers to the Research Ethics Office and suggested updating it to the more commonly used acronym, RESO.

7.5.2. Revisions to Research Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants, UREB 2012-01

Moved by J. Gahagan, seconded by M. McGonnell, that Senate approve the revisions to UREB 2012-01. CARRIED.

7.5.3. Revisions to Research Ethics Compliance policy, UREB 2012-02

Moved by J. Gahagan, seconded by S. Trenholm, that Senate approve the revisions to UREB 2012-02. CARRIED.

8. Other Reports

8.1. Students' Union

C. Cameron provided updates on several initiatives, including the Standards of Excellence grant for the foodbank and the appointment of a food security policy analyst. They also discussed the upcoming "Safe at Home for the Holidays" campaign, which will offer bursaries to students from rural or remote communities within the province to help them return home for the holidays. Additionally, C. Cameron provided updates on the naloxone-on-campus project.

M. Minocha provided an update on the ongoing food security project, noting that a research supervisor for the assistantship has been confirmed, the grant proposal has been submitted and curriculum for the seminars has been developed. She also mentioned that community activists and academic researchers have been identified and contacted for seminar development. M. Minocha expressed gratitude to P. Joy for his continued support of the project.

S. Kaur reported on her participation in the National Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) in Ottawa, where representatives engaged with parliament and Senators on collective challenges faced by post-secondary students nationwide. She announced her election as the National Graduate Deputy Chairperson for the CFS.

S. Kaur also highlighted several recent events, including workshops for mature and graduate students, graduate student socials, winter orientation and two fundraisers supporting the 2025 Queer Prom.

Additionally, she informed Senators that the “transformation closet” is currently closed due to the ongoing Canada Post strike and will reopen once the strike concludes.

8.2. Strategic Plan Update

J. Dickinson provided an update on the mid-term report for the strategic plan, highlighting the linked document shared with Senators. She also shared that the dashboard to display metrics and initiatives will go live in the new year and will serve as a living document.

9. New Business

9.1. Enrollment Report

L. Francis presented an enrollment update for Fall 2024, noting that comparing year-over-year data has been challenging due to recent IRCC changes and shifting patterns in student engagement with post-secondary education post-COVID.

L. Francis reported that, while the total number of students has increased this year, the number of courses taken per student has declined. She explained that, since COVID, it has become more difficult to predict how many courses each student will enroll in.

Additionally, L. Francis provided an overview of unit and student counts over the past five years, breaking down domestic vs. international student numbers, highlighting the countries from which MSVU students are coming and identifying the countries from which the university receives the most applications. She also briefly addressed conversion rates for specific countries.

J. Bail inquired about the rationale behind the low conversion rate for U.S. applications. L. Francis responded that she was uncertain whether it was a conversion issue, as she did not have data on Fall 2023 application rates, but offered to look up that information and report back.

G. Durepos inquired about the distribution of international students across programs. L. Francis acknowledged that some data is available, but it has not been consistently

reported year over year. She noted that distribution varies by program and that they are monitoring programs potentially at risk due to IRCC changes. L. Francis offered to follow up with a report detailing the distribution by program.

J. Sawler asked how Fall 2024 applications compare to previous years. L. Francis responded that the numbers appear to be similar to those of prior years but highlighted that attendance at Open Campus Day was higher than in previous years and that it is still early in the application process.

9.2. Microcredentials Report

J. Smith III presented on the microcredentials currently being offered at MSVU, including Ready to Lead (R2L), Case Management Fundamentals and SHIFT 2025: Job Search and Interview Readiness. He also discussed proposals for future microcredential topics, such as resources for early childhood educators on supporting neurodiverse learners and EDIA training aimed at post-secondary stakeholders.

Additionally, J. Smith III highlighted ongoing discussions with various MSVU stakeholder groups and outlined key recommendations moving forward, including the establishment of a committee, updating a draft policy and expanding internal communications.

D. Piccitto inquired about the decision-making process for microcredential offerings. J. Smith III explained that programs are developed in collaboration with subject matter experts, with oversight by himself to ensure sound pedagogy and alignment with the NS microcredentials framework. However, senior administration makes the final decisions regarding which programs move forward.

D. Piccitto referenced a photo of a rainbow bow tie in the presentation and asked if there was a 2SLGBTQIA+ component to the SHIFT 2025 program. J. Smith III responded that there is no specific 2SLGBTQIA+ element in the program, explaining that the photo was used in the course on interview readiness and was sourced from the Mount's Flickr account.

D. Piccitto sought clarification on the use of the term "microcredential" to describe what appeared to be professional development courses. With reference to the two main streams for microcredentials—professional development and community support—J. Smith III noted that the term "microcredentials" is used to align with its recognition in government and other sectors.

C. Barker inquired about the credential provided to participants and its basis. J. Smith III explained that the credential is primarily a digital badge via MyCreds, which includes objectives, skills and assessment requirements. He emphasized that the goal is for assessments to be as authentic as possible.

C. Barker also asked about the instructors involved, wondering if they are MSVUFA members, CUPE members or others. J. Smith III clarified that those involved in the development and facilitation of microcredentials are considered independent contractors for these purposes.

Regarding the proposed committee, C. Barker asked if it would be a Senate committee. J. Smith III responded that he is open to it being either a Senate or University committee, with further discussions needed.

J. Gahagan inquired about the inclusion of a research component in the programs and whether such a component could be integrated, particularly in connection with EDIA. They also asked about potential pathways from microcredentials to higher education programs. J. Smith III expressed interest in adding a research component and will follow up with J. Gahagan on this. He also mentioned that he is currently writing a grant proposal to support high school students in navigating the application and scholarship process.

B. Russo inquired about the parameters and evaluation methods for measuring the success of the programs, as well as the sources of the standards. J. Smith III explained that the standards are primarily based on the NS provincial framework for microcredentials, along with standards from Australia and New Zealand, which have been running microcredential programs for a longer period and therefore have a robust framework in place. Regarding success metrics, the evaluation is based on completion rates and participant feedback.

S. Grant requested more information on how professions and competency sets are selected for microcredentials, as well as how experts in those fields are chosen. Additionally, S. Grant sought clarity on who is involved in the topic selection through to the delivery process.

In response, J. Smith III explained that the selection process involves himself, the subject matter expert, development partners, and TLC, who collaborate on topic selection and program development. He noted that part of the selection process is influenced by grant opportunities and input from the Mount community, describing it as somewhat ad hoc at present. Regarding the selection of subject matter experts, J. Smith III emphasized the importance of vetted experience and expertise. He also mentioned that establishing a formal policy would be ideal. S. Grant recommended consulting with colleges or regulators within healthcare settings for further guidance on topic selection.

A. Thurlow inquired about the compensation structure for facilitators, to which J. Smith III responded that payment is funded through grants and is based on a subject matter expert scale.

J. Bail inquired about the resources incorporated into the microcredentials, particularly in the SHIFT 2025 program, and suggested that the library's extensive collection of business and industry resources could be valuable additions to the program.

10. Items for Communication

Senate approved:

- Minutes of October 25, 2024
- Graduate and undergraduate curriculum changes
- A nomination for a Senate-elected committee vacancy
- Revisions to Research Ethics Policy for Research Involving Human Participants, UREB 2012-01
- Revisions to Research Ethics Compliance policy, UREB 2012-02

Senate received for information:

- Undergraduate curriculum changes
- A revised 2023-24 annual report for CRP
- A notice of motion for a revision to Bylaw 14.13
- An enrollment report
- A report on microcredentials

Senators thanked those Senators whose terms are ending: K. Blotnicky, M. J. Harkins and R. Gechtman.

11. Adjournment

Moved by R. Bursey, seconded by B. Russo, that the meeting be adjourned. CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.