

# Senate Minutes

**September 18, 2020  
MS Teams**

The Chair, M. Mkandawire, called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

He began with the acknowledgement that Cape Breton University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people first signed with the British Crown in 1726. The treaties did not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations.

## **1. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum**

### **Present:**

Amar Anwar, Catherine Arseneau, Stephen Augustine, Tanya Brann-Barrett, Debbie Brennick, David Dingwall, Mary Beth Doucette, Emma Drohan, David Gerbasi, Jim Gerrie, Terry Gibbs, Stephanie Gilbert, Jasmine Hoover, Patrick Howard, George Karaphillis, Mary Keating, Geoff Lee-Dadswell, Hayley Langlois, Doug Lionais, Gordon MacInnis, Richard MacKinnon, Bernie MacLennan, Emily MacLeod, John MacMillan, Ryan Magee, Martin Mkandawire, Joe Parish, Andy Parnaby, Rick Pierrynowski, Leigh Potvin, Bill Robinson, Scott Rodney, Harsha Sai Bandari, Tom Joseph Scaria, Manini Sethi, Amrinder Singh, Michael Tanchak, Makayla Townsend, Éric Thériault, Tom Urbaniak, Wendy Wadden, Audrey Walsh, Richard Watuwa, Bilynda Whiting, John Mayich, Terry MacDonald

### **Regrets:**

Pat Bates, Janet Kuhnke, Ann Sylliboy

## **2. Consent Agenda – N/A**

## **3. Confidential Business – N/A**

## **4. Matters to be Considered in Closed Session – N/A**

## **5. Matters Forwarded for Information – N/A**

## **6. Special Presentations – N/A**

## **7. Reports of the President and Vice-President, Academic (Provost)**

President Dingwall welcomed Senators to the new semester and thanked everyone for the efforts put in to the development of the UTP in preparation for the move to online learning. He noted that CBU is currently running an approximate \$16 million revenue shortfall and that he, and other Nova Scotian universities continue to lobby government for funding assistance through a stabilization fund. He provided an update on the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system; Colleague, and that some issues are being experienced with its implementation but that the team is working diligently to address these as they arise. Senators were urged to send any issues they have experienced to Gordon MacInnis as soon as possible. Universities Canada continues to lobby federal government to assist with the situation brought on by the pandemic, in particular, for a one-time intervention to support universities for the loss of international students. He suggested that Senate's Executive Committee should engage with those addressing issues that have risen with respect to advising and wait lists. He also advised that CBU has to begin the process of succession planning, to plan for CBU's future.

In response to how Senate could assist with advising, President Dingwall suggested that Senate's Executive Committee meet with John Mayich to discuss the issue and to develop a plan. M. Mkandawire confirmed that he will take this suggestion, and that in relation to succession plan, to their next meeting of the Executive Committee.

Dr. Richard MacKinnon reported much of his attention has been on the start of the new term. He expressed gratitude to the Dean's and their assistants who worked through a new system to address wait lists. He noted that MPHEC has begun meeting after their summer break and he sits on both the Commission and the QA committee.

M. Keating expressed thanks for the facilitators made available as part of the online delivery system and noted that without them, it would be quite difficult to deliver a quality online course.

In response to a question on the flexibility of the fall payment dates, G. MacInnis noted that there has been no change to the September 30<sup>th</sup> date and that increased communications have been implemented to ensure students are fully aware of the date. A. Singh confirmed that students did get this letter and that was not well received. He asked that this date be made more flexible considering the pandemic situation. In a follow up question on the possibility of a payment plan, G. MacInnis noted that this option is available but that it is the exception, not the norm.

President Dingwall agreed that delays in hiring does create a wait list issue and that every effort to address this issue is being explored. It was further noted that these problems with delays in hiring have been a longstanding issue, which has been made worse by the pandemic

## **8. Question Period**

Currently, 14 Canadian Universities and 259 post-secondary institutions worldwide have signed the UN climate emergency letter. At this time, Cape Breton University has not signed it. Given that CBU is already carbon neutral and has been increasing its selection of sustainability related courses and programs it seems like a very easy choice. Will CBU administration sign this letter?

G. Lee-Dadswell shared a link to the letter referred to in the question. He summarized the letter as one that commits to mobilize resources for more action-orientated climate change research, a firm date to become net zero for carbon emissions, and to increase the delivery of environmental and sustainable

education offerings. He suggested that the letter fits well with what CBU is already doing and suggested it be signed to commit to efforts already underway. President Dingwall provided clarity on the efforts CBU has taken over the years to become carbon neutral. Most recently, by enrolling in the Canada Green Building Council's (CaGBC), Zero Carbon Building program. This not-for-profit, national organization works to advance building and sustainable building practices in Canada. A plan is under development to present to potential partners in such a project and the hope is to have this complete sooner as opposed to later. To respond directly to the question on the letter, President Dingwall said that CBU, at this point, is not inclined to sign the letter until clarity is provided on what resources and financial implications are attached to it. He added that this does not mean CBU would not entertain signing it at another time.

## **9. Approval of the Minutes**

**9.1 It was moved** by, M. Keating, seconded by B. MacLennan, the **approval of the minutes from the June 5, 2020. Motion carried. Abstentions: 6**

**9.2 It was moved** by, M. Keating, seconded by M. Tanchak, the **approval of the minutes from the August 14, 2020. Motion carried. Abstentions: 4**

## **10. Business Arising from the Minutes – N/A**

## **11. Report of the Executive Committee**

D. Brennick reported that the Executive Committee met on September 4<sup>th</sup> to set the agenda for this Senate meeting and the development of a special orientation for new and returning Senators. The Committee also reviewed the Master of Education Sustainability, Creativity and Innovation program now available on the Senate SharePoint. The Committee discussed the shift to online learning for the fall and Phase 2 of the Return to Campus Plan. The Committee continues to complete the committee membership and anyone not currently on a committee is encouraged to contact Debbie Brennick.

## **12. Student's Union Report**

SU President, A. Singh, reported that the Union has been busy planning various online and socially distanced in-person events for the Week of Welcome. The food bank continues to be quite active and continues to assist members with mobile deliveries. The food bank is also providing care to those returning to Cape Breton from outside the Atlantic bubble and having to self-isolate for the 14 days.

## **13. Reports of Other Committees**

**a) Academic Committee** – M. Keating referred to the informational report circulated with the meeting material. She noted the Committee met over the summer to discuss a number of issues; language around Academic Integrity, revisions to the course change form, created a template for minor program changes, and updates to the course proposal template and the hope is to have these items ready for the October meeting of Senate. Also, in October, the M.Ed. (SCI) program proposal will be presented. She advised this proposal was originally approved by Senate in 2014 and was sent to MPHEC but was returned because the Province froze all new Education program proposals,

this freeze has been lifted. Also included were three course change proposals: the pre-requisite for PSYC 2603 has been changed for PSYC 2601 to PSYC 1101 and three additional credits of PSYC at the 1000 level. MIKM 3141 is to be cross-listed with ANTH 3141, and GEOL 3101 will move to a 2000 level and will require no prerequisite.

- b) **TLEC** – G. Lee-Dadswell referred to his informational report circulated with the meeting documents. He highlighted that the Committee is currently analyzing the results of the survey circulated to gain feedback from faculty on the emergency move to online course delivery. The Committee plans to review guidelines for online exam procedures, policies on the use of course evaluations, policy on students involved in teaching-related activities. He also noted that, unfortunately due to the COVID-19 situation, a planned event to celebrate the 2020 recipient of CBU's Instructional Leadership Award was cancelled. He announced that Jason Loxton is this year's recipient and M. Mkandawire noted that a congratulations will be sent to Jason on Senate's behalf.
- c) **Research** – É. Thériault reported that the Committee held their first meeting where he was elected Chair.
- d) **QA** – G. Jerrie referred to the report circulated with the meeting material and noted that the Committee met and he was elected Chair and Debbie Brennick was elected Secretary. He met with the Provost Group to gain feedback for the Committee's review of the Graduate Attributes.
- e) **Bylaws** – C. Arseneau reported that the Committee has not yet met and are awaiting documents from the previous year's Chair.
- f) **P&R** – S. Gilbert reported that the Committee has not yet elected a Chair but have met to discuss their list of activities for the coming year. They will be Preparing mandate letters for Senate committee chairs in response to the to the Academic Plan and they do expect delays in their pre-budget report.

## 15. Board of Governors' Report

B. MacLennan reported that the Board of Governors' met on June 26<sup>th</sup> and three main items were covered: the September Intake Working Group, the Phase 1 Return to Campus Plan, and the presentation, and subsequent, approval of the 2020-21 Budget Proposal. He noted that the next meeting is scheduled for October 23, 2020.

## 16. Adjournment

Before adjournment, M. Mkandawire asked Senators to remain on the call to receive a Senate Orientation. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:12 pm.

**Debbie Brennick**  
**Secretary to Senate**

## **Senate Orientation**

During a previous Senate Retreat, the Executive Committee was assigned the task of presenting an annual orientation for new and returning Senators. T. Urbaniak thanked everyone for taking the time to participate in this orientation. He posed the following questions as those that would be addressed:

1. What is the role of a University Senate?
2. How can an individual senator be effective?
3. Is Senate procedure complicated, and how is on-line procedure different?
4. Why are committees important?
5. How does our work as a Senate tie into the strategic directions of the university?
6. How does Senate benefit from student perspectives?
7. Is there additional information that would assist you with Senate orientation?

Through a PowerPoint presentation, he provided a history on the creation of CBU's Senate and the core responsibilities for Senators. He also detailed procedural motions that most often occur during meetings and how these are actioned. M. Mkandawire added that with the transition to online meetings, the Executive Committee researched best practices for conducting meetings and implemented changes to voting and how to manage those virtually raising their hand and the chat option. S. Gilbert and M. Keating provided input on work of the Planning & Review and Academic Committees, also noted was the importance of all Senate committees.

## **Questions & Comments**

Referring to the final question on any additional information, M. Keating suggested that more widely providing information to non-Senators could allow for better engagement with the entire University.

On the suggestion of Senate adopting a code of conduct or basic principles, T. Urbaniak suggested that the Bylaws & Procedures Committee should explore possible options. C. Arseneau agreed to bring this to the Committee to look at possible options for a healthy and respectful debate policy or principle.