

Senate Minutes

February 26, 2021
MS Teams

The Chair, M. Mkandawire, called the meeting to order at 1:30.

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.

Before beginning the business of Senate, he welcomed Bettina Callary as SASS's replacement Senator.

1. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

Present:

Amar Anwar, Catherine Arseneau, Carol Beaton, Tanya Brann-Barrett, Debbie Brennick, Bettina Callary, David Dingwall, Mary Beth Doucette, Jim Gerrie, Terry Gibbs, Stephanie Gilbert, Jasmine Hoover, Patrick Howard, George Karaphillis, Mary Keating, Janet Kuhnke, Geoff Lee-Dadswell, Doug Lionais, Gordon MacInnis, Richard MacKinnon, Bernie MacLennan, Emily MacLeod, John MacMillan, Ryan Magee, Martin Mkandawire, Joe Parish, Rick Pierrynowski, Bill Robinson, Scott Rodney, Tom Joseph Scaria, Amrinder Singh, Ann Sylliboy, Makayla Townsend, Éric Thériault, Tom Urbaniak, Wendy Wadden, Audrey Walsh, Bilynda Whiting, John Mayich, Terry MacDonald

Regrets:

Stephen Augustine, Harsha Sai Bandari, Courtney Degiobbi, Emma Drohan, David Gerbasi, Mike Hennick, Andy Parnaby, Manini Sethi, Michael Tanchak

2. Consent Agenda

2.1 QA – Information Only

2.2 TLEC – Information Only

3. Matters to be Considered in Closed Session – N/A

4. Confidential Business – N/A

5. Matters Forwarded for Information – N/A

6. Special Presentation

Take Note Debate – Volunteer Advantage Program

T. Urbaniak referred to the report introduced during the January meeting of Senate and to the questions circulated with the meeting material. He explained the proceedings for Take Note Debate, how any necessary follow up will be disseminated, and set a time limit of 20 minutes. He then welcomed discussion on the questions posed in the covering memo of the meeting package:

1. How can a Volunteer Advantage program best advance the strategic directions of the University?
2. How can we ensure that a Volunteer Advantage program is truly a benefit to our region and participating organizations? What kind of mentorship or follow-up may be required?
3. What support structures should be in place? How do we avoid or minimize any risk or harm?
4. What do you see as appropriate and incremental steps to begin offering a Volunteer Advantage program?
5. What is your input on how an expanded co-curricular record might work?
6. What benchmarks and tools should be in place to track progress and impact?
7. What should be Senate's next steps on this issue?

M. Keating expressed support for the initiative and hoped that a meaningful framework for its implementation is developed in order to move forward. She also noted that she believes that a central coordinator is essential to build trust and engagement with the external communities.

T. Gibbs commented that within the framework a deep engagement of listening is most important to ensure both the University and the organizations understand the needs and opportunities each have. She referred to the CBRMs initiative of welcoming presentations from various community groups which may assist the municipality in their strategic planning process and she suggested that a version of this infrastructure could work for the Volunteer Advantage Program at CBU.

C. Aresneau added that she too is support of this effort and how it will add to a student's co-curricular record. She did add caution to rushing the process and overwhelming organizations that may not have the regular staff. She also suggested that a mapping of faculty members working in the communities could also be useful.

R. MacKinnon suggested that targeted pilot projects through the Thompkins Institute, CED Institute and Beaton Institute could be a starting point. M. Keating suggested that a pilot project should include members from external community organizations from both the CBRM and other municipalities.

G. Lee-Dadswell referred to the budgetary implications noted in the report and suggested that, due to the similarities, the lead could be incorporated in to the responsibilities of those managing the placements for the co-op programs. G. Karaphillis added that placement officers also are doing much of the same coordination and the development of the program could also be a capstone project for a group.

At the 20-minute mark, it was agreed to continue the conversation until all those on the speakers list had a chance to comment.

M. Keating suggested that particular attention should be paid to finding out what faculty members allow for voluntary components as part of the class expectations. T. Gibbs echoed this suggestion to ensure we know what relationships are already in place.

In conclusion, T. Urbaniak suggested that if Senators had any further input to please forward them to any member of the Executive Committee and that they would provide feedback and next steps during the next meeting of Senate.

7. Report of the President & Vice-President Academic (Provost)

7.1 Report of the President

President Dingwall thanked Senators for their efforts on Voluntary Advantage Program and looks forward to hearing more on the process. He then provided updates on the following:

- Tuma Young has assumed the position of Vice President of the Nova Scotia Barrister's Society; he is the first indigenous professional to serve in this role, not only Nova Scotia, but in Canada and beyond.
- An application has been made for a Mi'kmaw Chair in Healthy L'nu Communities and he will provide more detail as it become available.
- Ryerson University has been granted funds from the Government of Canada to promote Canadian universities in various countries around the world, and Ryerson has included CBU in this effort.
- The Development Department has been working tirelessly with regards to scholarships; Rhodes Scholarship Fund, the Weston Foundation, and McCall MacBain to name a few.
- Search Committee have been active in the process of finding a new Chief Information Officer, a Dean for Unama'ki College and the process is soon to conclude for the Assistant Director of Facilities Management.
- A Presidential Task Force on Micro-Credentials, with Rod Nicholls appointed as Chair, has been developed and an interim report/recommendation is expected on or before April 19th.
- Facility upgrades continue and many are near completion with others, due to procurement issues, are still in progress. He noted many of the upgrades underway included the residences which were in particular need.
- The Centre for Discovery and Innovation has received many support letters, including those from the CBU's Student's Union, NSGEU members, CUPE members, the Alumni Association of Cape Breton University, as well many local businesses, partner organizations, and stakeholders. Most recently the Chiefs of the Indigenous communities passed a resolution

in support the CDI.

- The terms of reference for the Marshall Institute are near completion and he thanked Stephen Augustine and Andy Parnaby for their contributions.
- With regard to student experience, he noted that he will be meeting to discuss programs and facilities available on campus to enhance recreational opportunities for students.

7.2 Report of the Vice President Academic (Provost)

R. MacKinnon reported that he has been active in several of the hiring committees mentioned by President Dingwall and the recently concluded search for the new Director of Human Resources. He has also been working with others on updates to the collective agreement with regard to indigenous content. He has been meeting regularly on various external boards; Destination Cape Breton, MPHEC and MPHEC's QA Committee. His office is also been in discussions with the Canadian Armed Forces on the 150 anniversary of the Cape Breton Highlanders and the events being planned to celebrate this milestone. He recently he attended a virtual seminar on academic leading.

8. Question Period

Preamble: Regarding the email we received from Sonya Spencer about the updated language for campus closures and online classes. Specifically, the language in question is as follows (quoting): "If the campus is closed, and you are participating in an online course that would have typically happened in person (pre-pandemic), this class should also be cancelled. (This is currently the majority of classes)."

Questions: 1. Why wasn't Senate consulted prior to these policy changes?
2. What consultation processes were followed to make sure that the change in language did not have a negative impact on the way some faculty have already organized their online courses?

Follow-up statement: Lack of consultation and coordination in what is communicated by CBU and instructors undermines our efforts to provide timely, consistent information to our students regarding online courses' expectations and guidelines.

Mr. MacInnis responded that his understanding of the question was if Senate was consulted and if Senate will be consulted in the future. He noted that Senate has not ever weighed in on the campus closure policy closure since his time at CBU, so there was no thought to consult Senate for this reason. He asked that if Senate had any concerns or suggestions, they are most welcomed

Considering that a decision that had to be made in a very short time-frame, G. Lee-Dadswell suggested that it was understandable that time did not allow for Senate to be consulted, but that a procedure needs to be implemented to allow for situations like this, that require Senate's input and eventual approval, be implemented as temporary until Senate has the opportunity to provide a permanent policy/procedure. G. MacInnis responded that this policy has been in place for some time, and that the delivery of online classes was the issue due to the

complicated environment CBU is currently experiencing. He would welcome and appreciate any input Senators may have on how to best include online teaching in to the policy. S. Rodney fully supported G. Lee-Dadswell's comments and suggestions and he also suggested that Senate's Executive Committee should develop an evaluation of sorts to determine a policy's academic merit.

9. Approval of the Minutes

It was moved by É. Thériault, seconded by G. MacInnis, **the approval of the revised minutes from December 11, 2020. Motion carried. Abstentions: 3**

It was moved by M. Keating, seconded by G. Karaphillis, **the approval of the regular and confidential minutes of the January 22, 2021 meeting. Motion carried. Abstentions: 2**

10. Business Arising from the Minutes – N/A

11. Report of the Executive Committee

D. Brennick reported that the Executive Committee met on February 12th to set the agenda for this Senate meeting. The Committee also discussed the roles of Senate member on the Board of Governors' and decided to request a meeting of the Chair and Vice Chair of both bodies for a collaborative discussion. It was also mentioned, that when gathering restrictions are lifted, that the informal practice of a gather of both bodies be re-implemented. The Committee also discussed additional supports for new committee chairs and suggested that chairs may consider implementing the support of a co-chair as the Planning & Review Committee has done.

It was moved by D. Brennick, seconded by M. Keating, **that the Planning and Review's Committee's utilization of a co-chair be conducted as a pilot to determine the effectiveness of having a co-chair in addition to a chair on Senate committees and be acknowledged as a strategy to support the committees of Senate, and that a framework be developed during this process.** It was noted that it is not necessary for this co-chair to be a Senator. For clarification, it was noted that committees are not obligated to implement a co-chair if they do not feel it is necessary. S. Gilbert noted that being new to Senate last year, and being a committee chair, it was quite difficult to continue the work of P&R but with the assistance and knowledge of G. Carre and the use of him as a co-chair, the process has been much better this year. On the question of who could fill this position, it was determined that like that of a Chair, anyone in administration would not be eligible to fill this position. **Motion carried.**

12. Students' Union Report

A. Singh reported that the general elections have concluded and a new President and Vice President will begin their terms on May 1st and they have begun their transition plan to ensure a

smooth changeover. New staff has been hired for the front desk of the New Dawn location to assist students and extend hours. R. Magee added that honors certificates will be distributed and will be mailed to those not in the local area and a video has been produced to acknowledge student academic successes. M. Keating recognized the Union for their proactive approach on what has been an unusual and complicated year, which was echoed by many others.

13. Reports of Other Committees of Senate

13.1 Planning & Review

Referring to the report as circulated with the meeting package, S. Gilbert presented the Pre-Budget Report. She detailed each of the recommendations as they were presented.

Recommendation 1: It was moved, by S. Gilbert, seconded by T. Gibbs, that **CBU should invest in a needs assessment of mental health supports on campus, including usage data, an examination of the potential barriers to access, and whether current services meet student needs, and a larger wellness and mental health promotion strategy should be developed in consultation with current mental health providers and the Mental Health Advocacy Committee.** M. Keating suggested that going forward, ICA and part-time staff should be considered as they are groups that are often overlooked.
Motion carried

Recommendation 2: It was moved, by S. Gilbert, seconded by A. Singh, that **CBU should allocate staff time and resources to initiate annual student surveys as a joint initiative of Student Affairs and CBUSU.** **Motion carried.**

Recommendation 3: It was moved, by S. Gilbert, seconded by J. Parish, that **Senate endorses the report "Cultivating a Culture of Academic Integrity: Final Report of the President's Taskforce on Academic Integrity" and recommends that the next budget includes the necessary investment to see that the recommendations are carried out.** **Motion carried.**

Recommendation 4: It was moved, by S. Gilbert, seconded by R. MacKinnon, that the **CBU Senate endorse administration's efforts to attain a new research and teaching facility (Centre for Discovery and Innovation), particularly in light of the constructive impact it would have on our academic endeavors.** Members discussed that although the proposed CDI is not intended to be a science building as requested in a previous pre-budget report, but rather an enhanced multi-use space. **Motion carried.**

Recommendation 5: It was moved, by S. Gilbert, seconded by D. Lionais, that **CBU adopt a transparent reporting framework (AASHE STARS), to measure our performance on post-secondary sustainability initiatives as they compare to similar institutions, in order to provide a framework for future action.** On the question of what other universities have signed on to the program, S. Gilbert responded that Dalhousie, St. Mary's, Acadia as well as NSCC has signed on. On the questions if STARS, or others like it, include some review of impact of investments on environment and if not, could they be added

in the future, S. Gilbert responded that credits are provided for actions that fall outside the main groupings and this may fall in there. **Motion carried.**

Recommendation 6: It was moved, by S. Gilbert, seconded by J. Kuhnke, that **Senate encourages CBU to make investments towards identifying and overcoming barriers to communication with students, such as the nature of student email addresses, as part of a strategy to improve digital communications.** S. Rodney and M. Keating offered support for this motion adding that personalizing student email address would give a sense of belonging to the student rather than being a number. **Motion carried.**

Recommendation 7: It was moved, by S. Gilbert, seconded by M. Keating, **that in the 2021 fiscal year, CBU continues to dedicate resources and prioritize the development of an Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework.** On the question of why there were two committee members who voted against the motions, S. Gilbert responded that the general feeling was that the wording of the motion may not be fully represent what is being recommended. **Motion carried.**

Recommendation 8: It was moved, by S. Gilbert, seconded by T. Gibbs, **that a budgetary commitment should be made to provide the resources and fuel the initiative required to revitalize the Mi'kmaq Studies program.** S. Rodney questioned the need for this motion suggesting this is an action that has to be taken and not one that should be an ask. M. Keating responded that the motion is more complex than hiring staff but is a larger process and will required a detailed approach. Concerns were also expressed with the lack of faculty in Mi'kmaq Studies and that recent searches revealed no viable candidates for various positions. **Motion carried.**

G. Lee-Dadswell referred to recommendation five with regard to STARS, was suggested in last year's pre-budget report and requested that Senate be presented with a follow up on all the recommendations with a clear indication as to why a recommendation may not be implemented, especially if it is not the first time the request has been made. G. MacInnis responded that generally, administration typically produces a response to the recommendations and this will occur again this year. He also added, that with respect to STARS, President Dingwall did provide information on this in a previous meeting.

13.2 Academic

M. Keating referred to the report circulated with the meeting material.

Items for Information:

- 2020 NSCC-CBU ACC Agreement
- Holland College Articulation Agreement
- Minor course change items: EDUC5101, 5103, 5105, 5107
- Minor course change items: FRNC 2101, 2103, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 3324, 3343, 3403

Recommendations:

It was moved by M. Keating, seconded by D. Brennick, that Senate approve the **new course proposal NRSCXXXX: Applied Quantitative Research** as presented. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by M. Keating, seconded by P. Howard, that Senate approve the **new course proposal NRSCXXXX: Applied Qualitative Research** as presented. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by M. Keating, seconded by R. Pierrynowski, that Senate approve the **terms for Advanced Standing in the BET Chemistry** program as presented. S. Rodney suggested that CBU must make a concerted effort to evaluate, year-to-year, how students are moving based on the transfer credits they have received and based on this evaluation that adjustments on criteria be made if necessary to ensure student success. M. Keating responded that this evaluation is intended and does occur in other departments as well, to which S. Rodney responded that a yearly data analysis would be more beneficial to all programs and the students. **Motion carried.**

13.3 Bylaws

MB. Doucette referred to the report circulated with the meeting material. **It was moved** by MB Doucette, seconded by C. Arseneau, that Senate approve the **Guidelines for Departments in the Development of Bylaws** as presented. **Motion carried.**

13.4 Research

É. Thériault referred to the informational report circulated with the meeting material and noted there was nothing more to add.

14. Board of Governors' Report – N/A

15. Adjournment

There being no further business, **it was moved** by É. Thériault, to **adjourn the meeting** at 4:01 pm.

**Debbie Brennick
Secretary to Senate**