

Senate Minutes

January 13, 2022
CE339 / MS Teams

The Vice Chair, E. Robertson, called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

1. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum and Land Acknowledgement

The Vice Chair 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.

Present:

Catherine Arseneau, Sahand Ashtab, Carol Beaton, Tanya Brann-Barrett, Danielle Boudreau, Geoff Carre, Mary Beth Doucette, Philip Eappen, Ayse Ersoy, David Gerbasi, Michael Henick, Jasmine Hoover, Patrick Howard, Himali Kadam, Harkanwal Kaur, Mary Keating, Janet Kuhnke, Carolin Kreber, Kimberley Lamarche, Doug Lionais, Jason Loxton, Gordon MacInnis, Richard MacKinnon, John MacMillan, John Nadeau, Mandy Nguyen, Felix Odarety-Wellington, Marcia Ostashewski, Peter Oyedijo, Natalia Parsons, Andy Parnaby, Rick Pierrynowski, Michelle Prendergast, Erin Robertson, Karen Rowe, Damanpreet Singh, Samarjeet Singh, Chloe Stewart, Ann Sylliboy, Laurianne Sylvester, J. Tunnicliff, É. Thériault, T. Urbaniak, B. Whiting, T. MacDonald, J. Mayich

Regrets:

Nofisat Banjo-Saibu, David Dingwall, Jan Hancock, Samantha Hodder, Katherine Jones, Karen Kennedy, Hanah Lewis

Before proceeding, E. Robertson welcomed Geoff Carre, who is serving for six-months an SST replacement.

Secondly, she noted that CBU has suffered the loss of several individuals over the past few weeks, including the tragic loss of a CBU student, Rajesh Kumar. Senators then joined in a moment of silence to mourn the losses.

2. Pre-Budget Recommendations

E. Robertson introduced the meeting's only agenda item: the Pre-Budget Report from the Planning and Review Committee. She referred to the document circulated in advance of the meeting. She noted that if adopted by Senate, it becomes Senate's submission into the budget

process for the consideration by the Budget Advisory Committee.

J. MacMillan then gave members a detailed overview of the process and referred to the resulting report with 13 recommendations for consideration.

Motion 1: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by C. Arseneau, that **Cape Breton University provide investment to support and provide mobile computer lab(s) on campus.**

This recommendation was further explained as access to computers for teaching and examinations becoming challenging due to the heavy use of existing computer labs and that outfitting mobile carts, housed and signed out from the library, could meet short-term needs.

On the question of the availability of the proposed carts, Mr. MacMillan confirmed they would be intended for the entire university and not just the example in the proposal. It was also suggested that in addition to the one-time cost associated with the carts updating and technical support would be a longer-term investment that would be required.

Motion carried.

Motion 2: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by L. Sylvester, that **Indigenous Elders, Traditional Teachers, and Knowledge Holders should have a vital presence and a meaningful role at CBU, a fund must be created to support their contributions for the purposes of engaging Indigenous knowledges in holistic participation, in educational practices, and for their expert advice and guidance towards policy development, institutional practices, and other initiatives.**

This motion was further detailed as supporting the strategic goal of Indigenizing the L'nu Way and aligning with the Strategic Enrolment Plan. Many comments were offered in support of this motion as well as expressions of appreciation.

On the suggestion of motions being broad and possibly requiring a more detailed proposal with approximate expenses associated with the suggestion, J. MacMillan responded that the committee is not charged with identifying the costs of the recommendations but rather the principle of the suggestion and priorities. The costs associated with the recommendations are presented to the Budget Advisory Committee and are decided, at that level, if they are financially feasible.

Motion carried.

Motion 3: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by C. Arseneau, that **Cape Breton University commit to investments in infrastructure to increase and improve the space for offices, classrooms and labs, Student Services and the Library and Cultural Resources services to better accommodate the growing student population.**

A friendly amendment was accepted to include Cultural Resources with the Library to ensure the Beaton Institute and the Art Gallery are included in the recommendation.

This recommendation was supported by referencing 2.5 of the Academic Plan, which calls for inspiring teaching and student learning by improving teaching, learning, and common spaces holistically and deliberately. The spaces on campus must meet the needs of our students, faculty and staff based on the level of students expected from the strategic enrolment plan. As the University continues to grow, it has created a need for increased and improved space in many areas of the campus.

It was clarified that the committee's proposal of the dual mode technologies is suggested as any new upgrades are initiated, this technology be included. It was noted that from a student's perspective, the recommendation of updates to the library is much needed with the growth in the student population and the demand for library services.

It was also highlighted that broader consultation with the end users and the Centre for Teaching and Learning is encouraged to ensure that the equipment and tools are adequate to support the learning outcomes and pedagogical practices of end users.

Motion carried.

Motion 4: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by P. Oyedijo, **that Cape Breton University continue to work on securing funding for the development of the new Centre for Discovery and Innovation.**

For further clarification, J. MacMillan noted that this recommendation is the committee's attempt to ensure that support for the Centre for Discovery and Innovation remains a focus as it will address long-term issues concerning space and storage and that the origins of the funding was not of concern just that the file remains active. With an emphasis being placed on the fact that the funding ought to be external, **it was moved** by J. Loxton, seconded by E. Thériault, that the motion be revised to include "**external** funding". **Motion defeated.**

Original motion carried.

Motion 5: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by T. Brann-Barrett, **that Cape Breton University continue to work on improving the accessibility of the campus for students, faculty and staff.**

Motion carried.

Motion 6: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by C. Arseneau, **that Cape Breton University should provide funding for renovations to the Boardmore Theatre.**

Motion carried.

Motion 7: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by M Henick, **that Cape Breton University invest in the tools and equipment needed to: modernize our general teaching spaces, support and promote experiential learning, enhance digital technology capabilities, support the CBU creative arts strategy and satisfy the accreditation and regulatory burden for certain programs.**

This recommendation was detailed as the need for the quality and safety of the tools and equipment in CBU's teaching, learning and research environments and how this attracts and retains students and staff and enhances the reputational capital of the programs and the University at large. These learning environments include but are not limited to all teaching and research spaces, including creative and performance arts and recreational areas. Some programs require investment to modernize and update the technology and equipment utilized in their programs. Other programs require additional tools to accommodate the rapid growth and course offerings in certain areas. Investment in tools and equipment allows CBU to provide our students, faculty, and community members with opportunities to participate in world-class learning and research. Consideration should be given, but not limited to, accreditation and regulatory requirements, general teaching space upgrades, digital tools and equipment, creative arts, experiential learning equipment, and library databases.

It was clarified that the committee did not pick specific requests from any individual or department; instead, the spirit or theme of the asks were grouped together to keep the recommendations as broad as possible.

Motion carried.

Motion 8: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by C. Arseneau, **that Cape Breton University provide further investment to explore the development of a new digital lending platform or options to enhance and expand the existing digital lending platforms used in the library to create an institutional "library of things."**

Motion carried.

Motion 9: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by F. Odarety-Wellington, **that Cape Breton University continue to invest funding for programs in the areas of student housing support and transportation services.**

J. MacMillan noted that since 2018 enrollment at CBU has increased year over year and that this population increase has expanded the CBU community, and our students now live and participate in many communities within the CBRM. This has increased demand for the existing housing market and public transportation services. The addition of the Cineplex Campus, and George St., office locations has created additional challenges for some students. These concerns have also been shared by staff, students, community members and stakeholders. With the implementation of the CBU Strategic Enrollment Plan, an ambitious plan for further campus expansion and continued enrollment growth, it is imperative that CBU continues to commit resources and attention.

Many comments and opinions were offered to support this recommendation, and the **motion was carried.**

Motion 10: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by F. Odarety-Wellington, **that Cape Breton University commit resources for revising existing processes to provide access and additional opportunities for scholarships and bursaries for international students.**

J. MacMillan noted that CBU has a large population of international students and that current practices limit or exclude international students from being eligible to apply for certain scholarships, which has been described as an equity or fairness concern. In addition, many international students are required to attend classes in the Spring/Summer sessions to complete their Post Baccalaureate and are not eligible to apply for in-course bursaries, unlike the Fall and Winter Semesters.

It was echoed from an international students' perspective that those who must attend Spring/Summer sessions are unfairly disadvantaged with regard to scholarships and bursaries.

Motion carried.

Motion 11: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by É. Thériault, **that Cape Breton University develop a retirement policy that serves the interests of retired faculty, librarians, and staff, as well as the goals of the institution itself.**

The benefits of a retirement policy for CBU were described as a strategy to help the institution to open the way for new faculty positions and harness retiree experience for academic work, volunteer service, community outreach, mentoring, institutional history, fund-raising, and more. CBU consistently supports alumni with an Alumni Office, communications, and events; retirees, like alumni, are committed to their universities, having served on campus sometimes up to 50 years; and they are frequently significant donors and goodwill ambassadors for their institutions.

C. Arseneau suggested that in the development of this policy, that the Emeritus Policy ought to be cross-referenced to ensure no conflicts are created in the development of this policy.

Motion carried.

Motion 12: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by P. Oyedijo, **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.**

J. MacMillan added that this recommendation is in response environmental sustainability being a growing priority for post-secondary institutions all over the world. Many have developed strong operational sustainability goals and targets and are giving increasing emphasis to teaching and research on sustainability issues. Some have committed at the executive level to integrating academic and operational sustainability in the context of treating their campus as a living laboratory of sustainable practice, research, and teaching. The issue is not just about achieving carbon-zero emissions, it is also about adaptation and mitigation. In a previous pre-budget recommendation, a recommendation was made to operationalize sustainability and "that CBU develop a plan, a systematic approach, to foster synergistic relationships and collaborative projects among various elements of the University working towards a long-term commitment to sustainability, recognizing that these efforts offer long-term social, environmental, financial and health returns." There has been little evidence of a systematic move in this direction, perhaps because of other challenges that we are facing and the enormity of the task.

It has been stated that CBU is among the national leaders in the post-secondary education sector regarding sustainability practices. It was suggested that CBU should start with an independent assessment of how we compare with other universities. Should we 'score' as a national leader, then our promotional material would have strong backing. Should we not fare so well, we would have significant feedback on where we need to put our efforts – a guide toward operationalizing sustainability, to that end the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS) was recommended. Although a commitment to use STARS is significant, the committee feels it is outweighed by the challenges faced with addressing the world's ecological and climate status today.

Motion carried. Nays: 1 Abstentions: 1

Motion 13: It was moved by J. MacMillan, seconded by P. Oyedijo, **that Cape Breton University commit to funding an Online Invigilation Coordinator for programs that deliver online and dual-mode courses.**

J. MacMillan detailed that on-campus courses resumed in 2021, but most, if not all, academic schools continued to offer online courses and began developing dual-mode courses. There is a

long list of majors that fall under this category. While some students enrolled in the online and dual mode courses are physically located in the CBRM, some are living in other parts of the country, and some are international students. Others live in the CBRM but cannot attend classes on campus due to employment demands, childcare responsibilities, or transportation barriers. Demand for online and dual-mode courses in these programs is steadily increasing and with this increase comes the need for an online invigilation coordinator to ensure academic integrity and quality.

After a fulsome discussion with support for the motion and varying recommendations, it was recognized that the solution may not be exactly as suggested but by drawing attention to the issue emphasises the need to address it.

Motion carried.

3. Adjournment

There being no further business, **it was moved by** M. Henick seconded by P. Oyedijo, to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 pm. **Motion carried.**

Jasmine Hoover
Secretary to Senate