Senate

Minutes

**February 16, 2024**

**CE339**

The Chair, C. Kreber, called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

**1. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum and Land Acknowledgement**

The Chair advised that the quorum has been met and began with the Land Acknowledgement.

**Present:**

Catherine Arseneau, Sahand Ashtab, Tammy Bernasky, Tanya Brann-Barrett, Danielle Boudreau, Colton Burke, Martin Chandler, Sahilpreet Singh Chatha, David Dingwall, Mary Beth Doucette, Phillip Eappen, Ayse Ersoy, Kylie Ewing, Virginia Gunn, Jan Hancock, Michael Henick, Samantha Hodder, Harkanwal Kaur, Karen Kennedy, Carolin Kreber, Janet Kuhnke, Tracy Lillington, Brandi Jean Lind, Doug Lionais, Jason Loxton, Ellyn Lyle, Gordon MacInnis, John Nadeau, Rod Nicholls, Felix Odartey-Wellington, Gideon Otoibhi, Joe Parish, Andy Parnaby, Michelle Prendergast, Erin Robertson, Nancy Spina, Éric Thériault, Jamie Tunnicliff, Terry MacDonald, John Mayich

**Regrets:**

Hamid Andishan, Melissa Bishop, Sean Campbell, Paula Condon, Harmanjot Singh Ghuman, Carrie Karsgaard, Kimberley Lamarche, Hannah Lewis, Laurianne Sylvester, Stephanie MacQuarrie, Folorunsho Oduloye, Karen Rowe, Juveriya Samreen, Viviana Paz Contreras Venegas, Bilynda Whiting

**Items for Information**

C. Kreber extended her sympathies to Tom Urbaniak, professor of political science and university parliamentarian, for the recent loss of his wife and father within the same week. A moment of silence was observed to acknowledge the condolences extended to him and his family.

She thanked Terry MacDonald, Assistant Academic Director and Lead Educational Developer with the Center for Teaching and Learning and a regular member of TLEC, who offered to serve as the Chair of TLEC until June.

She advised that the Senate Executive Committee has been exploring the possibility of a Senate retreat at some point this year which would principally address EDID, but as a secondary theme could also consider how to make participation in Senate and Senate committees a more desirable undertaking for colleagues and a more productive one for everyone at the institution.

**2. Consent Agenda**

**3. Reports and Items for Information**

**3.1 President**

President Dingwall provided updates on the following:

In December it was announced that the GIC on deposit required for international students would rise from $10,000 to $20,635 and that there would be a temporary suspension of the 20-hour-per-week students can work off campus until April 30, 2024.

On January 21, IRCC announced a cap on international student visas and applications, excluding master’s and doctoral degrees. During this announcement, they also stated that there would be additional changes to the work permit rules.

On February 2, the Province of Nova Scotia announced that it would enter into bilateral agreements for 2024-25 with the province's 10 universities. Some highlights in this announcement included:

* a two percent cap on tuition increases for all Nova Scotian undergraduate students
* a requirement to fill health program seats to an average enrolment rate of at least 97 percent
* a requirement for institutions to develop international student sustainability plans outlining how these students will be recruited, housed, and connected to the labour market
* a requirement for universities in the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality to begin to increase student housing. Dalhousie was assigned 200 beds and CBU 300 beds.
* a requirement for institutions to work together to develop an inter-university plan to reduce administrative expenses by a minimum of five percent.
* a minimum tuition increase of 9 percent for first-year international undergraduate student

He advised that CBU is working diligently to prepare for the impact of these announcements as details from the government are still sparse. He advised that he had issued a news release in response to the announcement on behalf of the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP) noting his surprise since no consultation had taken place.

He explained that the full effect of this announcement is unknown until Nova Scotia receives its allocation of application and shares it with the sector but we are expecting a budgetary impact as soon as the 2024/25 budget and that our SEM goals could be challenged due do our lower-than-average conversion rate. The national average is 66%, CBU is around 30 percent.

Mr. Dingwall advised that he agrees with the recommendation by the Vice President Academic that a special Senate meeting be scheduled once all of the relevant information has been received.

Work continues on the Tartan Down’s project and he informed senate that a Letter of Intent has been received from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, indicating potential funding for CBU pending the submission of Class B estimates for the project. Collaboration with the CBRM is ongoing, and an announcement from the Minister of Housing is anticipated regarding the allocation of funds from the Housing Accelerator Fund, which is expected to contribute to the funding of the Tartan Down’s project.

Earlier this week, the Urban Neighborhood Development Association met for a board meeting and passed a motion that no decision has been made on whether or not to move forward with the project until they know more information, such as the interest rate and the forgivable portion including the funding from the CBRM.

Since returning in January, he has been meeting with the schools and other departments to discuss the strategic plan renewal and to hear priorities. These meetings are progressing well and he hopes to have all meetings completed by mid-March.

CBU has successfully registered for the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). The application registration provides CBU access to the STARS reporting tool which includes the ability to document management's sustainability information and earn public recognition as a STARS reporter which has been suggested by members of CBU faculty.

The changes to the Bachelor of Education program were announced last week at the Nova Scotia Progressive Conservative Party’s AGM. None of the Deans in the various education departments nor the Presidents were aware of these changes before they were announced. No consultation was done in advance of these changes and we have not heard from the Department of Advanced Education in terms of what it actually means.

After the President’s Report, Senators discussed the following:

* The 9% tuition increase and working towards the goal of increasing financial aid for international students.
* The timeframe and allocation of International students to Nova Scotia is unknown
* Conversion rates
* Weather, cancellations, and transportation

**3.2 Vice President Academic and Provost**

R. Nicholls reported on the following:

* Weather cancellations continue to interfere with university events. In certain cases, and under specific conditions, it’s almost impossible to make the “right decision” and even established guidelines are difficult to apply. He expressed his appreciation for the accommodations and improvising by everyone affected and briefly discussed the suggestions to establish a “quick shift” policy whereby in-person courses immediately go online when weather or related events cause the campus to close.
* He has been meeting with academic budget managers to discuss the status of academic-oriented budget requests. While the decision has been made to present the 2024/2025 budget at the Board’s April meeting – not March as originally intended – He recognizes that certain items are time-sensitive and will be dealt with accordingly.
* He consulted with the Dean of Education and Health on the progression of students in the January start 8-month accelerated BEd program and can confirm that they are successfully meeting the rather strict MPHEC conditions of approval conveyed to CBU in December. He discussed the announcement by the Province a week ago that Nova Scotia was establishing a process whereby students could enter a BEd program after two years of undergraduate study. There are a lot of unknowns but the Dean will be closely monitoring developments and will eventually be able to draw conclusions as to if, when, or how CBU’s BEd program will be affected.
* He is continuing to work with the Dean of Nursing, HR, and the VP of Finance on the mechanics of CBU’s satellite nursing program at Acadia and also consulting with CBUFA on transitional details.
* The Bras d’Dor Institute will continue to exist and he has been having ongoing discussions with the SST Dean and several faculty members about an updated, reimagined role for the BDI.
* The SEM plan contains a goal of increasing the number of domestic students in online programs by 4% by 2027. MPHEC has changed its regulations concerning online programs since things have changed over the course of the pandemic when many faculty members switched to online delivery and for various reasons, people continue to take online courses. MPHEC indicated that if a program is going to be delivered online, the institution would have to submit a modification of the program submission to MPHEC. He advised that a good strategy would be to reduce the overall number of online courses but to focus on programs, which are largely delivered or exclusively delivered online. He noted that pilot projects were being starting which would be a good example of how this can be done.

After the report, Senators discussed the following:

* The timeframe and process involved for the number of student visas and allocation to CBU?
* What CBU’s International partners are saying
* Conversion rates
* CBU’s policy and the decision that was made to send correspondence in regards to students not being penalized if they don’t attend class due to bad weather and lack of transportation.

*\*The Student Union Report was provided at this point in the meeting*

**3.4 Students' Union**

S. Sahilpreet Singh Chatha presented the Students’ Union Report highlighted the following:

**Town Hall:**

Last week in January, the executive team participated in a town hall meeting. They addressed four key agendas to connect with the student body, informing them about activities in the student union and actively seeking their input. During the session, students voiced their concerns, fostering a mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities within the union.

**Events:**

Scheduled events for the semester at the centers have been impacted by the recent snowstorm, leading to the need for rescheduled dates. They have communicated these changes to the students.

**Upcoming events**

**Academic:**

Next month, Gideon is scheduled to meet with Jasmine Hoover from the CBU library to explore ways of enhancing awareness of AtlanticOER at CBU, both among students and faculty.

**CBU Multicultural Celebration:**

As the chair of a multicultural celebration, Gideon reported that the committee is making headway with the festival's planning. $37,000.00 was approved by the student union executive and further approved by the students' union representative council to ensure a well-coordinated event and their plans to implement a 5-day meal plan with the cultural celebration. The event is for students CBU staff and for the community.

S. Chatha expressed the concerns heard from students at the townhall about the announcement from the Province in regards to student caps and tuition fees.

**3.3 Unama'ki College**

Rod Nicholls provided the following update:

**Community Engagement Lead** - The hiring process is still taking place with a few interviews rescheduled due to weather. We are expecting the new hire to start by April 1.

**Scholarships/Bursaries**- One of the Indigenous Nursing students received the Sisters of St. Martha Scholarship in honor of Sister Veronica Matthews from Eskasoni. Joseph Oleson received a 10K renewable scholarship. Joseph is from Wagmatcook First Nation.

Jamey Toney-Gagne’ received the Rose Nolan Scholarship of 5K. Jamey is from Eskasoni First Nation and is also an active member of the Student Union as the Indigenous representative for the Ekkian Room.

**Second Cohort for Nursing Program**- An information session will be held in March. This cohort will begin in September.

**3.5 Board of Governors N/A**

**3.6 Executive Committee**

E. Robertson provided an update from the Executive Committee.

The Senate Executive Committee met on February 2nd to plan the agenda for the February 16th Senate meeting and discuss additional topics. She noted that the recommendations put forth by the Senate SEM subcommittee were well received and Dr. Rod Nicholls, Vice-President Academic is now coordinating with various units to carry out actions to make advising more efficient and effective.

Discussed updates on the need to fill the TLEC chair position and a broader discussion emerged around ongoing difficulties recruiting faculty members for service positions including Senate.

Complications around short-term ICA contracts in relation to the timing of the appeal process was discussed. The appeals process for fall courses extends well into the winter semester and complications can arise when ICAs who taught the fall course are no longer employed by the university. Further discussions with the appeals committee and Registrar’s Office were suggested.

Last summer Dr. Eric Theriault, secretary of Senate, mentored and supervised a work study student to conduct a review on the structure of Senate at comparable universities across the country and how they are integrating the principles of EDID into Senate. The student put a great deal of time into preparing this thorough document.

Approaches that Senate could take to infuse EDIAD across the university and an idea put forth by the Bylaws and Procedures Committee in the past about having a Senate retreat and how this might be a good opportunity to delve deeper into Senate’s relation with EDIAD. It was suggested that an ad hoc group be developed to plan and carry out the retreat.

Following the update, G. Otoibhi brought up concerns from the students regarding an unfavourable timeline with the appeal process as well as a lack of communication.

Dean Parnaby explained that what is being seen is that some students are not articulating the grounds for the appeal and that the policy is clear. He advised that it has to be to carelessness, discrimination or violation of university policy and that disappointment with a grade is not grounds for an appeal through the official channel. It is however grounds for collegial engagement with the professor's possibly assistant or associate dean for a review of materials that have been submitted.

President Dingwall raised a Point of Order, highlighting the university's successful fundraising efforts. He recently attended CONSUP meetings in Halifax and met with a potential donor he has been working based in Ontario. At their request, the university pitched a project focusing on the medical school, with hopes of securing a substantial donation ranging from $500,000 to $1 million.

The presentation was well-received, and the return on investment was impressive, garnering a donation of $5 million. Additionally, there was a suggestion from the donor of exploring matching funds from other potential donors to further bolster the campaign. President Dingwall expressed enthusiasm for this idea, stating that if matching funds are secured, the initial donor would increase their contribution by an additional $2 million.

1. **Approval of Minutes from:**

* Senate Minutes – January 19, 2024

**It was moved** by E. Lyle, seconded by A. Ersoy, to approve the Senate meeting minutes from January 19, 2024. **Motion Carried**. **(2 abstention)**

**5. Business Arising from Minutes – N/A**

**6. Report from Senate Committees**

**6.1 Planning and Review**

V. Gunn advised that the planning and Review Committee reviewed their Terms of Reference to identify other activities that they should prioritize. They decided to start with the Academic Plan concentrating on finding areas that still need attention, either because the plans aren’t implemented consistently across schools or that there are some directives that they did not have a chance to complete yet.

**6.2** **Teaching, Learning, and Evaluation**

T. MacDonald advised that a subcommittee will be looking at nominations for the Instructional Leadership Awards set to happen in the next week and that the Committee will have a full report at the next Senate meeting.

**6.3 Academic Committee:**

J. Parish advised that the Academic Committee had no formal report but have met twice since the last Senate meeting. They are currently planning on reviewing the Exam Policy in detail at their next meeting and they will be bringing a new course proposal to the next meeting of Senate for consideration.

He presented a draft document from the Registrar's office regarding changes to the end of semester for informational purposes, so that Senators are aware of the changes to the dates of the semester. He also noted that this situation prompted a discussion at their meeting this morning and they intend to bring points of discussion to the planned retreat around a future plan regarding winter semester.

**6.4 By-Laws and Procedures**

A. Ersoy provided a report on the following work of the Committee:

They will be discussing the organization of a retreat for Senate in order to find ways and strategies to solicit Senate’s membership to actively engage members and hopefully to tackle API issues and some other issues that we have discussed.

The Committee is in the process of receiving revised bylaws from the newly formulated departments in the Shannon School of Business.

They have consulted with the resources in the library in terms of how to come up with a unique system for documents, archiving or documents repository. They have some preliminary ideas and will be planning on formally presenting to Senate in the near future.

Following the report, Senators discussed the Senate approve templates and the need for a standard template for Department bylaws.

**6.5 Quality Assurance**

S. Ashtab provided an update from the Quality Assurance Committee and advised that they received the Bachelor of Science Quality Assurance Review Report, He noted that internal and external reviewers have been confirmed and that the candidate has been identified. This will be discussed with the QA committee members at their next meeting after reading week.

**6.6** **Research**

J. Hancock provided an update from the Research Committee and advised that the Committee met yesterday where they discussed the SSHRC Impact awards. They have 3 nominations and 2 awards. They made a decision and sent the recommendations to the VPA. They were approached by ORGS to take on the internal process of reviewing applicants for this year. CBU has not been making applications to the SSHRC awards for the last few years and do not have a formal policy for the Research Committee to use to assess the applications.

The Research Committee has accepted the task of adjudicating nominations and making recommendations for SSHRC Impact awards from amongst CBU faculty.

**It was moved** by J. Hancock, to adopt the internal SSHRC Impact Policy to adjudicate nominations and make recommendations for SSHRC Impact awards from amongst CBU faculty. **Motion Carried**.

The Research Committee of the Senate has discussed how to better integrate EDID considerations into its award deliberations.

**It was moved** by J. Hancock that Senate adopt the EDID Policy in order to formally accommodate interruptions in career / research activities in its deliberations of all awards it is asked to adjudicate.

T. Brann Barrett discussed the process of the adjudication process for the awards and a friendly amendment to the motion was made by C. Arseneau to incorporate the use of Freedom of Information within the Policy.

**Motion Carried**.

It was suggested that there is a role for the Research Committee to look at student research as well and how CBU is promoting opportunities for students.

Prior to adjournment, it was advised that Senate would be notified if a special Senate meeting is required.

**7. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:16 p.m.

**Éric Thériault**

**Secretary to Senate**