

Senate Minutes

December 13, 2024
CE339

The Chair, F. Odartey-Wellington, called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

1. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum and Land Acknowledgement

The 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:

Harsimran Kaur Antaal, Catherine Arseneau, Tammy Bernasky, Matthias Bierenstiel, Melissa Bishop, Tanya Brann-Barrett, Karen Butterworth, Linda Cavanaugh, Martin Chandler, Paula Condon, David Dingwall, Sophia Butler-Doucette, Virginia Gunn, Michael Henick, Chad Hillier, Harkanwal Kaur, Kimberley Lamarche, Doug Lionais, Ellyn Lyle, Terry MacDonald, Gordon MacInnis, Emily MacLeod, John Mayich, Bishakha Mazumdar, John Nadeau, Kathleen Nash, Rod Nicholls, Felix Odartey-Wellington, Olabode Peters Olaniran, Joe Parish, Andy Parnaby, Karen Rowe, Nancy Samson, Rebecca Seymore, Nancy Spina, Laurianne Sylvester, Éric Thériault, Jamie Tunnicliff, Bilynda Whiting

Regrets:

Sahand Ashtab, Sean Campbell, Geoff Carre, Ayse Ersoy, Kylie Ewing, Ava Graham, Ali Heydari, Carrie Karsgaard, Janet Kuhnke, Tracy Lillington, Stephanie MacQuarrie, Marcia Ostashewski, Michelle Prendergast, Ann Sylliboy,

F. Odartey-Wellington introduced the new president of the Students Union, Harsimran Kaur Antaal, and welcomed the rest of the team who were in attendance.

F. Odartey-Wellington advised that Senator Melissa Bishop completed her dissertation this week and congratulated her on her PhD.

2. Consent Agenda: N/A

3. Items to be considered in closed session:

Motion:

Moved by M. Chandler, seconded by D. Lionais, to move into Closed Session for the purpose of conducting confidential business. **Motion Carried.**

Motion:

Moved by Tanya Brann Barrett, seconded by C. Arseneault, **to move to Open Session.**
Motion Carried.

4. Reports and Items for Information

4.1 President

President Dingwall shared the following updates:

- **Impact of Immigration Policy Changes:** Recent policy shifts by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) have adversely affected universities across Canada, damaging Canada's global reputation as an educational destination. These changes have resulted in lower-than-expected student enrollment, prompting a transition from managed decline to a focus on strategic growth. To address this, President Dingwall outlined plans to reduce part-time faculty and term positions, implement new academic programs, and enhance financial management strategies. Recruitment and strategic investments remain key priorities.
- **CBRM Funding Request:** The Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) passed a resolution requesting federal funding for the Tartan Downs project.
- **Capital Campaign Progress:** Cape Breton University (CBU) secured additional contributions toward its \$50 million capital campaign, including \$1 million from John Bragg, \$750,000 from Learn Corporation, and \$200,000 from local construction workers.
- **Strategic Plan 2030:** The Strategic Plan 2030 will be distributed to Senators for feedback and suggestions after the meeting.

President Dingwall concluded by extending warm holiday wishes to all Senators and their colleagues and invited everyone to the Holiday Party next Thursday.

Following the President's Report, there was discussion around the discontinuation of programs and the challenges posed by Immigration issues.

4.2 Vice President Academic and Provost

Rod Nicholls provided updates on several key topics:

Smart Growth Focus:

- He highlighted the decline in student numbers relative to the original SEM (Strategic

Enrollment Management) targets.

- He provided a breakdown of domestic versus international students, emphasizing the importance of understanding these trends.
- He noted ongoing efforts to develop new programs and recommended that individual schools establish SEM groups to support strategic growth.

Network Upgrades:

- He reported on the progress of new network upgrades, emphasizing their importance in supporting institutional goals.

8-Month BEd Program:

- While Senate had approved the 8-month BEd program and it was quickly submitted to MPHEC, the approval was received too late to deliver the program to CBU standards. As a result, the January start has been canceled, and students have been informed.

4.3 Unama'ki College

L. Sylvester reported on the following:

- She attended a conference hosted by Colleges and Institutes Canada in October, where an Indigenous Education Protocol was introduced. She expressed her desire to bring this initiative to the attention of Senate to gauge interest in participating as a university. While many colleges have signed onto the protocol, she highlighted that only one university has done so thus far. She reviewed the principles outlined in the Protocol and shared the link with the Senators for their consideration in relation to the SEM goals.
 - The in-Community Program, Sipekne'katik will be starting a new cohort in January. There are 30 interested applicants but the program will only serve 20. The community will make the decision about who will attend.
 - Students completed the first preparatory courses for the BSc Pathway program. They will start with the required BSc courses in January.
 - The Alumni celebration that was planned as part of the 50 celebrations. They are now combining it with the Annual Student banquet that is held in May each year. The new date is May 30th.
 - In September, the Union of NS Mi'kmaw requested to have the Mi'kmaq Ethics Watch (MEW) under their organization which is under consideration. They are hoping to be part of the funding with other universities.
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- A small group from CBU and Mi'kmaw communities will be traveling to New Zealand honoring a relationship with Victoria University. They will also be attending, presenting and performing at the 48th Annual World Conference - International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance. During this visit, Canada's High Commission to New Zealand has invited our delegation for a special tea/meeting.
 - They met with community Elders regarding the Elders' Protocol which is how they work with Elders and Knowledge keepers within the University. When the document is finalized, they will provide feedback on the protocol with everyone on campus.

- The Donald Marshall Legacy and Community Leadership Award was awarded to Melanie Mellen from Membertou who is a student in the Bachelor of Social Work Program and the Sister Dorothy Moore Education Award - Dwan Starr Paul from the BEd Program.

4.4 Students' Union

O. Olaniran announced that the Students' Union now has a full team in place. He mentioned that the Vice President, who would typically present the report, is absent due to exams. He expressed gratitude to both the Senators and the team for their support and efforts.

Harsimran Kaur Antaal, Students' Union President, provided the report on behalf of the Vice President, Ava Graham, which is outlined in the Meeting package. She highlighted the following

- Successful completion of the recent by-election. Voter engagement improved substantially, compared to the appealed by-election which took place in October.
- Held in collaboration with CBU, November's Honors Banquet celebrated academic excellence and student achievements. The Dr. Mary Keating Medals for Academic Integrity were also presented at this event to deserving students from each of our schools.
- Olabode Peters Olaniran contributed significantly to operational advancements during his tenure as Interim President, finalizing plans for the Caper Café in the Verschuren Centre and the Canteen at the rink opening in the new year.

Key projects and upcoming events they will be taking on include:

- CBUSU 2025 Strategic Plan
- January Week of Welcome
- CBUSU Student Scholarships
- Pride Week
- Women's Week
- Multicultural Celebrations

H. Antaal thanked members of her team for their hard work and continued encouragement.

B. Mazumdar suggested that the week of welcome should consider more countries and more about Cape Breton and Canadian culture, and for more engagement with domestic students as well.

The Chair thanked the Students' Union for all they do and expressed appreciation for the contributions of the administrative supports, Dawn MacDougall and Alex Macneil.

4.5 Board of Governors

M. Henick reported on the following:

The Cape Breton University Board of Governors met once since the last Senate meeting due to their first meeting of the year being cancelled. The following topics were covered:

- President Dingwall delivered his report including the nominations of new board members. CBU Board of Governors welcomed Lori Kennedy, Monette Pasher and Terry Kelly.
- An extensive Treasurers Report was delivered by Gordon MacInnis to the Board which

detailed the current financial situation along with some in-depth understating of new capital projects.

- The Presidential Review Committee presented the findings of their 2023-2024 report the Board of Governors which was voted on and approved by the board.
- He recognized President David Dingwall for being awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal for Contributions to Education and Public Service.
- He also recognized the 35th anniversary of the École Polytechnique massacre this past Friday.

4.6 Executive Committee

Éric Thériault reported on the following:

Senate Executive Committee met on November 9th where the following items were discussed:

- Discussed and set today's Agenda
- In-depth discussion and review of the Terms of Reference for Senate Standing Committees
- The establishment of repositories of Senate documentation
Committee Chairs provided an overview of their Reports for the Senate meeting
- It was decided that a Special meeting will be held on January 17th, to review the planning and Review's Pre budget recommendations.
- Next Executive meeting is scheduled for January 10th
- With the latest election from the Students' Union, revisions are required to update the Student representatives on Senate Standing Committees.

Motion:

Moved by E. Theriault, seconded by J. Parish, to approve the changes to the Students' Union representatives on Senate Standing Committees. **Motion Carried.**

5. Approval of the Minutes

- Senate – November 15, 2024

Motion:

Moved by T. Brann Barrett, seconded by C. Arseneau, that Senate approve the minutes from the November 15th Senate meeting. **Motion Carried. (9 abstentions)**

6. Business Arising from the Minutes – N/A

7. Report from Senate Committees:

7.1 Planning and Review

K. Rowe provided the report and advised that the Committee has finished pre-budget recommendation and they are included in the package for review. There will be time for discussion at the Special meeting. The Committee are currently working on review of Academic Plan and are hopeful to include that in an upcoming meeting.

7.2 Teaching, Learning and Evaluation

T. MacDonald reported on the following:

CBU Grading Definitions are provided in the meeting materials for informational purposes. He noted that Cape Breton University currently lacks formal grading definitions. To address this, the School of Education and Health collaborated with the Centre for Teaching and Learning, the Teaching, Learning and Evaluation Committee of Senate, and the Registrar to develop CBU Grading Definitions. These definitions are intended to serve as a general framework or starting point, which individual schools and departments at CBU can adapt or adopt as needed.

After the Report, the Dean of Education and Health provided more clarity on the purpose of the grading definitions. It was also confirmed by the Registrar that the Grading Definition will not be included in the Academic Calendar.

7.3 Academic

J. Parish reported on the following:

The Chair of the Academic Committee received the following minor course changes from SASS and SSOB which are for information only and are included in the Meeting Package:

- a) ENGL/FOLK2601: Oral Literature>Folk Literature (Name consistency for cross-list)
- b) DRAM3104>DRAM2104: Stagecraft (Level change)
- c) DRAM2201>DRAM3201: Directing (Level change)
- d) MGMT4603: Diversity Issues in Management (Description change, minor)

J. Parish advised that the Committee has two recommendations: Revisions to the Academic Integrity Policy/Determination of Categories; and responses from the Academic Committee to Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Class Attendance and Related Issues. He noted that since the first issue requires a vote, he would begin by addressing the second issue.

b) Responses from Academic Committee to Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Class Attendance and Related Issues

J. Parish noted that the Meeting Package includes nine (9) recommendations from the AD Hoc Committee. He advised that items (3-5) and (8-9) were either out of the scope of the Committee or already covered with other commitments within the structure of Senate. He then discussed the remaining items:

Point 2 - Collaborate with relevant stakeholders: Engage faculty, staff, students, and community members in the development of the attendance and children's presence framework to ensure inclusivity.

The Committee recognized that the issue represents a significant recommendation requiring input from multiple stakeholders and suggested forming a task force to address it. He also emphasized that the Students' Union gathering input from students about their needs would be a valuable contribution to the process.

Point 6 - Ensure safety and supervision: Establish clear guidelines for the presence of children on campus, emphasizing safety measures and appropriate supervision to mitigate risks and maintain a conducive learning environment.

Point 7 - Promote faculty involvement: Encourage faculty members to contribute insights on their roles and expectations regarding attendance policies and children's presence in classrooms.

J. Parish stated that the Committee believes Points 6 and 7 could be addressed through guidelines informed by practices at other universities regarding children's safety and supervision. He further elaborated on several considerations they are striving to balance, including the responsibilities of student parents, provincial family law, employee rights, and the CBU Respectful Campus Policy.

Point 1 - Collaborate with relevant stakeholders: Engage faculty, staff, students, and community members in the development of the attendance and children's presence framework to ensure inclusivity.

Regarding Point 1, he proposed utilizing the Academic Calendar to develop a set of guidelines, drawing inspiration from practices at other universities to serve as a template. He noted that the

Committee was hesitant to create a formal policy due to the challenges of enforcement and implementation across the entire university.

He also addressed the suggestion of faculty involvement referenced in Point 7, recommending that faculty be invited to contribute by sharing their preferences, which could then be incorporated into the guidelines.

He emphasized that while the Ad Hoc Committee could initiate the process, they would seek input from Senate, as the Committee does not believe this is an undertaking they can accomplish independently.

a) Changes to the Academic Performance Policy: Determination of Categories - needs a taskforce to get through the recommendations.

J. Parish introduced the second issue in his report and explained that the Policy changes largely focus on the Determination and definition of Categories. He highlighted the changes and proceeded to make the following motion:

Motion:

Moved by J. Parish, seconded by M. Chandler, that Senate approve the Changes to the Academic Performance Policy.

During Discussion, the following friendly amendments to the original motion were suggested:

Dean Parnaby suggested that definitions 4.5 to 4.10 consist of general terms applicable to all policies. He recommended removing these from the Policy and instead including them in a general glossary within the Academic Calendar. Regarding the terms "suspension," "discontinuation," and "expulsion," he advised standardizing terminology across policies for consistency.

He also highlighted Section 12, which addresses previous Senate discussions about potential conflicts or misalignment between CBU policies and those created by external bodies. He encouraged careful review of this section.

C. Arseneault noted that section 12 identifies a list of programs that could be reference in an external document that the committee could keep updated with a link. She suggested that this approach would eliminate the need for re-approving revisions and approvals each time those programs are updated.

J. Parish advised that the following friendly amendments to the original motion would be as follows:

- Remove items 4.6 and 4.10
- Remove the specific list of program names and reference a final form

Amended Motion Carried.

7.4 By-Laws and Procedures

J. Tunnicliff advised that the Committee continues to review school and department by-laws and they will also be starting to review for Terms of Reference for Senate sub-committees.

7.5 Quality Assurance

No Report.

7.6 Research

M. Bierenstiel reported the following:

- The Committee adjudicated three (3) Research Awards, and put forward their recommendations to the President. Policies may need some revisions which will be included in the Committee's mandate letter.
- They are currently looking at one (1) Institute application

M. Bierenstiel provided an overview of the Summary Information to Proposed Changes to the RISE Policy, which was included in the Meeting Package, he highlighted the following:

- The RISE Grant program requires only minor adjustments in light of increased CBU faculty membership and growth in students over the past few years, and Inflationary pressures.
- The RISE grants are administered through RAC. Currently, Michelle Jetha is chair of RAC and has been providing detailed feedback with administration of the RISE grants to the Research Committee.
- Recent updates to the TOR are mainly to do with language on representation based on 5 schools as apposed to the old infrastructure of 4 schools. It is their opinion that faculty membership of 12 representatives on RAC is a good balance of size and practicality. The membership clause is proposed to be changed to accommodate a minimum of 2 members per school. These proposed changes are to be presented to Senate in due course for discussion and a vote.
- Some minor changes include the improvement of CBU research reporting. The reporting should be integrated between the Research Office and ORGS. This is to be expanded and include the automatic reporting of awards to ORGS that this information is used and it is expected that RISE award recipients collaborate with ORGS to help better broadcast CBU research.
- He discussed the need for an increase in grant limits which were set in 2010 at (\$1,000) for small grants (\$8,000) for large grants. He noted that more funding is needed to adjust for inflation as well as the increase the number of CBU faculty.
- SSHRC provides funding to universities to be used to support research and CBU has been using these funds (\$25,000) to augment the RISE grant budget. SSHRC is raising the individual grant limit to \$10,000 with explicit instruction that no further top-up is permitted. Currently, this SSHRC funding can be readily added to the RISE budget; but having a different grant amount greater than \$10,000 could make it very difficult to use the SSHRC funding in tandem with the RISE grant system. Further, having a separate system for just \$25,000 SSHRC seems administratively impractical.
- The Committee discussed and voting was unanimous that small grant limit should be increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and large grant limit to be increased from \$8,000 to \$10,000.

- He discussed a budgeting issue regarding alignment of RISE grants and approval of the annual budget. Typically, RISE grant adjudication is complete in March/April however official budget approval could be delayed into late May, then all researchers/applicants yet await outcomes pending budget approval.

It was moved by M. Bierenstiel, seconded by D. Lionais, that Senate approve the proposed changes of the revised Rise Grants Policy and to approve the increase in the small grant limit to be increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and large grant limit to be increased from \$8,000 to \$10,000.

After discussion on the motion, it was decided that the original motions should be divided to address the issues separately.

Motion:

Moved by M. Bierenstiel, seconded by D. Lionais, to approve the editorial changes to the RISE Policy.

Motion Carried.

Motion:

Moved by M. Bierenstiel, seconded by D. Lionais, that Senate approve the recommendation to increase the cap for small grants from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and to increase the CAP for large grants from \$8,000 to \$10,000.

Motion Carried. (8 opposed, 2 abstentions)

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

É. Thériault
Secretary to Senate