

Senate Minutes

March 21, 2025
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, Sophia Butler-Doucette, Geoff Carre, Linda Cavanaugh, Paula Condon, David Dingwall, Ayse Ersoy, Kylie Ewing, Melissa Franco, Virginia Gunn, Michael Henick, Carrie Karsgaard, Janet Kuhnke, Kimberley Lamarche, Doug Lionais, Gordon MacInnis, Emily MacLeod, Stephanie MacQuarrie, Bishakha Mazumdar, Sophie Mordi, John Nadeau, Kathleen Nash, Rod Nicholls, Felix Odartey-Wellington, Olabode Peters Olaniran, Marcia Ostashewski, Joe Parish, Madison Parsons, Andy Parnaby, Michelle Prendergast, Karen Rowe, Nancy Samson, Rebecca Seymore, Nancy Spina, Éric Thériault, Jamie Tunnicliff, Bilynda Whiting

Regrets:

Sahand Ashtab, Karen Butterworth, Sean Campbell, Martin Chandler, Ava Graham, Ali Heydari, Chad Hillier, Harkanwal Kaur, Tracy Lillington, Ellyn Lyle, Terry MacDonald, John Mayich, Ann Sylliboy, Laurianne Sylvester

2. Presentation: CBMC status update:

Darrell Kyte, Program Director, provided a presentation on behalf of the CBMC and highlighted the following:

Regional Campus – Student Numbers

- Campus DMNS – 95
- Campus DMNB – 40
- Campus CBMC – 30

MPHEC Approval

Admissions:

- Rural Admissions Pathway (RAP)
- Admissions sub-committee

- Interest surpassed supply of seats
- Letters of offer to go out March 28
- Return of service agreements

Staffing updates:

- Physician leadership
- Staff
- Faculty

Accreditation

Infrastructure:

- Medical Sciences Building
- Regional Hospital Facilities
- Collaborative Care Clinic

Next Steps

Following the presentation, Senators discussed the following:

- In regards to acceptance rate & admissions – It was noted that demand exceeded supply, with no issues related to the return-to-service agreement. When asked about potential future admissions for international students, it was clarified that this decision would be made by the Dalhousie Admissions Committee and the Rural Admissions Pathway, with no immediate plans for expansion.
- Senators inquired about collaboration with the Medical Center and the connection between the medical center and CBU, exploring opportunities for joint research initiatives.
- Discussion included the role of the Director of Humanities and Research in Medicine (RIM) mentors, and how CBU could enhance its involvement in mentorship opportunities.
- Faculty positions and how they are affiliated with CBU and/or Dalhousie was also discussed.

3. Consent Agenda:

3.1 Minor Changes to BBA with concentration in Human Resource Management Program – expanded list of available courses for required courses list

Motion:

Moved by J. Parish, seconded by J. Nadeau, to approve the Consent Agenda for March 21, 2025.
Motion Carried.

The Chair advised that the CBU's Research & Teaching Awards were held last night, he congratulated the following recipients:

- **Distinguished Teaching Award** - Heather Schmidt and Maya Giorbelidze
- **Structural Leadership Award** – Dawn White and Heather Schmidt
- **Margaret Dechman Deckman Community-Engaged Research Champion Award** – Marcia Ostashewski and Jason Loxton
- **President's Award for a Rising Researcher** – Alana Pindar

- **President's Award for Excellence in Research** - Catherine Leviten-Reid

4. Reports and Items for Information

4.1 President

President Dingwall reported the following:

- CBU has an arrangement with Dalhousie University that as of 2034 CBU will have its own medical school.
- Earlier this week, a \$17.1 million investment through the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund was announced to support critical water infrastructure projects in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality. \$6.9 million will be directed toward the Tartan Downs Housing Development, enabling the installation of a new water main, sanitary sewer, stormwater piping, and a new stormwater retention pond. An additional \$10.2 million will support the establishment of a new, sustainable drinking water supply for Cape Breton University and the adjacent Tanglewood subdivision.
- A Presidential Task Force is being developed to evaluate and provide strategic direction for CBU's Student Awards Program. This task force will assess how the awards structure can be better aligned with CBU's mission, vision, and the evolving needs of the student population.
- Dr. Rod Beresford, Dean Laurianne Sylvester, and Dr. David Johnson will be officially awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal. Senators expressed their admiration and support for their outstanding accomplishments.
- He is going to do a pilot project on Artificial Intelligence which will be led by a team in India and he would also like to include local CBU students, faculty and staff. The AI program will be based on productivity.
- He reduced his budget by 30% and reported that term position reductions have been lowered by approximately 50%. Staff reductions are in progress, and discussions are underway with unions regarding a voluntary retirement incentive program. Additionally, 10 new programs are in development, along with efforts to strengthen relations with NSCC.

Following the presentation, the discussion focused on the potential of retaining a contractor for the AI pilot project and the various applications and opportunities AI presents. Ethical considerations were emphasized, particularly regarding its use in rural healthcare and its impact on physicians. The conversation also addressed the challenges of teaching AI effectively and the difficulty of regulating its rapid evolution within academic institutions. Concerns about AI and academic integrity were raised, highlighting the need for clear ethical guidelines and professional standards to ensure responsible use, especially in fields like medicine. The pilot project was seen as an opportunity to better understand AI's challenges and the safeguards needed for its integration.

4.2 Vice President Academic and Provost

Rod Nicholls reported on the following:

Revised SEM targets will play a significant role in shaping the university's direction over the next few years, and Senators are encouraged to have discussion around them. An offer has been extended to departments and schools for further engagement. Anyone with questions about the broader SEM targets, CBU's future trajectory, and its impact is welcome to schedule a meeting for further discussion.

The Provost Committee on Academic Integrity, part of the President's Taskforce, is focused on implementing key goals from the taskforce, many of which are already in place. There is a discussion on formally integrating this work into the Senate infrastructure, with the decision left to the Senate regarding how and when this should occur. Emphasizing continuity and automation will enhance effectiveness and student-friendliness. A key focus is on AI in the classroom, shifting from a punitive approach to recognizing AI as an essential tool that should be used creatively and responsibly. With AI becoming widely available and regulatory guidelines evolving—such as MPHEC updates and the Microsoft pilot—faculty will need to adapt, as restricting AI use will no longer be feasible.

a) Bachelor of Science Quality Assurance Review

Motion:

Moved by R. Nicholls, seconded by S. MacQuarrie, to approve the Bachelor of Science Quality Assurance Review.

Motion Carried.

4.3 Unama'ki College

No Report.

4.4 Students' Union

The Chair welcomed new Students' Union members Madison Parsons and Laura Melissa Franco Baena.

H. Antaal provided an update on behalf of the Students' Union as outlined in the report in the Senate meeting package. She highlighted the following:

- Applications for Winter semester scholarship program have closed. They received 90 applications.
- Rebecca, VPSS, in collaboration with CBU's Advising Centre, held a Resumé Review Drop-In Session, a Job Search Workshop and a Tenancy Rights Workshop.
- Women's Week was held from March 3rd to 7th.

- Guard.Me, their international health plan provider, donated several Sobeys gift cards to the Students' Union for distribution. The Students' Union included some in the Hello Baby packages they give out through their Women's Centre, and allocated many to the CBU Chaplaincy Gift Card Giveaway. This event gave students the opportunity to win over \$7,500 in free gift cards from Sobeys, Atlantic Superstore, Giant Tiger, and The Shoe Tree, and was a massive success. Their Food Bank also provided 50 grocery packages for students during the event.
- Caper Café Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was held on March 4th. Their Executive Team then visited several departments across campus to deliver coffee and cookies, as well as give out free beverage vouchers. They also gave out branded tote bags to their first 50 café visitors that morning.
- They sent two of their Students' Union vans of students up to Halifax to cheer on the CBU Capers basketball teams. This was a three-day trip, and tickets included two-way transportation and passes to all CBU games.
- In previous years, the CBUSU has published a Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) list on our website. They collected data through Microsoft Forms, and have found the list has often been incomplete and difficult to maintain each semester. With help from Dr. Rod Nicholls, they're now planning on adding a ZTC icon to the CBU Course Catalog, next to courses that don't require students to pay additional fees. This should be implemented in the Fall 2025 semester.
- Their Multicultural Creative Arts Week is being held from March 17th to March 23rd. This includes a visual arts showcase, a creative writing session facilitated, a movie night, three student-led cultural dance workshops, short film viewings, and a cultural music day in the cafeteria. The highlight of the week is sure to be our Talent Showcase. They're also collaborating with the Music Society and the XCS Society to hold a Music and Wing Night to finish off the week. Their Food Bank is also working on putting together spice kits to give out to students during this celebration.
- The Child-Minding Survey was official launched and they hope to provide an update at the next Senate meeting.
- Applications for several Students' Union roles next year were posted. This includes our Vice President Finance and Operations, our Vice President Promotions, our Vice President Student Services, and several Coordinator positions.
- They're working with Cape Smokey to hold a second ski trip on March 22nd.
- Student Research Poster Showcase is being held on March 27th in the Pit.
- In collaboration with Dana Mount and Jonathan Doering, they are working on putting together an English conversation club. They hope to have 6-7 students mentoring other students.
- Their Community Outreach Coordinator, Lara Dalton, is working on planning their 4th annual Capers Helping Capers Online Auction which will be held from March 24th to 30th on Facebook, and will feature donated items from several local businesses. All proceeds will be donated to Hospice Cape Breton, the Cape Breton SPCA, Pathways to Employment, and Caleb's Courage.

Dawn MacDougall, their Executive Director, and Alex MacNeil, their General Manager, who have both been awarded the Friend of CBU Award by the CBU Alumni Association were recognized for their dedication, leadership, and ongoing contributions to the CBU community. They also congratulated their Enactus Society who was awarded first runner up in the innovation category and second runner up in the entrepreneurship category at their regional conference.

Senators shared their support and appreciation.

4.5 Board of Governors

No Report.

4.6 Executive Committee

Éric Thériault reported on the following:

The Senate Executive Committee met on March 7th to set the agenda for today's Senate meeting which included when to organize a group photo of the Senate and a presentation on the update of the Cape Breton Medical Campus.

During the meeting, committee representatives presented their reports and outlined what they planned to bring forward. Some feedback was provided on how to best present certain reports and recommendations. The Research Committee of the Senate will be providing a take note debate regarding the new Strategic Research Plan during the next meeting of the Senate. The committee also discussed a few changes to the Terms of References to Senate committees. The next Senate Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for April 11th.

Following the report, a question was raised in terms of the Provost Committee on Academic Integrity and how that moves forward as something for Senate to consider? It was decided that it would be discussed at the next Senate Executive Meeting and brought forward to Senate.

The Registrar announced that due to this year's convocation ceremony timeline, the date for the special Senate meeting in May has been changed from May 5th to May 16th.

5. Approval of the Minutes

➤ Senate – February 21, 2024

Motion:

Moved by G. Carre, seconded by M. Henick, that Senate approve the minutes from the February 21st Senate meeting.

Motion Carried. (6 abstentions)

6. Business Arising from the Minutes – N/A

7. Report from Senate Committees:

7.1 Planning and Review

G. Carre advised that the Committee is working on review of Academic Plan and hope to bring that forward at the next Senate meeting along with two policy reviews.

7.2 Teaching, Learning and Evaluation

No Report.

7.3 Academic

J. Parish reported on the following:

The committee has met three times since the last Senate meeting. They have considered policies from the School of Education and Health as well as changes to programs in the Shannon School of Business. They have also been steadily working to revise the Appeals Policy, especially where appeals to final grades are concerned. They received feedback on the Academic Integrity Policy and that will be completed and brought forward to Senate.

He presented the following minor course changes for information only:

- a) Items for Information
 - i) HATM3509 – pre-requisite change
 - ii) MATH1216 – description change
 - iii) MATH1211 – number change to MATH2409

- b) Items For Approval

J. Parish advised that the committee considered three new policies affecting conditions of leaves of absence, timeouts of program courses, practicum placements, and requirements, and transfer credit procedures and restrictions. All three are new policies that address needed procedures where there currently are none in place.

- i) SEH Leave of Absence Policy

J. Parish advised that a Leave of Absence Policy currently exists for international students. This updated policy seeks to outline procedures for Canadian SEH students. The committee also believes that the Leave of Absence Policy in particular could be considered as a framework for an institution-wide policy.

Motion:

Moved by J. Parish that Senate approve the SEH Leave of Absence Policy.

Discussion on the motion included the following suggestions:

It was proposed that the policy apply to the entire university rather than just the School of

Education and Health. Additionally, the removal of the word "Jurisdiction" was suggested. A recommendation was made to establish a form or documentation process for students transitioning or transferring back. Other points of discussion included policy metrics, a discretionary provision for financial considerations, and a clear timeline for response. It was also suggested that explanatory language under the "Purpose" section be removed. Furthermore, alignment in the approval process language was emphasized, with a recommendation that the Department Chair review and recommend the policy to the Dean, who would make the final decision in consultation with the Registrar. Lastly, the need for an appeals process was considered.

Motion Tabled.

ii) SEH Stale Date Policy

J. Parish advised that the Stale Date Policy seeks to keep the training of SEH students aligned with current practices and approaches by introducing timeouts to relevance of elements of their programs.

Motion:

Moved by J. Parish that Senate approve the SEH Stale Date Policy.

Discussion on the motion centered on whether the policy should be course or program-specific and how it aligns with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Concerns were raised about enforcement and binding authority, with some suggesting Senate oversight. It was noted that leave of absence decisions cannot be appealed, and there was debate on ensuring policies have real consequences while meeting program needs. A university-wide policy was proposed for consistency, and an audit of existing policies is underway. The discussion also touched on expiry dates for degree requirements and next steps.

Motion Tabled.

iii SEH Transfer Credit Policy

The Transfer Credit Policy introduces defined restrictions around types and amounts of credits that can be transferred, timeouts of credits based on date of completion, minimum grade benchmarks to ensure quality transfers. There is also a procedure outlined for transferring credits.

Motion:

Moved by J. Parish that Senate approve the SEH Transfer Credit Policy.

Discussion on the motion included topics related to the policy vs program regulations. The following amendment suggestions were put forward:

- Replacement of the word "Jurisdiction" with "administration "
- Replacement of "Health Sciences and nutrition" to "Bachelor of Health Sciences" program"
- Addition of "in the School of Education and Health" to the scope of the Policy.
- Area of authority should be a single authority

Motion Carried.

7.4 By-Laws and Procedures

J. Tunnicliff advised that the Committee has been reviewing bylaws for schools and departments. They finished the Terms of References and once finalized they will be brought to Senate.

In response to a question, J. Tunnicliff agreed that the Involvement of Students in Teaching-Related Activities Policy should be part of department and/or school bylaws and he will bring the issue to his committee for review and discussion.

Senators discussed the topic and it was decided that it would be further be discussed at the next Senate Executive.

7.5 Quality Assurance

No Report.

7.6 Research

M. Ostashewski expressed her appreciation for the committee's hard work with award adjudications and reported on the following:

- Recent updates to various policies, with a focus on intellectual property (IP) and research centers/institutes policies. Feedback is being collected and considered through surveys instead of intensive workshops.
- The adjudication process for the Rise Awards went smoothly and ahead of schedule, with letters expected to be sent to recipients by the end of the month. Budget discussions are ongoing, but approvals will not delay award notifications.
- A discussion emerged about data security when collaborating with U.S. researchers or carrying research data across borders. Concerns included privacy laws (e.g., the U.S. Patriot Act), the use of cloud storage, and how researchers should handle student or sensitive data when traveling.
- There was agreement that a workshop or presentation on data privacy, led by the university's privacy officer, would be beneficial. The committee will coordinate with relevant departments to address these concerns.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

É. Thériault
Secretary to Senate