

Senate Minutes

**April 25, 2025
CC261**

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, Sahand Ashtab, Matthias Bierenstiel, Melissa Bishop, Tanya Brann-Barrett, Karen Butterworth, Geoff Carre, Linda Cavanaugh, Martin Chandler, David Dingwall, Ayse Ersoy, Kylie Ewing, Melissa Franco, Ava Graham, Virginia Gunn, Michael Henick, Carrie Karsgaard, Harkanwal Kaur, Kimberley Lamarche, Doug Lionais, Gordon MacInnis, Stephanie MacQuarrie, Bishakha Mazumdar, John Nadeau, Rod Nicholls, Felix Odartey-Wellington, Olabode Peters Olaniran, Joe Parish, Andy Parnaby, Karen Rowe, Nancy Samson, Ann Sylliboy, Nancy Spina, Laurianne Sylvester, Éric Thériault, Bilynda Whiting

Regrets:

Tammy Bernasky, Sean Campbell, Paula Condon, Sophia Butler-Doucette, Ali Heydari, Chad Hillier, Janet Kuhnke, Tracy Lillington, Elyn Lyle, Terry MacDonald, Emily MacLeod, John Mayich, Sophie Mordi, Kathleen Nash, Marcia Ostashewski, Madison Parsons, Michelle Prendergast, Rebecca Seymore, Jamie Tunnicliff

F. Odartey-Wellington introduced the incoming CBU Students Union executives as follows:
Harsimran Kaur Antaal - President & CEO, Rebecca Seymore - Executive Vice President, Angelica Bermudez Herrera - Vice President Promotions, Destiny Tobin - VP Student Services, and Simran Sharma - VP Finance & Operations.

2. FOIPOP Act Considerations and Application:

Deanna Petrie, CBU Privacy Officer, provided a presentation on FOIPOP Act Considerations and Application emphasizing the importance of privacy legislation and the responsibilities of employees in upholding these rights. She highlighted the following:

- Privacy at CBU
 - Nova Scotia Privacy Legislation
 - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP)
 - Personal Information International Disclosure Protection Act (PIIDPA)
- Confidentiality and Privacy of Student Records
- Privacy in the Workplace
- Offences
- Confidentiality and Privacy of Student Records Policy
- Protecting Privacy on and off Campus
- Current Politics
- Privacy Tips

The Chair thanked Deanna Petrie for her presentation.

3. Consent Agenda:

3.1 New Course Proposal – ENGL 2305: Speculative Fiction (Academic Committee)

3.2 Minor Changes – Policy on Policies and Procedure (Planning and Review Committee)

Motion:

Moved by J. Nadeau, seconded by N. Sampson, to approve the Consent Agenda for April 25, 2025.

Motion Carried.

4. Take Note Debate:

4.1 Policy on Retention of Academic Records

F. Odartey-Wellington defined the Take Note Debate process.

J. Parish outlined the current practice of the Registrar's Office regarding the retention of academic records. He noted that:

- Records of academic integrity violations and academic suspensions (e.g., due to failure to progress, program discontinuation, or dismissal) are retained permanently.
- Students may request the removal of such records through the Registrar's Office, in consultation with the Dean and Vice-President Academic (VPA). However, there is no formal policy governing this process, and requests are handled on a case-by-case basis.

He raised concerns about the lack of consistency and transparency in the current approach, particularly in light of the Academic Integrity Policy. Key points included:

- All violations are recorded on transcripts, which may limit students' future educational opportunities—even years after graduation.
- Some records may need to remain for professional certification purposes.
- The absence of a formal process may leave students unaware of their options for record removal.

Potential solutions discussed:

1. Time-Limited Retention: Establish a defined period after which certain records may be removed.
2. Formal Expungement Policy: Develop a policy and application process for expunging specific violations.
3. Clarified Case-by-Case Process: Retain the current approach but formalize and communicate the process to students.

J. Parish opened the floor for Senate's consideration of the issue and welcomed any further ideas and suggestions.

Motion:

Moved by J. Parish, seconded by C. Arseneau, to proceed with the Take Note Debate.

Motion Carried.

Motion:

Moved by C. Arseneau, seconded by M. Chandler, to provide Mark Tambal speaking privileges for the Take Note Debate.

Motion Carried.

Discussion Highlights:

- E. Theriault inquired about the frequency of ad-hoc requests; response: they are infrequent.
- M. Bierenstiel asked about the percentage of academic violations; response: estimated at 10–20 cases per year.
- B. Whiting clarified that violations are documented both on transcripts and in internal systems (e.g., Colleague).
- President Dingwall questioned if there was a cost associated to requests; response: there is not cost currently.
- C. Arseneau raised concerns about repeat occurrences and how other institutions view such records; B. Whiting explained that most universities may not accept students with recent violations if regarding a dismissal, suspension or expulsion
- M. Henick questioned how other universities are handling this situation; response: University policies differ and it depends from institution to institution.
- T. Brann Barrett asked whether deleted records are retained elsewhere; response: no records have been expunged to date, but a system would be needed.

- M. Henick suggested a tiered system based on severity (e.g., distinguishing between sexual violence and lesser infractions).
- C. Arseneau inquired about the difference between the operational record and the academic and public access record when it comes to retention
- M. Tambal shared findings from a jurisdictional scan: retention periods at other institutions typically range from 5 to 7 years.
- President Dingwall addressed the relevance of the Criminal Code in the university context and emphasized the importance of developing a comprehensive policy that accounts for a range of infractions and corresponding penalties. He proposed that a draft policy be created and made available to the university community for consultation and feedback. Following this review period, the finalized policy would be brought to Senate for approval and implementation. He also recommended the introduction of access fees to help offset administrative costs associated with policy enforcement and the inclusion of a third-party review mechanism to ensure transparency and accountability.
- J. Parish highlighted that professional programs may have their own regulatory requirements regarding record retention.

5. Reports and Items for Information

5.1 President

President Dingwall provided the following updates:

- This week on his podcast, he interviewed F. Odartey-Wellington, Chair of Senate, who explained the role of Senate, and Professor Lynn LeVatte, who shared updates on new programming in the Bachelor of Education program.
- A pilot initiative has been launched in collaboration with HCL Tech, focused on AI in productivity. Over the next six weeks, 35 participants from across the university will test the platform and provide valuable feedback to inform next steps.
- A renaming ceremony for the Canada Games Complex is scheduled for this afternoon.
- Cape Breton University will soon celebrate a historic milestone: the largest graduating class in CBU's history, with over 4,000 students.
- A governance framework is being developed, along with a dedicated budget, to support the advancement of microcredentials at CBU.
- Earlier today, the Board of Governors approved Cape Breton University's 2025–26 Operating Budget. A deficit is projected, with hopes of achieving a balanced budget within three years.
- The task force on student awards continues its work. They will be engaging with faculty members, and anyone wishing to make a representation is encouraged to contact Sheryl Trimm or Sarah Burke.

The Chair thanked the President for his presentation and noted the positive impact of his podcasts.

In response to a question regarding the 2025–26 budget deficit, Gordon McInnis discussed the projected shortfalls and the strategies in place to mitigate them, including a continued reliance on international student enrollment.

5.2 Vice President Academic and Provost

Rod Nicholls reported on the following:

- Emphasized the three-year structural deficit that Canadian universities face, noting increased government involvement in university operations. More details on the budget context may be shared in early fall.
- Winter term exams are complete, with grades now being submitted. He acknowledged the smooth delivery of Moodle-based exams, with no reported errors, and thanked IT and the Registrar's Office.
- Faculty across many programs are preparing for the research season. Earlier this month, the president of SSHRC visited campus. The names of the 2025 Discovery Grant winners are currently under embargo; 13 submissions came from CBU researchers, with an estimated 45% success rate.
- Looking ahead to Spring/Summer courses, faculty are encouraged to consider new teaching techniques and take advantage of the CTL May Showcase to learn from colleagues' innovative work, including in the area of AI.
- The Academic Plan will be discussed later in the meeting. The plan is due for renewal, and the timing aligns with the bilateral agreement signed by Nova Scotia universities, which aims to secure \$250 million over the next 10 years for operations. The upcoming program review should be coordinated with the Academic Plan renewal.
- Raised concerns about academic publishing piracy, highlighting the disadvantages faced by faculty and students.

Discussion took place in response to a question regarding the sustainability of maintaining a 54 percent international student enrolment requirement at CBU.

5.3 Unama'ki College

L. Sylvester reported on the following:

- Alumni Gathering/Annual Student Grad Banquet is scheduled for May 30th and will take place at the Membertou Convention Center. There will be a limited amount of seating for staff and faculty but those invites will be sent out next week.
- In total they have 5 active in-community programs. One cohort will be graduating in May and they are working on two other interested communities.
- Unama'ki College team is getting prepared to go on the road to Indigenous communities and attend events to share information on programs at CBU and what Unama'ki College

has to offer.

- MOU has been signed between CBU and Victoria University of Wellington. For Unama'ki College to continue the relationship with the Maori of NZ. This MOU is supporting a 24-million-dollar grant application (New Frontiers in Research Fund- "Equitable Futures: Indigenous Knowledge Leadership for Sustainable Development as well as other grant applications including SSHRC Connections and Horizon Europe.
- MMIW2S Awareness Day is on May 5th. There will be activities on campus and a walk for awareness.
- Two L'nu students are continuing their studies in medicine. One will be attending Dalhousie and one will be attending the CBU Med Campus. One other student is in the process of applying. All 3 students are from Eskasoni.

5.4 Students' Union

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:

- In October, a By-Election was conducted to fill the roles of President and Executive Vice President for the remainder of the 2024–2025 academic year. However, the results were appealed. A second By-Election took place in November, resulting in the election of Harsimran Kaur Antaal as President and Ava Graham as Executive Vice President. In February, the General Election was held to determine the leadership for the 2025–2026 academic year. Harsimran Kaur Antaal was re-elected as President, and Rebecca Seymour was elected as Executive Vice President. Both will continue serving as CBUSU Executives, with Rebecca stepping into a new role. Additionally, twelve representatives were elected to the Students' Representative Council through an online voting process.
- The annual Honours Banquet was held at the Joan Harriss Cruise Pavilion in November.
- The Caper Café opened in the Verschuren Centre in December, with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony held in March. Free coffee and cookies were distributed to departments across campus to celebrate. A branding contest was held for both services, resulting in new logos inspired by student submissions.
- The Food Bank has been very active this year. They started the summer with a concert fundraiser at Daniel's Alehouse and Eatery, raising over \$1,700 and collecting multiple large bins of non-perishable food items. They updated their Food Bank model to better support students. They now offer a Basic Package Program, providing students with essential items, and a Specialized Support Program, which provides larger packages but requires a longer application and the submission of supporting documents. They also received a donation of several Sobeys gift cards this year from Guard.Me, our international health plan providers, and partnered with the CBU Chaplaincy to give these out to students at their annual Gift Card Giveaway.
- The Drive Home Program has expanded this year, offering complementary rides home for students, airport pickups, drove nursing students to and from their clinical placements, and have been taking students living in residence to the grocery store on select dates each month.

- A child-minding survey was conducted. Findings showed that 83% of students with children would likely use an on-campus child-minding service, and 90% indicated a need for additional family-friendly space at CBU beyond the current daycare and potential child-minding service.
- This year saw the launch of their International and Indigenous Student Scholarship Program. Throughout the fall and winter semesters, they awarded a total of sixteen students with \$1,000 scholarships in recognition of academic excellence, they were able to reach 200 students with this initiative. In addition, they've given out two \$500 bursaries to Indigenous students through our Ekkian Indigenous Centre.
- They worked to plan Week of Welcome events in both September and January, raising over \$16,000 in sponsorship funding.
- They hosted their first Career Readiness Series as well as an IRCC & PGWP Information Session, and a Tenancy Rights Workshop. They held a Student Research Poster Showcase. They've also started an English Conversation Group in collaboration with the English Department and are planning to expand this initiative in the coming months.
- They are part of Students Nova Scotia, and had representatives attend their Annual General Meeting, their Advocacy Week, and Transition Conference (which was hosted here at CBU). They are also a member of the Canadian Federation of Students and participated in their Lobby Week in October.
- With help from Dr. Rod Nicholls, they're planning on adding a ZTC icon to the CBU Course Catalog, next to courses that don't require students to pay additional fees.
- They met with administration to discuss the need for an Indigenous Enrolment Services Specialist within Unama'ki College to ensure this position is filled for the coming school year. They also met with Transit Cape Breton to address student concerns and have been advocating within CBU for a bus shelter outside of the Canada Games Complex.
- The Executive Team selected five local charities to support in 2024–2025: Caleb's Courage, Every Woman's Centre, Pathways to Employment, Cape Breton SPCA, and the Hospice Palliative Care Society of Cape Breton, with a fundraising goal of \$20,000. The 14th Annual Charity Golf Classic, held in August at Lingan Golf and Country Club, raised over \$15,000. Additional fundraising events were held throughout the year in collaboration with CBU Athletics, the CBUSU Pride and Ally Centre, and Flavor Creative Catering. The 4th Annual Online Auction took place in April, featuring over 100 donated items. The final fundraising total will be announced on Monday, April 28th, during a campus event welcoming representative from each supported charity.

The Chair extended his thanks to the outgoing members for their contributions and warmly welcomed the incoming Students' Union team.

5.5 Board of Governors

N. Sampson reported on the following:

- Gordon presented the 2025/2026 budget, noting significant impacts due to recent IRCC changes.
- The Tartan Downs project received formal approval.
- The Cape Breton Medical Campus is progressing, with a minor delay in its opening timeline.
- The Board of Governors acknowledged and thanked the outgoing Students' Union members for their service.

5.6 Executive Committee

Éric Thériault reported on the following:

The Senate Executive Committee met on April 11th, as usual one of our main goals was to set both the regular and consent agendas for today's Senate meeting. This also included a special presentation from the CBU privacy officer and a take note debate. During the meeting, the Senate executive welcomed the new CBU Student Union Executive VP Rebecca Seymore. The executive had a discussion that surrounded how to foster more interaction between the Senate and the Board of Governors at CBU. Each committee representatives presented their reports and outlined what they planned to bring forward. Some feedback was provided on how to best present certain reports, recommendations and motions.

The next, and final Senate Executive Committee meeting of this session is scheduled for May 23rd.

Elections will be held at the June meeting. The Secretary position will be vacant while the Chair and Vice Chair are reoffering. The Secretary invited all interested parties to forward their expression of interest.

6. Approval of the Minutes

- Senate – March 21, 2024

Motion:

Moved by M. Henick, seconded by C. Arseneau, that Senate approve the minutes from the March 21st Senate meeting.

Motion Carried. (3 abstentions)

7. Business Arising from the Minutes – N/A

8. Report from Senate Committees:

8.1 Planning and Review:

a) Items for Information:

i) Academic Plan Review

G. Carre referred to the Academic Plan Review included in the Senate Meeting Package, and advised that the Review is provided as information only but offers the opportunity for feedback from Senators and other interested stakeholders.

b) Items for Approval:

i) Emerita/Emeritus Policy

G. Carre advised that the Committee wishes to replace the current Emeritus Policy and the Senior Scholar Policy with a new Emerita/Emeritus Policy. One of the main purposes of the Policy is to expand eligibility and encourage retired faculty to remain engaged with CBU. Having worked for CBU for 10 years you can apply when you retire for Emeritus status. The goal is that they would provide goals in which they can contribute and be involved would provide to CBU in the application. The revised Emeritus policy (and Senior Scholar policy) reflects a commitment to fostering inclusivity and strengthening the bond between retirees and our academic community. By extending this honorary designation opportunity to all faculty, instructors, and librarians, the policy aims to celebrate their legacy of excellence while encouraging active participation in university life.

Motion:

Moved by G. Carre, seconded by A. Graham, to approve the Emerita/Emeritus Policy as presented.

Discussion:

It was confirmed that the Senior Scholar Policy would be retired and the new Emeritus Policy would cover both the Senior Scholar and Emeritus Policy.

Friendly amendments suggested are as follows:

- Add a clause to the Emeritus policy allowing for exceptional individuals who do not meet the 10-year employment criteria to be considered for appointment.
- Revise the Emeritus policy to include a clause addressing liability and clarify the use of athletic and health facilities as per user policies.
- Consult with Stephanie Myles to ensure the revised Emeritus policy addresses all liability concerns.
- Include a clause in the Emeritus policy stating that all relevant CBU policies apply to emeritus faculty when engaging with the university community.

- The current Emeritus Policy has an option for professors to apply (or be nominated) for the Emeritus honorific through their department and it was suggested to include this in the new policy.
- Item 7.1 should include the right for the appointee to also remove themselves from appointment.
- In terms of Research support – this should include the phrase subject to availability.
- The years of appointment is recommended at 5 years due to ongoing costs in regards to Library privileges.
- Item 2. Definitions should include CBUFA and NSGEU.

The Chair recommended that, given the number of proposed amendments, it would be most appropriate to table the motion. Once the friendly amendments have been incorporated into the policy, the revised version will be brought back to Senate for approval.

Motion Tabled.

8.2 Teaching, Learning and Evaluation

No Report.

8.3 Academic

J. Parish reported on the following:

The committee met three times since Senate last met, they received feedback on the Academic Integrity Policy with many great recommendations from University Counsel, Stephanie Myles, and are currently working to tighten up the language around the levels of breaches. They have also been working through proposed changes to the Decision Matrix and there will also be additions of approximately nine processes that are missing from it, but which are regularly consulted on by the committee and many individuals and units around the institution. They should have both documents ready for the June meeting of Senate.

As a result of the last meeting of Senate, the SEM Committee has drafted language around an institution-wide Leave of Absence policy and that will likely be coming to Academic committee soon.

a) Items for Information:

He introduced the following minor course changes for information only which are outlined in the Senate Meeting Package:

- i) NBCC Human Services Practitioner Program to CBU BACS
- ii) NBCC Social Service Worker to CBU BACS
- iii) CNA Diploma in Mental Health and Addiction to CBU BACS

b) Items for Approval:

i) Proposal for a programme modification for BACS Online

The committee assessed a programme modification proposal to the BACS programme which was initiated by MPHEC which is a fully blocked out, cohort-based, online offering of the BACS degree. This proposal uses the more extensive form only because the request came from MPHEC, but the committee feels that the proposal is in the less than 25% change category. Substantively, this proposal represents an effort to organise the offerings that have already been done in practice. There are no resource changes that are associated with this modification and the committee believes that this will come as a welcome modification by MPHEC. The committee only made minor changes to the proposals wording.

Motion:

Moved by J. Parish, seconded by L. Sylvester, that Senate approve the programme modification for BACS Online.

Motion Carried.

ii) Proposal for a new Minor in BA and BACS: Earth and Environment (embedded 24 credit minor in 4-year BA and BACS)

The committee reviewed a new minor proposal in the BA and BACS titled Earth and Environment. This proposal was also a positive one that would strengthen ties between SASS, SEH, and SST. It may also have the side effect of helping to populate the BASE programme. There were some initial concerns about the level of mathematics in ENGI 2133, but further investigation into that course allayed those concerns. The committee only asked for clarification on the programme name and calendar description to align with the development of language from SASS on minors. There are also no resource changes associated with this proposal.

Motion:

Moved by J. Parish that Senate approve the Proposal for a new Minor in BA and BACS: Earth and Environment.

Motion Carried.

J. Parish noted that the BACS online vote counts and dates were not in the Senate package but will be included in the official record with unanimous School and Academic Committee approval.

8.4 By-Laws and Procedures

No Report.

8.5 Quality Assurance

S. Ashtab explained that the Quality Assurance Policy documents and framework were presented to the Quality Assurance Committee, where suggestions from both Senate Executive and Senate were discussed. The committee approved the documents, and he stated that he would bring them forward for approval at the next Senate meeting, along with his report.

8.6 Research

M. Bierenstiel provided the following report:

- Co-Committee Chair Marcia Ostashewski is currently participating in a session of the Research Strategy Plan Sub-Committee.
- The Committee's Terms of Reference have been submitted to the Bylaws and Procedures Committee.
- They are currently reviewing several key policies, including the Research Awards Policy, the Intellectual Property (IP) Policy, and the Research Centres and Institutes Policy. These items will be brought forward at a future session of Senate.
- The Adjudication Committee (AC), which supports the RISE Grant program, expressed thanks to Erna and Jared from the Research Office for their assistance. The RISE Grant policy has been updated: although an outdated template was initially included, the accurate policy is now in place.
- For the 2025 RISE Grant competition, 51 applications were received. Of those, 17 were funded and 30 were not. The breakdown is as follows:
 - **Early Career Researchers:** 33 applications, 10 funded, 23 not funded.
 - **Regular Faculty:** 17 applications, 7 funded, 10 not funded.

The budget for this round of Rise Grants was \$137,000. Additional funding is expected from SSHRC, and once received, further applications may be funded. The amount of incoming funding is roughly equivalent to last year, and a full report will be provided once all details are finalized.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

É. Thériault
Secretary to Senate