

Senate  
Minutes

**September 19, 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, Sahand Ashtab, Tammy Bernasky, Matthias Bierenstiel, Melissa Bishop, Tanya Brann-Barrett, Karen Butterworth, Linda Cavanaugh, Martin Chandler, Shannon Ezzat, Virginia Gunn, Michael Henick, Enrique Hernandez, Angelica Bermudez Herrera, Jenny Kassen, Harkanwal Kaur, Karen Kennedy, Tracy Lillington, Doug Lionais, Jaxson MacDonald, Shauna MacDonald, Emily MacLeod, Stephanie MacQuarrie, John Mayich, Chris McDonald, John Nadeau, Kathleen Nash, Rod Nicholls, Felix Odartey-Wellington, Joe Parish, Andy Parnaby, Alex Paul, Timothy Rawlings, Karen Rowe, Quinn Rowe, Stefanie Ruel, Nathan Ryan, Rebecca Seymore, Nancy Spina, Laurianne Sylvester, Toyin Tade, Jamie Tunnicliff, Tom Ue, Kellie White, Bilynda Whiting, Terry MacDonald

**Regrets:**

Catherine Arseneau, Sean Campbell, David Dingwall, Ellyn Lyle, Gordon MacInnis, Willena Nemeth, Marcia Ostashewski, Sergiy Pysarenko, Nancy Samson, Ann Sylliboy

**2. Items to be considered in closed session:**

**2.1 Approval of the CIC Graduand list**

**Motion:**

**Moved** by T. Brann-Barrett, seconded by D. Lionais, to move into Closed Session for the purpose of conducting confidential business.

**Motion Carried.**

Following a closed session:

**Motion:**

**Moved** by M. Bierenstiel, seconded by J. Nadeau, to move to Open Session.

**Motion Carried.**

**3. Take Note Debate: Strategic Research Plan (SRP) 2026-2031**

The Chair explained the process of the Take Note Debate and introduced T. Brann-Barrett to present.

T. Brann-Barrett shared the history and renewal process of the Strategic Research Plan, noting that the current 2020–2025 plan was approved by Senate in 2020. She discussed the renewal process which began last fall and included national benchmarking, surveys, school-level consultations, and feedback analysis. She advised that today's debate marks the final stage of consultation before the draft is reviewed by the Research Committee and brought to Senate for approval in October.

**Motion:**

Moved by T. Brann Barret, seconded by J. Mayich, to provide speaking privileges to Erna MacLeod and Jasmin Hoover.

**Motion Carried.**

T. Brann-Barrett provided a PowerPoint presentation and highlighted the two elements for feedback; the revised titles of the Collaborative Research Networks, which aim to foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and the Strategic Research Priorities and associated actions. Senators were invited to consider whether the network titles appropriately reflect institutional strengths, growing capacity and whether the priorities and actions are clear, achievable, and relevant.

**Collaborative Research Networks**

- Culture & Community
- Science, Technologies, and Data Analytics
- Ecology, Environment & Sustainability
- L'nu Research
- Ethical Economies & Wellbeing
- Health & Wellness

**Do these titles appropriately reflect areas of strength and growing capacity in Cape Breton University's research enterprise?**

C. McDonald suggested that education, pedagogy and learning, considering we have teaching chairs and a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) network should be included.

L. Sylvester wanted to ensure that L'nu research is not only listed on its own but also that reflected in all the other titles. It was discussed the option of removing it as its own and just make it clearer that it is included throughout.

A. Parnaby suggested adding Research in artificial intelligence and data analytics under bullet 2 or in the description or high-level title to capture that.

S. Ezzat noted that data analytics appears to be a narrow, specific topic rather than a broad one. He suggested using a more inclusive term that encompasses machine learning, artificial intelligence, and data analytics to better reflect the overall scope.

K. Kennedy suggested that research areas relevant to higher education and student affairs also be included.

T. Bernasky expressed her appreciation with the title of Ethical Economies & Wellbeing being included and would like to see that continue to be included. She also referenced her appreciation for the inclusion of quality of life and social determinants of health.

D. Lionais wanted to ensure that Marketing and Management departments are accurately reflected.

A. Parnaby questioned if research networks effectively support interdisciplinary conversations, and are they still the preferred method. Tanya admitted that it was a struggle and Erna MacLeod discussed ways in which they see the networks evolving and supporting research. She also discussed things they have done in the past to help people to connect with each other, to build networks with faculty members here and at other institutions as well as in communities, such as Collaborative Café's.

### **Strategic Research Priorities**

- Equip Researchers for Success
- Extend our Research Impact
- Expand our Collaborations
- Optimize Research Supports
- Advance Student Research and Graduate Programming

### **Are the priorities and actions clear, achievable, and relevant?**

In regards to Expand our Collaborations and in response to S. MacQuarrie's question on whether CBU's plan will be to develop or implement these best practices, T. Brann-Barrett clarified that CBU will be implementing those practices like those that have been created by indigenous communities.

T. Bernasky inquired about the specific online platforms and tools being considered to support the priority area of "Expand Our Collaborations." In response, Jasmin Hoover shared that CBU is implementing a new research management platform called Worktribe. This system will enable researchers to create public profiles outlining their research interests, facilitating collaboration and helping users identify and apply for grants aligned with their expertise.

C. McDonald referenced the priority of Optimize Research Supports and the establishment of research spaces and suggested that there should be a space also to think about the maintenance and the continuation of these research spaces.

A. Parnaby discussed the potential for the Research Office to support researchers in strengthening their communication skills for engaging with a broader, non-university audience. He suggested this could include opportunities to develop skills for public presentations, such as talks to the Chamber of Commerce, as well as for social media and other outreach platforms.

T. Brann-Barrett thanked Senators for their time and advised that the Research Committee will include feedback from this debate in the final SRP document which is scheduled to be submitted to Senate for the October 2025 meeting for an official approval.

**4. Consent Agenda:**

**4.1 Minor Program Change Nursing – (NRSG3501) (NRSG3101)**

**Motion:**

**Moved** by J. Parish, to approve the Senate Consent Agenda.

**Motion Carried.**

**5. Reports and Items for Information**

**5.1 President**

No Report

**5.2 Vice President Academic and Provost**

R. Nicholls reported the following:

- He announced that Karen Kennedy is now interim Dean of Nursing, Chris McDonald is the new Interim Dean of SASS, and noted that Andy Parnaby is attending Senate in his new role as Vice Provost.
- He referred to the many events happenings at CBU currently and highlighted that the first cohort of Cape Breton Medical Campus as begun which included a great number of CBU

graduates. He also advised that in the University teaching program (UTP) took place in August. The program emphasizes teaching excellence, research in pedagogy, and professional development for both new and experienced faculty. He added that participation across disciplines remains strong, showing a growing culture of engagement and continuous improvement in teaching quality.

- He updated Senate on the Bilateral Agreement with the Provincial Government, specifically Schedule H, which outlines an Academic Program Review focused on modernization, revitalization, and rationalization. He advised that preliminary work has been underway including classification and procedural mapping. A small working group has begun test cases, and once MPHEC provides full direction and data templates, the review will expand to include schools and specific faculty leads to review the programs.
- He noted that a Take Note Debate will be held at the October Senate meeting to discuss enrollment and the ongoing reorganization. He provided a brief update on enrolment and advised that as of the end of the add/drop period, total enrollment is approximately 4,900 students, down from earlier projections of 7,400 pre-IRCC and 5,400 after the first IRCC policy change. International students make up 53% of the student body, compared to 58%. There are 726 new domestic and 255 new international students, compared to 977 international students at this time last year. The decline is mainly in post-baccalaureate programs impacted by federal restrictions with 5 programs suspended. Domestic enrollment remains strong, particularly in BA/BACS and Nursing (up 7%). Looking forward, the university is focusing on renewed international partnerships, with the President undertaking three recruitment trips in the coming months. Work continues on new program development, including three master's programs expected to reach Senate in October. A Program Development Group, led by Andy Parnaby, will support faculty and deans to ensure programs are academically and financially sound before submission to Senate.
- He provided an update on the CDI building project, addressing questions about its timing given current enrollment trends. He emphasized that there are valid reasons for continuing construction and that, in the interest of openness and transparency, CBU has initiated a financial review. Geoff Carre's planning and review group is developing a three-year financial and operating plan, and MNP, an independent accounting firm, has been engaged to analyze CBU's financial status since 2018, including surpluses, staffing levels, and financial assumptions. MNP will lead the review with input from various university members, with further updates to come.

Following the report, the discussion focused on the following points:

Development of new master's programs and their implications. It was noted that master's programs will not replace post-baccalaureate programs on a one-to-one basis, as they are costlier but provide academic and reputational benefits. They also attract domestic and international students, with advantages such as post-graduate work permit eligibility and spousal access for international students.

Concerns were raised regarding federal policy impacts, the university's reliance on the volatile international market, and the need for cost-benefit and risk analyses. Several members emphasized the importance of protecting CBU's core undergraduate strengths, ensuring that resources for new programs do not negatively impact existing ones, and maintaining balance between growth and faculty capacity.

Questions were raised about synergy between departments and how new master's programs will align with existing ones. The New Program Development Group is assessing connections between schools to promote efficiency, effectiveness, and harmony.

Regarding the financial review, it was confirmed that 2018 was chosen as the baseline year, as it reflects enrollment prior to the international student surge.

In relation to the CDI building, it was noted that the project has a hard cost cap of \$140 million. While recognizing the importance of the new science facility, some components of the project may be deferred or scaled back to manage costs amid tariff increases and economic pressures.

### **5.3 Unama'ki College**

L. Sylvester provided updates on the following:

- On September 9<sup>th</sup>, the Mastercard Foundation made an announcement of "gifts" they had given out throughout the country. Unama'ki College was the only recipient in Nova Scotia recognized for work around Truth and Reconciliation and were gifted \$5 million.
- UC has about 70 new students this term including the in- community programs in Eskasoni, Millbrook, and Sipekne'katik and exceeds the goal initially set.
- The successful candidate for the Enrolment Specialist ended up not taking the position. They will be posting again.
- The Teepee will be in the courtyard until the end of October as another safe space on campus. They will be starting talking circles next week for Indigenous students in partnership with the Nancy Dingwall Health and Wellness.
- She is working with the School of Nursing on their planning committee for professional development on Cultural Safety.
- Hieroglyphic book project is ongoing. They met with the Mi'kmaw Grand Council in July to communicate the project and request guidance on next steps to translate the book and figure out more information on the book.
- Orange Shirt Day is on Tuesday, September 30. We are encouraging students to wear orange the week before to recognize TRC. Following TRC day, Unama'ki College will be recognizing Mi'kmaw Treaty Day on October 1.

- They have 8 Nursing students from the original cohort that started in Eskasoni in 2022 graduating. Half completed their NCLEX exam and the rest will be writing this month.

The Chair recognized and congratulated L. Sylvester and her team for the funding received for the Unama'ki College.

#### **5.4 Students' Union**

R. Seymour, Executive Vice President, presented the CBUSU Executive Report, with full details available in the Senate meeting package. She introduced the CBUSU Executive Team and student representatives joining Senate this year:

She discussed their completed and current projects as follows:

They worked on their Strategic Plan and developed six pillars they felt are representative of students needs:

- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, & Accessibility
- Student Engagement
- Transparency
- Academic Advocacy
- Transportation

They represented CBU at several conferences over the spring and summer including the following:

- Maritime Student Congress
- 2025 Campus Trust Assembly of Participating Organizations
- Students Nova Scotia Annual and Strategic Planning conference

They successfully hosted the Annual Capers Helping Capers Golf Tournaments where they raised and estimated \$14,000 for the following four charities:

- Cape Breton Family Place Resource Centre
- Transition House Association, Willow House
- EPIC Youth Peer Program
- Jane Paul Indigenous Women's Resource Centre

She advised that due to the bookstore no longer working out of the physical space it previously was, the Students' Union has taken over the physical merchandise side of things and are selling CBU merchandise and course required clothing, out of the Welcome Centre.

She noted that the Students' Union announced it will continue offering the REES sexual violence reporting platform following the university's decision not to renew its partnership. A MOA with REES will be signed in the coming weeks.

Week of Welcome was a great success, with strong student engagement across a variety of events organized by the Students' Union. She highlighted the events.

J. Mayich thanked them for their involvement with the orientation and the social activities.

## **5.5 Board of Governors**

No Report

## **5.6 Executive Committee**

K. Rowe reported on the following:

The Executive Committee met to set the agenda for today's meeting. Committees will get their mandates together for this year and a Take Note Debate was scheduled for today's and another one in October.

## **6. Approval of the Minutes**

- Senate – June 6, 2025

### **Motion:**

**Moved** by M. Henick, seconded by J. Tunnicliff, that Senate approve the minutes from the June 6<sup>th</sup> Senate meeting.

It was suggested that a typo on page 33 and that the Provosts' comments be updated.

**Motion Carried. (17 abstentions)**

## **7. Business Arising from the Minutes – N/A**

## **8. Report from Senate Committees:**

### **8.1 Planning and Review**

No Report.

### **8.2 Teaching, Learning and Evaluation**

No Report.

### **8.3 Academic**

J. Parish advised that the Academic Committee's activities are outlined in his report included with the Senate Material. He highlighted the following:

The committee met four times since the last Senate meeting. On July 11th, membership changes brought the committee to its full complement of ten. The Chair was confirmed by acclamation, and Kristin MacKinnon agreed to take minutes in the absence of a recording secretary. Work on the Decision Matrix has concluded but will be submitted in the October report. A new Academic Integrity Committee was formed following a June Senate suggestion, though its terms are still being finalized and will also be presented in October. There are currently 3 new programmes from SSOB and several new courses from SEH to be considered among many policy changes, updates, and improvements. They hope to bring many of these to the October meeting as well.

The following Items were introduced for Information:

1. Recommendation for Advanced Standing under the Scottish Qualification Authority
  - a. Advanced Standing Hospitality to BHTM
  - b. Advanced Standing Business to BBA
2. Programme Suspension of Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Business Analytics
3. Programme Suspension of Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Business Management
4. Programme Suspension of Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Healthcare Management
5. Programme Suspension of Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Supply Chain Management

He introduced the following Recommendations:

1. The committee recommends that Senate approve the Leave of Absence Policy for Domestic Students. He advised that the new policy applies to domestic students across the institution and that the currently policy only applies to international students.

**Motion:**

**Moved** by J. Parish to approve the Leave of Absence Policy (LOA) for Domestic Students.

During discussion on the motion, it was confirmed that the Domestic Policy would not conflict with the current institution policy for international students as well as an explanation as to why international students require their own policy.

The following friendly amendments were proposed:

- Specify in the policy who the report is to be submitted to.
- Divide Section 6 into two separate sections to improve clarity and ease of navigation.

**Motion Carried.**

J. Parish advised that the committee reviewed the proposed BET (Mechanical) Program. The proposal outlines the credentials and details of four streams for students to earn a Bachelor of Engineering Technology degree:

- Bachelor of Engineering Technology (Mechanical),
- Bachelor of Engineering Technology (Mechanical) with Co-op,
- Bachelor of Engineering Technology, Major in Mechanical Technology,
- Bachelor of Engineering Technology, Major in Mechanical Technology with Co-op

2. The committee recommends that Senate approve the Bachelor of Engineering Technology (Mechanical) Program proposal.

**Motion:**

**Moved** by J. Parish, to approve the Bachelor of Engineering Technology – Mechanical Concentration (BET Mech).

**Motion Carried.**

#### **8.4 By-Laws and Procedures**

J. Tunnicliff had no formal report but noted that the Committee met last week and welcomed new members. The Committee will meet again next week to review mandate letters, a summary of last year's activities, and bylaws, which will be presented to Senate in October for approval.

#### **8.5 Quality Assurance**

No. Report

#### **8.6 Research**

M. Bierenstiel provided an update on behalf of the Research Committee as outlined in his report included in the Meeting Package. He highlighted the following:

- Marcia Ostashewski and Matthias Bierenstiel were elected as co-chairs for RC
- The Committee is planning on working on the following:
  - Completion of CBU Strategic Research Plan
  - Research Awards Policy (see action item below)
  - CBU Institutes and Research Centre Policy
  - CBU Intellectual Property Policy
  - Adjudication of 3 Research Awards
  - Overseeing and confirmation of staffing of Research Ethics Board, Animal Care Committee and Research Assistance Committee
  - Changes to Terms of Reference for RC (submitted to Senate/By-laws Committee in early 2025)
  - RC has use of AI and research on its radar but we will await CBU policy and contribute through that.

#### **Research Awards Policy.**

M. Bierenstiel advised that the Research Committee has unanimously approved changes to the Research Awards Policy. He referenced the minor changes to the policy and advised there were no changes to the substantial nomination and selection criteria.

**Motion:**

**Moved** by M. Bierenstiel that Senate approve the Research Awards Policy as presented.

During discussion, clarification was provided on the self-nomination process and it was suggested that the winners of these awards be included in the Academic Calendar.

**Motion Carried.**

**8.7 Planning and Review**

M. Bishop reported that the committee held its inaugural meeting, during which she was elected as Chair. Preparations for the pre-budget recommendations will begin next week, with the intention of presenting them at the upcoming Senate meeting.

**8.8 Teaching, Learning and Evaluation**

T. MacDonald noted that a meeting was held; however, the position of Chair is currently vacant, and they hope to appoint one soon.

**9. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

**Karen Rowe  
Secretary to Senate**