Senate
Minutes

March 20, 2026
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, Tammy Bernasky, Melissa Bishop, Tanya Brann-Barrett, Martin Chandler, Shannon Ezzat, Virginia Gunn, Michael Henick, Enrique Hernandez, Jenny Kassen, Karen Kennedy, Carolin Kreber, Doug Lionais, Ellyn Lyle, Shauna MacDonald, Emily MacLeod, Stephanie MacQuarrie, Chris McDonald, Terry MacDonald, John Nadeau, Willena Nemeth, Rod Nicholls, Felix Odartey-Wellington, Andy Parnaby, Kinnon Pitcher, Sergiy Pysarenko, Timothy Rawlings, Quinn Rowe, Stefanie Ruel, Nancy Samson, Rebecca Seymore, Nancy Spina, Destiny Tobin, Karen Tobin, Jamie Tunnicliff, Tom Ue, Kellie White, Guosong Wu

Regrets:
Sahand Ashtab, Matthias Bierenstiel, Sean Campbell, Linda Cavanaugh, David Dingwall, Angelica Bermudez Herrera, Harkanwal Kaur, Tracy Lillington, Jaxson MacDonald, Gordon MacInnis, John Mayich, Kathleen Nash, Marcia Ostashewski, Joe Parish, Alex Paul, Nathan Ryan, Ann Sylliboy, Laurianne Sylvester, Toyin Tade, Bilynda Whiting

2. Consent Agenda:

2.1 New Course Proposal – GEOL: Oceanography and Climate

<u>Motion:</u>
Moved by C. Kreber, seconded by T. Rawlings, that Senate approve March 20th Consent Agenda.
Motion Carried.

3. <u>Reports and Items for Information</u>

3.1 <u>President</u>

No Report.

3.2 Vice President Academic and Provost

R. Nicholls advised that Joe Parish, Chair of Senate's Academic Committee, was absent due to a recent car accident. Best wishes were extended to him for a speedy recovery.

R. Nicholls reported the following:

- With respect to the Bilateral Academic Program Review, the process is currently in Phase 2. Deans, Chairs, and faculty are completing program-specific reviews, with the review expected to conclude in late April or early May. Each program will develop an action plan aligned with its classification, which may include no change, modernization, revitalization, or rationalization.
- An update was provided on new graduate programs within the Shannon School of Business. The Registrar's Office has begun processing applications for three new graduate programs, and as of yesterday, three students had confirmed seats in the Master of Artificial Intelligence and Business Analytics for a September start. These programs require 36 credits and are designed for 16 months of full-time study, delivered in person on campus. While most first-year seats are projected to be filled by international students, an online option is planned for working professionals in Canada. Admissions will be carefully managed to align with existing faculty capacity.
- With respect to graduate program oversight, policies guiding institutional oversight of graduate programs are currently in development and draft policies will be submitted to Senate for review and approval. The Centre for Teaching and Learning is also developing professional development opportunities for faculty who will be teaching online graduate programs, with further details anticipated in the fall.
- A budget update for 2026–2027 noted that external financial pressures continue to affect CBU. The Nova Scotia budget resulted in a reduction of approximately $750,000 in grants. Funding of $700,000 previously supporting the Beaton Institute and Art Gallery was not reinstated, while $50,000 supporting Unama'ki College was reinstated. The net impact adds approximately $700,000 to the university's ongoing budget challenges.
- Preparations are on track to launch the Viola Desmond Chair in Social Justice, with applications expected to open in Fall 2026 and an anticipated appointment in 2027.
- Congratulations were extended to recipients of the 2026 President's Research and Teaching Awards. Shannon Ezzat recognized with Senate's Instructional Leadership Award and currently holds the 2026 Teaching Chair. In addition, the Elizabeth Boardmore One Act Play Festival concluded its 50th year, and faculty members Kylie Ewing and Hamid Andishan were recognized for hosting Philosophy Cafés, continuing a longstanding CBU tradition.
- Registrar and academic timetable updates for 2026–2027 were also provided. The Registrar's Office will introduce two new timetable features, and faculty will be contacted earlier regarding courses that require scheduled final exams, with the goal of making this information available by the start of classes. Faculty will also be asked to identify Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) courses. Participation in ZTC initiatives is voluntary, and further clarification on qualifying materials will be forthcoming. These changes aim to improve efficiency and transparency for students.

Following the Report, the Chair extended collective thoughts and prayers to Joe and his loved ones. He also extended congratulations to newly tenured faculty members Emily MacLeod, Shannon Ezzat, Virginia Gunn, and Stephanie Ruel.

During Senate discussion, the Student Union expressed strong support for ZTC listings, citing benefits related to affordability and student retention. A question was raised regarding funding for the Viola Desmond Chair, and it was clarified that the Chair is supported by externally raised endowment funds, is planned to run for 12 to 15 years, and will offer three application streams: postdoctoral, professional, and established academic, open to both internal and external candidates.

3.3 Unama'ki College

No Report.

3.4 Students' Union

R. Seymour, SU Vice-President provided the report on behalf of the Students' Union and highlighted the following:

- Women's Week, hosted by the Women's Centre in recognition of Women's History Month, was successfully held and well attended. A variety of programming was offered throughout the week, including leadership-focused activities, creative workshops, and student-led initiatives. Appreciation was extended to individuals who participated and supported the events.
- They participated in Open Education Week in collaboration with Atlantic OER and Students Nova Scotia. Activities focused on raising awareness of Open Educational Resources and engaging students in discussions related to textbook affordability, with feedback being collected for future reporting.
- The Students' Union reported participation in a letter-writing campaign coordinated with Students Nova Scotia in response to provincial budget decisions affecting post-secondary education. Approximately 30 letters were sent to provincial officials, alongside advocacy efforts by other student unions.
- In observance of Ramadan, the Students' Union prepared and distributed Iftar packages for students. Packages were made available through the food bank and chaplaincy during the distribution period.
- The ongoing Student Services Passport initiative encourages student participation in Student Services programming through incentive-based draws. Recent and upcoming sessions were noted.
- The Students' Union confirmed that its annual elections had concluded following delays. It was reported that Paarth Mehla will assume the role of President and Bria Goyetche the role of Vice-President, effective May.

- Multicultural Week programming included a range of cultural, artistic, and social activities throughout the week. Events were supported by various student groups and campus partners, with strong student engagement noted.

During discussion, a question was raised regarding student strikes at other institutions in Nova Scotia and the Students' Union's decision not to participate. The Students' Union indicated that students, particularly international students, had expressed concerns regarding potential academic and immigration-related implications of missing classes. It was noted that students favoured alternative advocacy approaches such as letter-writing and lobbying efforts. Clarification was provided that peaceful protest is permitted under the Code of Student Conduct, provided activities are conducted safely and without disruption.

3.5 Board of Governors

N. Samson provided a summary of the Board of Governors meeting held on March 6.

- She reported that the Students' Union had included referenda with its general election to expand membership to master's and part-time students, and that amendments to the Students' Union Election Act had been proposed, including shortened campaign periods and revised academic eligibility requirements. It was subsequently clarified that both referenda did not pass.
- Highlights from the President's report to the Board - The visit from Mrs. Fox at the Keough Forum opening was well received and generated significant national and international media attention. The approval of three new master's programs was announced, along with confirmation that the official opening of the medical school will take place on May 14. It was noted that between December 6 and March 6, the President attended more than 60 internal meetings and numerous external engagements in support of the University's strategic priorities. Admissions activity was reported as strong in both domestic and international markets. The appointment of Jack H. Graham as CBU's third Chancellor, effective May 1, 2026, for a five-year term, was also announced.
- N. Samson further reported on the Treasurer's update, noting that work is underway to reset CBU's three-year financial plan based on revised enrolment projections of approximately 3,500 students. The updated budget will be presented to the Board of Governors at its April meeting. It was also reported that the Forever CBU campaign has reached 91% of its $50-million fundraising goal.

3.6 Executive Committee

H. Antaal reported the following:

She advised that the Senate Executive Committee met on March 6 following the Board of Governors meeting and provided an update from the Senate Standing Committees as follows:

- The Academic Committee advanced one consent agenda item, which was subsequently presented to Senate, discussions were had related to nursing students, academic pathways, and course transfer matters. Work is also underway on AI-related appeal processes and academic integrity policies, in consultation with Human Resources, with further details to be provided in the Committee's report.
- The Quality Assurance and Research Committee reported no new updates.
- The Teaching, Learning, and Academic Committee (TLAC) reported ongoing work related to TLAC awards.
- The Bylaws and Procedures Committee reported that school-level bylaws have now been approved at the school level and are currently with the Academic Committee for review.
- The Planning and Review Committee reported that work is underway on a Senate-related policy.

The Senate Executive Committee also approved the draft agenda for the current Senate meeting.

4. Approval of the Minutes

➢ Senate – February 20, 2026

Motion:
Moved by K. Kennedy, seconded by T. Brann Barrett, that Senate approve the minutes from the March 20th, 2026 Senate meeting.
Motion Carried. (4 abstentions)

5. Business Arising from the Minutes – N/A

6. Report from Senate Committees:

6.1 Academic Committee

C. Kreber provided an update from the Academic Committee and reported the following:

The Academic Committee are bringing three motions a forward for approval. The first of which concerns a proposed Transfer Credit Policy for General Certificate, Advanced, or A-Level courses. The policy outlines conditions under which up to 30 credits may be considered for transfer, with specific provisions based on subject area, the program to which the student is applying, and final grades achieved. The Committee noted the need for a formalized policy in this area and advised that the proposal aligns with practices across the region. The Academic Committee recommended that Senate approve the proposed policy.

Motion:
Moved by C. Kreber that Senate approve the Policy on Transfer Credit for General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Level (A Level) Courses.
Motion Carried.

The Academic Committee reported on a proposed new course, MATH 1009 – Statistics for Nursing, submitted by the School of Science and Technology. The course is intended exclusively for nursing students and would replace MATH 1109 for students enrolled in the nursing program. It was noted that students who do not progress in nursing and transition to a general science degree would still be required to complete MATH 1109.

The Committee advised that the proposed course is more applied and nursing-focused, responding to longstanding concerns regarding the suitability of MATH 1109 for nursing students. The Committee further noted that enrolment numbers within the nursing program are sufficient to support the course offering without increasing the overall number of statistics sections. The Academic Committee recommended that Senate approve the new course.

Motion:
Moved by C. Kreber that Senate approve the new course proposal for MATH 1009: Statistics for Nurses.

Senate discussed the motion to approve Math 1009, noting that the course is intended to better meet the pedagogical needs of nursing students while allowing Math 1109 to focus on science and engineering cohorts. Discussion addressed potential future development of program-specific statistics courses, impacts on enrolment and faculty resources, and effects on students moving between programs. It was clarified that Math 1109 would continue to be accepted for nursing if completed previously and that relatively few students would be affected. Follow-up items include correcting inconsistencies in the course title and confirming course numbering, with any required administrative amendments to be addressed prior to implementation.
Motion Carried.

The introduction of a new course to the core of the Nursing programme requires a minor programme change. This change does not require MPHEC approval, so consideration of its merits and approval rest solely with Senate. As indicated with the above new course proposal, the new MATH 1009 course will replace the current statistics course to better prepare nurses for their specific needs in their training. Making this change will not differently impact students who might fail to progress through nursing and switch to a different degree programme.

Motion:
Moved by C. Kreber that Senate approve the minor change to the B.Sc.N programme submitted by the School of Nursing replacing MATH 1109 with MATH 1009 in the programme core.
Motion Carried.

6.2 Quality Assurance

S. Ezzat advised that there was no formal report however it was noted that the Committee voted for a new Terms of Reference.

6.3 Teaching, Learning, and Evaluation

S. Pysarenko reported that the Instructional Leadership Award process was highly competitive this year. A total of nine nominations were received, with eight nominees accepting and submitting full applications. The review committee noted that many of the submissions were of very high quality, with several nominees considered deserving of recognition in future years. It was emphasized that nominees who were not selected this year remain strong candidates and may be successful in subsequent competitions without significant changes to their submissions.

6.4 Bylaws and Procedures

No Report.

6.5 Research

M. Bierenstiel reported the following:

6.6 Planning and Review

M. Bishop reported the following:

The committee met on Monday, March 2, 2026, to review the Adjunct policy with discussion focused on policy language, term length, and alignment with the collective agreement. The committee initially adopted the updated policy unanimously and recommended Senate approval. The primary proposed change was the amendment of adjunct appointments from a three-year term to a one-year renewable term.

During Senate discussion, questions were raised regarding appointment and renewal processes, escalation of recommendations, administrative clarity, and potential impacts on workload and governance consistency. As a result of the discussion, it was agreed that further clarification and refinement of the policy were required. The motion to approve the updated Adjunct Policy was deferred to allow the committee to revisit the policy and return with revisions at a future meeting.

Motion:
Moved by M. Bishop that Senate approve the updated Adjunct Policy.

Questions were raised regarding appointment and renewal processes, escalation of recommendations, administrative clarity, and potential impacts on workload and governance consistency. As a result of the discussion, it was agreed that further clarification and refinement of the policy were required.
Motion Deferred

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

Harsimran Kaur Antaal
Secretary to Senate