Senate
Minutes

May 15, 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, Sahand Ashtab, Matthias Bierenstiel, Tanya Brann-Barrett, Melissa Bishop, Linda Cavanaugh, Martin Chandler, Tracy Dike, Shannon Ezzat, Bria Goyetch, Virginia Gunn, Michael Henick, Enrique Hernandez, Jenny Kassen, Karen Kennedy, Carolin Kreber, Tracy Lillington, Doug Lionais, Ellyn Lyle, Shauna MacDonald, Emily MacLeod, Stephanie MacQuarrie, Terry MacDonald, Chris McDonald, John Mayich, Paarth Mehla, John Nadeau, Kathleen Nash, Willena Nemeth, Nova Nguyen, Rod Nicholls, Felix Odartey-Wellington, Kehinde Oni, Joe Parish, Andy Parnaby, Kinnon Pitcher, Timothy Rawlings, Quinn Rowe, Stefanie Ruel, Nancy Samson, Karen Tobin, Tom Ue, Kellie White, Bilynda Whiting

Regrets:
Tammy Bernasky, Jennifer Campbell, Sean Campbell, David Dingwall, Harkanwal Kaur, Jaxson MacDonald, Marcia Ostashewski, Sergiy Pysarenko, Nathan Ryan, Nancy Spina, Ann Sylliboy, Laurianne Sylvester, Jamie Tunnicliff, Guosong Wu

The Chair acknowledged Ellyn Lyle's final day on Senate, expressing appreciation for her contributions and extending best wishes for her future endeavors.

2. <u>Matters to be Considered in Closed Session/Confidential Business</u>

2.1 Approval of the Cape Breton University Spring 2026 Graduand list

<u>**Motion:**</u>
Moved by J. Nadeau, seconded by T. Brann Barrett, to move into Closed Session for the purpose of approval of the Spring 2026 CBU Graduand list.
Motion Carried.

Motion:
M. Bierenstiel, seconded by J. Mayich to move into open session.
Motion Carried.

3. Start Smart:

The Chair introduced the motion to approve the use of the Start Smart Moodle module for all students for the 2026–27 academic year, with a future Stay Smart module planned for returning students.

Motion:
Moved by J. Mayich, seconded by D. Lionais, that Senate approve the use of Start Smart Moodle for all students for the 2026-27 Academic Year.

- Concerns were raised regarding the mandatory nature of the module, the completeness of its content, and whether sufficient information was available prior to approval. Clarifications were provided that the core content remains unchanged from the previous presentation, with only short video segments to be added. It was noted that completion of the module would be required before students can access other Moodle courses, with no academic or financial penalties applied beyond restricted access.
- Discussion also addressed applicability to different student groups, implementation considerations, and the process for updating content. Support for the initiative was expressed as a measure to ensure students are informed of expectations and available resources.

Motion Carried. (6 abstentions)

4. Reports and Items for Information

4.1 President

No Report

4.2 Vice President Academic and Provost

R. Nicholls provided an update on key academic initiatives, including the official opening of the Cape Breton Medical Campus and its anticipated positive impact on education, research, and health sciences. He highlighted recent and upcoming academic events, confirmed completion of program review report deadlines with institutional submission to follow, and noted ongoing program costing analysis. Updates were also provided on enrolment timelines for new School of Business master’s programs, the appointment of an Acting Dean of Education, and organizational changes within Health Sciences, including forthcoming bylaw and procedural updates.

In discussion, it was noted that the medical campus is contributing to increased interest and applications in Bachelor of Science programs, particularly biology, alongside growth in pre-med engagement. Admissions to the medical program were clarified as being based on a rural pathway with no institutional preference, though early indications show CBU graduates are successfully gaining entry. Opportunities to strengthen pre-med supports and improve tracking of applicant outcomes were identified.

Further discussion addressed integration between the medical campus and CBU, with existing collaboration with Dalhousie expected to expand. Increased engagement through joint events, research initiatives, and interprofessional learning opportunities was encouraged. Recruitment of physician researchers with protected research time was identified as a key opportunity to enhance research capacity and student involvement.

4.3 <u>Unama'ki College</u>

No Report.

4.4 <u>Students' Union</u>

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

- A new Student Union executive team took office on May 1st, consisting of the following members.
    - Paarth Mehla, President
    - Bria Goyetch, Executive VP
    - Nova Nguyen, VP Promotions
    - Tracy Dike, VP Finance & Operations
    - Harsimran (Simi) Kaur Antaal
    - Kinnon Pitcher
    - Jaxon McDonald
    - Kehinde Oni

- Initial activities included tabling sessions (May 5–6) with Student Affairs to engage incoming students and promote services; a social media prize draw was held on May 13.
- Two student staff were hired to support operations, including reception duties, food bank services, women's centre access, and convenience store operations.
- The executive completed transition meetings with university staff and received training on social media and event planning.
- A meeting was held with the Mayor (May 7) to discuss collaboration, student issues, and advocacy priorities (e.g., OER funding, MSI access, transit, housing).
- Plans are underway to collaborate on the fall CBU Expo and maintain regular check-ins with community partners.
- A strategic planning retreat was completed, with progress made on priorities.

- The executive expressed commitment to representing students and participating in Senate.

Following the report, support was expressed for the proposed CBRM Expo initiative and It was requested that Student Affairs be included and engaged in supporting the Expo.

4.5 Board of Governors

No Report

4.6 Executive Committee

H. Antaal reported the following:

The Senate Executive reviewed upcoming agenda items and discussed the recent meeting with incoming Student Union executives. The committee also considered the Intellectual Property Policy currently under development and agreed that it would not be brought forward to Senate at the next two meetings, with a draft to be shared for review in June.

5. Approval of the Minutes

- Senate – April 24, 2026

Motion:
Moved by S. MacQuarrie, seconded by V. Gunn, that Senate approve the minutes from the April 24th, 2026 Senate meeting.
Motion Carried. (6 abstentions)

6. Business Arising from the Minutes – N/A

7. Report from Senate Committees:

7.1 Academic Committee

J. Parish reported the following:

The Academic Committee met twice since the last Senate meeting. Two new programs were considered, one of which has been withdrawn, and two new articulation agreements were discussed; these will return to Senate for information following completion by the Community Outreach and Academic Pathways Office.

Items for Information:

- J. Parish advised that the certificate in High School Mathematics Education has been suspended due to low enrolment and operational challenges, including scheduling and resource constraints.
- The Academic Committee approved a proposal for a new Master of Arts in Community Sport and Health, which will be presented to Senate on June 12. Due to MPHEC submission deadlines on the same day, the intent is for Senate to vote on the proposal at that meeting and, if approved, submit it immediately. The proposal will be circulated to senators in advance to allow for early review and feedback, with comments coordinated prior to the meeting to address key issues and support an efficient approval process.

Recommendations:

1. The Embedded Certificate in Foundations of Computer Science

- The Academic Committee recommended approval of an 18-credit embedded Certificate in Foundations of Computer Science within the mathematics program. The credential uses existing courses and requires no additional resources, and is intended to recognize foundational computer science learning and support pathways to further study, including graduate programs.

Motion:
Moved by J. Parish that Senate approve the Embedded Certificate in Foundations of Computer Science.

- A question was raised about how library resource requirements are assessed in program proposals, noting the contrast between identifying essential subscriptions and indicating no new resources are needed. Discussion highlighted that the library evaluates resources by aligning them with program learning outcomes, course needs, and the level of study, while considering both current holdings and gaps. Factors such as access format (electronic and print), support for research activities, and long-term availability are also considered. It was noted that existing resources were sufficient in this case because the program is built on existing courses. The importance of maintaining core subscriptions to support programs and avoid disadvantaging students was emphasized, along with broader considerations of how academic support resources are integrated into program planning and budgeting.

Motion Carried.

2. New Course Proposal Form

The committee has developed a revised new course proposal form to improve clarity and consistency in submissions. Updates include clearer prompts linking learning outcomes to program objectives, a requirement to address the consideration of artificial intelligence, a dedicated section for experiential learning aligned with provincial guidelines, and improved formatting for readability. The committee recommended that Senate approve the revised form.

Motion:
Moved by J. Parish that Senate approve the revised New Course Proposal Form**.**

A question was raised about the clarity and expectations of the artificial intelligence section in the course proposal form, particularly whether consultation should be required or simply reported. It was explained that the intent is to gauge how proponents are considering AI, with expectations varying depending on the course. Suggestions were made to revise the question to require a brief explanation rather than a simple yes/no response.

Further discussion addressed concerns about defining experiential learning and ensuring consistency in interpretation, as well as broader challenges related to tracking course delivery changes over time and respecting academic freedom. The potential value of consulting the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) was highlighted, though it was noted that adding such a requirement would need further committee consideration.
Motion Postponed.

7.2 Quality Assurance

No Report

7.3 Teaching, Learning, and Evaluation

No Report

7.4 Bylaws and Procedures

S. MacDonald reported the following:

The committee continues its ongoing bylaw review work and has brought forward a recommendation for Senate to approve revised terms of reference for its standing committees. The revisions were developed by the respective subcommittees and are generally minor in nature, with some variation across committees.

Motion:
Moved by S. MacDonald that Senate approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Standing Committees of Senate.

A concern was raised that specifying representatives from individual schools in committee terms creates the need for policy revisions whenever membership changes, suggesting a more flexible approach. Feedback was also provided on the review process, noting that including a tracked-changes version would improve clarity.

- A friendly amendment was accepted to correct indentation formatting of items B, C, and E in the document.

Motion Carried as Amended.

7.5 Research

M. Bierenstiel provided an update from the Research Committee.

A proposed revision to the Animal Care Committee's terms of reference was brought forward, addressing a restrictive membership requirement that had created challenges due to limited eligible personnel. The revised language combines previous criteria to allow greater flexibility by requiring at least two members with experience in animal care and use, who must be full-time CBU employees and may be faculty and/or lab instructors. The change aligns with external regulatory requirements and is described as a minor but important update.

Motion:
Moved by M. Bierenstiel, that Senate approve the revised membership language in the TOR for Animal Care Committee (ACC).
Motion Carried.

M. Bierenstiel also reported that results for the RISE funding competition were recently announced, following the review of 38 applications by the Research Assistance Committee. A total of 20 projects were funded, while 18 were not, with $180,000 awarded from $332,000 requested. Applications were received across multiple schools, and results now include project titles, recipients, and funding amounts under the updated policy. The report also noted tracking of early career applicants, though none were identified in this round. Overall, appreciation was expressed for the work of the committee and the Research Office, and the breadth and quality of funded research projects was highlighted.

7.6 Planning and Review

No Report.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Harsimran Kaur Antaal
Secretary to Senate