

MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY
MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

September 11, 2018, 4:00 p.m.
Tweedie Hall

Present: L. Bedgood, F. Black, JP. Boudreau (Chair), C. Brett (Secretary), A. Cannon, A. Cockshutt, G. Cruttwell, G. Desmarais, J. Devine, J. Dryden, E. Edson, B. Evans, A. Fancy, N. Farooqi, N. Fry, A. Grant, O. Griffiths, D. Hamilton, R. Inglis, R. Ireland, G. Jollymore, L. Kern, M. Klohn, D. Lieske, J. Lilburn, S. MacIver, K. Meade, L. Michaelis, E. Miller, A. Nurse, J. Ollerhead (Vice-Chair), C. Parker, E. Patterson, C. Quint, B. Robertson, J. Rogers, S. Runge, V. St. Pierre, E. Steuter, F. Strain, J. Tomes, M. Truitt, S. Unger, N. Verret, N. Vogan, E. Wells, B. White, K. Willock, W. Wilson

Regrets: P. Kelly-Spurles

Observers: There were many students standing in the room, showing support for the motion under Item 06.09.11 below. Those who wished to be identified signed a sheet, which is appended to these minutes.

01.09.11 Acknowledgement of Lands

JP. Boudreau read the statement of aboriginal custodianship:

Before we begin the proceedings, I would like to acknowledge, honour, and pay respect to the traditional owners and custodians (from all four directions), of the land on which we gather. It is upon the unceded ancestral lands of the Mi'kmaw people, that Mount Allison University is built. While this area is known as Sackville, NB the territory is part of the greater territory of Mi'kma'ki.

As we share our own knowledge, teaching, learning, and research practices within this University, may we also pay respect to the knowledge embedded forever within the Indigenous custodianship of this country. Welilioq.

He then asked everyone present to consider how they embody the statement of committal.

02.09.11 Approval of the Agenda

Motion (N. Verret/L. Bedgood): that Senate adopt the Agenda as circulated

Motion Carried

Due to the large number of student visitors with an interest in the agenda item pertaining to the modes of course delivery, it was agreed to move that item forward in the order.

03.09.11 Introductions

Senators introduced themselves and stated their constituencies. JP. Boudreau welcomed all senators, new and returning.

04.09.11 Approval of the Senate Minutes of May 10 , 2018

Motion (N. Verret/L. Bedgood): that Senate adopt the Minutes of the meeting of May 10, 2018

Motion Carried

05.09.11 Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising.

0.6.09.11 Report from MASU regarding Delivery of Courses

The report, which is appended to these minutes, contained the rationale for the following motion.

Motion (E. Patterson/ S. Unger): that Senate affirms in principle the necessity of varied modes of delivery of instruction, especially ample online courses, in the realization of the academic mission of the university.

Motion was later modified

N. Fry spoke to the motion, arguing that recent cuts to correspondence and online offerings would impact students from disadvantaged groups who take reduced course loads in some terms and rely on these offerings to fill in gaps in their programs. He noted that MASU brought this motion for three reasons: (i) the courses affected are critical; (ii) recent changes that led to a reduction in correspondence and online offerings were not adequately communicated to students; (iii) students were not consulted, and MASU deems consultation to be necessary.

The following points were raised during debate on the motion:

- Students in many programs use correspondence and online courses to fill in gaps in degree requirements. E. Steuter, J. Devine, and J. Dryden all noted that these offerings give departments a flexible way to offer additional courses when sabbatical and other leaves are not fully replaced or when it is difficult to find instructors willing to move to Sackville to teach a single course. M. Klohn added that online courses can be used by students who do not always have suitable access to a building or classroom.
- Some Senators, including J. Tomes and D. Hamilton, were worried that the motion would direct departments who do not currently offer correspondence or online courses to develop these courses. E. Patterson noted that the intent of the motion was to ensure that the overall number of online offerings be adequate, not to direct any specific departments to change their modes of course delivery.
- A. Cockshutt and J. Ollerhead noted that online courses are still available, and departments offer them as part of their course rotations. J. Ollerhead commented that, the per-student method of paying instructors is not being used this academic year. Instead, all instructors are being paid on stipends or as part of a contract. The Provost said that he made this decision to limit the number of course offerings with very small enrollments, with a goal to allocate more resources to stipendiary and full-time faculty hires.
- Some senators then questioned the rationale for the change in procedures. N. Fry noted that MASU had collected data indicating that correspondence courses had a mean enrollment of

ten students, with a median of eight. F. Black asked whether correspondence courses cost much to run. F. Black and J. Dryden added that the recent changes have decreased total course offerings because some of the discontinued correspondence courses have not been replaced by stipendiary offerings. J. Ollerhead answered that direct costs were in range of \$50,000-\$70,000, and that indirect costs need to be added in. R. Inglis noted that it is hard to disentangle the effects of the policy change from other budgetary decisions, making it difficult to arrive at an estimate of where the savings were spent. O. Griffiths was puzzled by the inconsistency between the MASU data and the Provost's statement that there were many low-enrollment courses. He would have liked to have seen more data on the costs of offering correspondence courses and any associated revenue streams.

- B. Robertson took issue with the idea of correspondence and online courses being a necessity. He cited examples of other liberal arts universities that offer no online or correspondence courses. He noted further that online courses are available from other institutions, so their availability to students does not rest rely on in-house offerings.
- E. Steuter, L. Bedgood, and M. Klohn all expressed a wish that a discussion like the one occurring at this meeting, or other forms of consultation, had taken place before the actions of this academic year had occurred.
- A. Fancy, O. Griffiths, and J. Devine noted that a suite of correspondence courses could be attractive to students, and perhaps a source of added revenue to the university.
- At times, the discussion focused on the distinction between online delivery and correspondence courses. In order to move the debate on from that point, the mover and seconder proposed an alternate wording of the motion, which Senate agreed to vote upon.

Motion (E.Patterson/ S.Unger) that Senate affirms in principle the necessity of varied modes of delivery of instruction, especially ample online courses and, in particular, correspondence courses, in the realization of the academic mission of the university.

Motion Carried (11 nays, 2 abstentions)

07.09.11 Report from the Chair

JP. Boudreau stated that he is looking forward to working as Chair of Senate. He asked Senators to show their appreciation for the work of Drs. R. Campbell and C. Verduyn. Senators did so with a round of applause. The President went on to say that he is open to introducing new modes of discussion in Senate, while respecting its current traditions.

JP. Boudreau then gave Senators a time to share news, as part of his ongoing Discover MTA initiative. S. MacIver noted that the Interdisciplinary Conversations Series will continue this year under the theme Connections. He also noted the Shad Program for high school students that Mount Allison hosted during Summer 2018. N. Farooqi referred Senators to the latest edition of the Social Science Newsletter, and noted that Mount Allison accounting students scored above the national average on recent CPA exams. E. Miller acknowledged the team effort behind Orientation, and thanked faculty for their work in Academic Orientation. B. Evans expressed appreciation for the current spirit of cooperation between Mount Allison and the Town of Sackville. JP. Boudreau thanked everyone involved in making these success stories.

The President then informed Senate of his ongoing listening tour, in which he has interacted with many people and groups on campus, with more to come. He also mentioned of his recent meetings with local officials, donors, and the presidents of nearby universities. He added that Mount Allison has signed a new MOU with NBCC.

JP. Boudreau identified six areas of priority on which he wishes to work: (i) differentiating our strengths; (ii) fostering sustainability; (iii) student recruitment; (iv) telling our stories; (v) ensuring quality experiences, including experiential learning; (vi) building connections and partnerships.

He also noted upcoming events including the PowWow, the Installation, a talk by Stephen Lewis in the President's Speakers Series, and the Pride Parade.

Finally, the President thanked everyone for their welcome and support in his first days at Mount Allison. He said that he is honoured to be the 15th President and Vice Chancellor.

08.09.11 Report from the University Planning Committee

J. Ollerhead reported that the committee was scheduled to meet for the first time on September 14. Academic unit review summaries were circulated for the Departments of History, Politics and International Relations, and Mathematics and Computer Science. He asked for initial questions about these reviews and noted that further discussion could be carried out during the October meeting of Senate. He informed Senators that reviews will be carried out this year for the Departments of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Music, and the Libraries and Archives. He noted that the committee plans to review vacancies and decide on hiring priorities in the coming months, with a hope to initiating tenure-track searches by the end of October.

J. Ollerhead asked if there were any questions about the report. There were none.

09.09.11 Report from the Committee on Committees

J. Dryden gave the report, which consisted of the following motions.

Motion 1: (J. Dryden /J. Tomes) The Committee on Committees moves that Senate acclaim the following nominee to the Academic Matters committee for a term beginning immediately and ending June 30, 2021:

LIAM KELIHER

Motion Carried

Motion 2: (J. Dryden / L. Michaelis) The Committee on Committees moves that Senate acclaim the following nominee to the University Planning committee for a term beginning immediately and ending June 30, 2021:

WAYNE HUNT

Motion Carried

10.09.11 Other Business

There was no other business

11.09.11 Adjournment

There being no further business or announcements, the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 pm (V. St. Pierre/L. Bedgood).

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Brett
Secretary

Names appear on minutes of Senate (optional)

Name

Aminah Simmons
Arianna Woodley
Sarah Zanoni
Emily Shaw
Brandon Pines
Alison MacIntosh
Emma Jacobson
Emma Garlick
Sarah Gordon
Sydney Ford
Olivia Corrigan
Kristie Earles
Cara MacKenzie
James Nanas
Andrew Linton
Will Traues
Brad Gamble
Anneke van der Laan
Julia Campbell
Alexandra Ballu
Emma Kruisselbrink
Rebekah Howlett
Venna Penner
Molli Ward
Catherine Campbell
Grace Snowden

Name

Grace Moreno-Dimayacyac
Faisal Hossain
~~Morgan McNeill~~
Amira Abouleish
Kayla Blanchard
Will Lint
Claire Klumbeck
Anna Manuel
Romie Pond
Juliana Rutledge
Darcy Phillips
Bolin Li
Emilie Pichon
Karlie Rheume
Madelyn Isenor-Ryan
Maggie Ivinney
Coralee Alder +
Elin McMillan
Connor Doiron
Mitch O'Donnell
Michael McEachern
Hannah Wickham
Katelyn Gamble
Marcis Darrell
Emma Murro
Jonathan Ferguson



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NAME

Nehyan Ingham
Emma MacMillan
Alyson McCormack
Haley Sullivan
Grace McNea
Alicia Landers
Angelica Whiteway
Lauren Stockart
Shaulynn Dicaire
Julia Bedell
Gabrielle Jowinski
Kira Gill-Maher
Kaelan Ruddick
Lindsay Wray
Allison Clark
Siobhan Doyle
Samantha Freer
Stephanie McKenna
Michele James
Michaela Davy
Laura Scaramelli

NAME

Shannon DM
Cecilia Watt
Sara Mizen
Tessa Craig
Claire Genest
Lindsey Gallant
Lauren Doane
Elise Hansen
Olivia Hansen
Mackenzie Hachey
Ian Richardson
Nathanael Unger
Christina Acton

Course Delivery Agenda Item
MASU Motion
Senate Meeting September 11
4pm, Tweedie Hall

In April, we were informed by the Provost that the correspondence course payment method would no longer be in use. This decision was rendered without any student input and involvement, and has yet to be properly communicated to the community at large. This notable change to course payment methods inherently affects the delivery of online courses, thereby extending beyond a simple budgetary outlook. As such, it is an academic concern that stands to deteriorate the experience of our students and depreciate the mission of the university. We ask the members of senate to carefully read and hear in-person our position, contribute to this critical debate on the academic vision of the university, and consider lending support to our motion.

Our Position

It is unlikely to surprise the members of senate that we are supportive of a deep pool of correspondence course offerings. Less than three years ago, we mobilized to defeat the introduction of fees for correspondence courses, and are more than exuberant to do so again for the retention of online instruction. Correspondence courses, which had overwhelmingly tended to be delivered online, provided the flexibility needed to complete degrees all while being able to take courses of particular interest. Although the flexibility of a few courses may seem trivial to some, the snowball effect can significantly alter the experience of a student. Accordingly, the range of impact of correspondence courses should not be underestimated.

As a students' union, we also think it is incumbent upon us to highlight that the effects of this unilateral elimination of correspondence courses are not distributed equally. In fact, the detriment of these cuts hurt students already disadvantaged within the university. Students with mental and physical disabilities rely on correspondence courses to help them overcome barriers to their education. Students with medical challenges, especially those that need to travel frequently, rely on correspondence courses to optimally maintain their well-being and academic growth. Students that live outside of Sackville, especially mature students, rely on correspondence courses to help manage their competing interests and costs. The elimination of correspondence courses is devastating to our student body because it serves to grow the systemic barriers of our university.

It should be noted that our concern with this change does not end with its immediate consequences to our community. We worry that the way this was handled may be indicative of a lack of commitment to collegial governance. While it is true that the university has many challenges when it comes to financial sustainability, we believe we come to our best decisions when we have community support. Student involvement, or the involvement of any subset of the community, is not for the university's convenience. Rather, it is a necessity, even if it slows decision-making. As a students' union, we bring our advocacy to senate today in part to make it clear that we are not optional.

Addressing Counter-Arguments

While students were not involved in the fate of correspondence courses, it is worthwhile noting that university administration has been receptive to meeting and explaining their rationale after the fact. We do appreciate the willingness of the administration to answer our questions and provide data. That said, in our view, the arguments put forward in defense of the elimination of correspondence courses fail to hold up under scrutiny.

One of the most common defenses we have heard is that correspondence courses have little demand, leaving many courses with two or so students. Yet, the data seems to suggest the opposite. While the university has been rapidly cutting correspondence courses over the last four years, the demand has remained relatively inelastic. Last year, the student mean for Fall and Winter correspondence courses was 10.3. This is above the eight-student minimum, which is another unilateral decision that stands to potentially undermine the student experience. In fact, the overall correspondence course mean has met the eight-student minimum for the last three years. There is little to no reason for one to conclude that correspondence courses are not of interest from the data.

One of the assumptions supporting this change is that most of the students formerly taking correspondence courses can find a suitable replacement on campus. Yet, this ignores the rationale for taking correspondence courses. While some may assert that it is lazy students filling correspondence courses, it is far more likely to be students in need of timetable flexibility, something that on-campus courses cannot do as well as their online counterparts. For this reason, the notion of hybrid courses, while intriguing, cannot be raised as a replacement for online courses.

It has also been asserted that the decision to not offer correspondence courses is about resource allocation. We have been told that we must be a university that either does on-campus courses or online courses, but not both. In our view, this argument does not have much merit. It is difficult for one to suggest that it has to be one way or the other when we have been doing both for nearly two decades. We are also concerned that this contrived binary is meant to push certain members of our community to begrudgingly support these cuts.

Another central point in the decision was the manual work involved with the implementation of correspondence courses. While we acknowledge that this can be a tedious process, we have never received substantial complaints from students. The extra work to get into a correspondence course, from the student perspective, is not a significant barrier.

Overall, the decision to not offer correspondence courses is one that clearly runs against the development of our university from academic and governance perspectives. Correspondence courses were critical to the advancement of our education and the accommodation of disadvantaged students. The rationale supporting these cuts fall short of justifying the action itself, let alone how it was done. The motion presented below is a step in our long-term campaign for the re-introduction of correspondence courses in Fall and Winter semester and, more generally, the commitment to student and community involvement in decision-making.

Motion (E. Patterson/ S. Unger): that Senate affirms in principle the necessity of varied modes of delivery of instruction, especially ample online courses, in the realization of the academic mission of the university.