

MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY
MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

September 10, 2024, 4:00pm
Windsor Grand Room & Microsoft Teams (hybrid format)

Present: M. Ahmady, B. Annear, F. Antonelli, Y. Bourgeois, C. Brett (Secretary), B. Broadbent, P. Brown, B. Clayton, R. Delaney, J. Devine, J. Dryden, C. Duguay, B. Evans, A. Fancy, A. Francis, L. Garnett, D. Hamilton, L.-D. Hamilton., M. Hamilton, C. Ionescu, R. Isnor (Vice-Chair), B. Jewett, N. Johnston, S. Law, A. LePage, C. MacDougall, R. Majithia, M. Maston, C. McLaughlin, V. Meli, L. Michaelis, K. Morse, A. Nurse, C. Pringle-Carver, B. Robertson, R. Rubin, V. St. Pierre, I. Sutherland (Chair), J. Tomes, N. Vogan, G. Waldron, B. Walters, W. Wilson

Guests: R. Gamm, J. Mullen, G. Sandala

Regrets: R. Bruening, G. Cruttwell, S. Fanning, M. Hashemi, R. Inglis, K. Souch, A. Wilson

01.09.10 Territorial Acknowledgement

I. Sutherland read the official territorial acknowledgment written by Elders and the Indigenous Advisory Circle as follows:

We would like to acknowledge that we are located within the territory of Mi'kma'ki, the unceded, ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq. Our relationship and our privilege to live on this territory was agreed upon in the Peace and Friendship Treaties of 1752. Because of this treaty relationship it is to be acknowledged that we are all Treaty people and have a responsibility to respect this territory.

02.09.10 Approval of agenda

Motion (B. Robertson/S. Law): that Senate adopt the agenda as presented.

Motion carried

03.09.10 Welcome

I. Sutherland welcomed Senators to the meeting and thanked everyone for their willingness to serve. Senators then introduced themselves and indicated the which constituencies they represent.

04.09.10 Consent Agenda (B. Robertson/R. Rubin)

- a. Approval of the minutes (May 9, 2024)
- b. Report from the Academic Integrity Committee
- c. Discover Mount Allison

Approved without discussion

05.09.10 Business arising from the minutes

No business arising.

06.09.10 Chair's remarks

The President summarized the main points in a pre-circulated written report, which outlined the President's priorities and gave updates organized by vice-presidential area. He said that he hoped to provide a written report to each meeting. He thanked the university committee for the welcome that he and his husband have received. He also welcomed the new Provost, R. Isnor and thanked C. Brett for continuing as Secretary.

A. Nurse asked about the review of Indigenous student services. I. Sutherland responded that the parameters of this review are still under discussion. He noted an upcoming meeting with Elders on September 12 at which this topic may arise.

07.09.10 Report from University Planning Committee

R. Isnor reported that the committee has met once and plans to meet weekly throughout the term. It is now considering the academic plans submitted by departments and programs. The Provost expressed appreciation for work done by those writing the plans, adding that they serve as useful introduction.

R. Isnor informed Senate that there will be unit reviews in Psychology and Visual and Material Cultures this year. A review of Philosophy is deferred to 2025-2026.

08.09.10 Report on Strategic Planning

The President summarized the Draft Strategic Planning document as circulated before the meeting. He noted that the timeline was ambitious but that the process, one similar to those the President has worked on elsewhere can be creative and thought-provoking. He also noted that the process requires a large team to share the work.

S. Law noted that the university is quite successful, and perhaps a reasonable plan would be to keep doing what we are now. I. Sutherland noted that the future is uncertain, and that a plan can guide adaptation to external pressures.

J. Devine asked whether it would be prudent to delay the strategic planning exercise until after the relatively new senior administration had time to settle in. I. Sutherland answered that the exercise can help administrators to settle in, adding that delay might not be prudent.

C. McLaughlin noted that the timeline did not include a launch period. I. Sutherland noted that the timeline is flexible, and time could be allocated to roll out if needed.

J. Dryden agreed with J. Devine that the document seemed ahead of its time. She also asked whether external consultants would pay sufficient attention to local circumstances, and how we can be sure that the consultants would be moving the process in the right direction. I. Sutherland answered that the consultants will be working for the university, with a mandate to advise but not to make decisions. The anticipated role of consultants would be to advise on future directions in higher education, to help build the consultation process, and to help analyze data.

A. Fancy asked how existing strategic plans will be incorporated into the upcoming process. I. Sutherland answered that reviewing previous and existing plans, including the current Strategic Academic Plan, is part of the initial work.

L. Michaelis wondered why, for the first time, external consultants are needed. She noted that some firms are understood to have their own visions of the academy, perhaps calling their neutrality into question. She worried about whether an external firm would drive the process. Alternatively, she asked whether there is a sense that the university has drifted away from an industry norm and needs to be brought back to the mainstream. I. Sutherland responded that the external consultants could build capacity and to provide information about the higher education sector that they have gathered. He noted that there is nothing fundamentally wrong at Mount Allison. L. Michaels then noted that selection of the consultants will be important and asked whether the selection process will be shared. I. Sutherland answered that the co-leads and the President will vet the consultants.

R. Delaney noted that external consultants may spread new light on what does and does not work for students and that a strategic plan may help to make sense of university decisions.

C. McLaughlin noted that people will sometimes feel more comfortable sharing information about existing shortcomings with external consultants rather than people inside an organization. She noted that an external consultant can ensure anonymity.

K. Morse asked about the scope of the resulting plan, specifically will it be a five- or ten-year plan, and asked about the costs of the planning process. I. Sutherland answered that it would be at least a five-year plan and that besides the cost of hiring consultants, some staff secondment would be needed.

B. Walters noted that the wording of the planning team left open the possibility of there being no faculty members, and certainly did not guarantee representation of all the academic Faculties. J. Devine noted that previous planning exercises include representation from the three Faculties. I. Sutherland answered that the intention is to have at least two faculty members on the team and for the team to seek input from Faculties and departments. He also noted the need for broad representation, including from equity-deserving groups.

K. Morse asked how the plan would be implemented and how feedback would occur. I Sutherland replied that implementation would be through the actions of the university, with governance bodies like Senate holding administrators accountable.

V. Meli asked if external consultants would be able to comment on the accuracy of our internal evaluations of the university's strengths. I. Sutherland agreed that this is one role for external consultants.

The discussion of the plan culminated with the presentation of two motions.

Motion (R. Isnor/ Y. Bourgeois): that Senate waive the 48-hour notice of motion requirement for the purpose of introducing a motion on the Draft Strategic Planning Process.

Motion carried (3 abstentions)

Motion (R. Isnor/ B. Broadbent): that Senate endorse, in principle, the Draft Strategic Planning Process as outlined in its meeting of September 10, 2024.

Motion carried (1 nay, 2 abstentions)

L. Michaelis said she was unsure what the motion asked of Senate, and whether it would be possible to change that endorsement in the future. B. Robertson interpreted the endorsement as signalling willingness to start a process, similar to when Senate strikes a committee to investigate an issue. M. Hamilton and W. Wilson noted that endorsement could be interpreted as applying to the process, not to specific decisions. K. Morse and J. Devine wondered if Senate could endorse the first stages of the process. K. McLaughlin wondered if the hiring of the consultants could be separated from the endorsement, given the concerns about the consultants raised by senators. W. Wilson also asked whether changes in the planning process would require new endorsement from Senate.

I Sutherland responded that it is beyond the powers of Senate to be involved in hiring consultants. He also noted that substantive changes to the planning process would call for re-consideration by both the Board of Regents and Senate.

09.09.10 Elections to Committees

Motion (C. Brett/B. Robertson): That Senate elect the following to the Senate committees listed, with a term beginning immediately and ending June 30, 2027.

Committee on Students with Disabilities

Mike Roy

Teaching and Learning Committee

Laura Landon

Motion carried

Motion (C. Brett/B. Broadbent): That Senate elect the following students to the Senate committees listed, with a term beginning immediately and ending April 30, 2025.

Committee on Students with Disabilities

Owen Cole
Ainsley Atkinson

Academic Appeals Committee

Kaite Souch

Academic Matters (Curriculum and Academic) Committee

Kaite Souch

Academic Matters (Regulations) Committee

Cole Sinclair

Graduation Review Committee

Rajan Minocha-McKenney
Honorary Degrees Committee
Chloe Dugay

Teaching and Learning Committee

Kaite Souch

Motion carried

10.09.10 Election to the Committee on Committees

C. Brett noted that a call for nominations to the Committee on Committees yielded one nomination, O. Griffiths, for two vacancies. I. Sutherland asked for further nominations from the floor. A. LePage asked if volunteering also meant agreeing to chair the committee. C. Brett answered that the committee selects its own chair. A. LePage then volunteered to join the committee.

This discussion led to the following motion.

Motion (C. Brett/ K. McLaughlin): that Senate elect Owen Griffiths and Anne LePage to the Committee on Committees, with a term beginning immediately and ending on June 30, 2027.

Motion carried

11.09.10 Other Business

There was no other business.

12.09.10 Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm, as moved by V. St. Pierre.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Brett
Secretary