Approved Minutes of the Ninth Meeting of Senate
Friday, May 2, 2025
3:00 – 5:00pm
Alumni Hall and via Zoom

Present:	**A. MacKenzie, A. Hsiao, A. Trowbridge, B. Linkletter, B. Waterman, D. Moses, F. Sadat, G. Jiang, G. Naterer, H. Wang, J. Ngobia, J. Sentance, J. McIntyre, K. Gottschall-Pass, K. Mears, M. Sweeny-Nixon, M. A. McMahon, M. von Eccher, M. Turnbull, N. Mannholland, P. Bernard, P. Smith, R. Gauthier, R. Raiswell, , S. Fitzpatrick, S. Myers, S. Hamilton, T. Mady, T. Walker, W. Rodgers, W. Montelpare,**
Regrets:	**D. Griffon, J. T. McClure, M. Clapson, M. Buote, R. Dennis, Y. Rashchupkina**
Secretariat:	**P. Robichaud, K. Porter, W. Anderson**

OPEN SESSION

1. **Call to Order, Welcome, Land Acknowledgement and Opening Remarks from Chair and Vice-Chair**
W. Rodgers called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm and acknowledged the land.

2. **Approval of Agenda**
After some discussion regarding the need to defer consideration of the Course Material Policy, it is agreed that the item will remain on the agenda for information, but that it may come up for more in-depth discussion at a future meeting of the Senate.

MOTION: (J. McIntyre/ B. Waterman) that the agenda be approved as amended. CARRIED.

3. **Approval of Minutes**
a. April 11, 2025, Open Minutes
MOTION: (S. Fitzpatrick/W. Waterman) That Senate approve the minutes of the open session of Senate of March 14, 2025, as presented. CARRIED.

4. **Business Arising from Minutes**
Following discussions at the previous meeting about the designation of Professor Emeriti as a gender-neutral version of Emeritus or Emerita and the grammatical incorrectness of such a term, the Committee on Emerita/Emeritus/Emeriti (sic) discussed the idea and landed on the possibility of using "Emirit". However, that solution is still grammatically problematic and other options need to be considered, including the use of an English term "Distinguishes". The Committee will continue its deliberations and come to the Senate with a recommendation at another meeting.

5. **Senior Administration Reports**
a. President's Report
President Rodgers welcomes new members of Senate, including new student senators and University Vice Presidents and thanked those whose term is ending. Lucianna Paredes is the new President of the UPEI Student Union and new Senator. Jane Ngobia and Tim Walker are new Vice President People and Culture and Administration and Finance, respectively.

The President also noted continued work on the development of the University's Strategic Plan which is tracking towards a final version to be approved this Fall.

With the Province's late submission of its budget, our budget process was somewhat delayed this year. The University is required by Law to table a balanced budget, which cannot be done reasonably before the Province's funding is confirmed. We are now on track for budget approval on May 27. The reduction in international enrolment does weigh heavily on our finances, but UPEI's fiscal discipline in previous years has given us a bit of time to sort out the recurring $3 Million shortfall that must be addressed in the coming years. Efforts in the immediate are focused on revenue generation and cost containment. This includes looking at new ways to recruit and retain students, increased fees, process improvements and expenditure reduction. The challenge is to continue to enhance our institutional culture, while recalibrating what is financially safe for the University. Consultations and brainstorming on measures to ensure UPEI's long-term sustainability have begun with the notion that this new financial level setting is a shared responsibility. As Canadian Universities adapt to the new post-international student enrolment crescendo, all are challenged to better communicate their societal value; to reflect to our partners and governments that Universities are where the world solves much of its problems.

As the term comes to an end, convocation is near. This is where we celebrate both the students' achievements and our collective hard work that got them there. This is a good time to remember that everyone at the University contributes to student success in their own way from teaching, to curriculum design, to academic advising, health and wellness services, food services, to those who clear the snow from our parking lots, who manage our pay and benefits; everyone plays a critical role. With the University delivering its ambitious Action Plan and Governance Review, it's important that we remember our duty of care to each other, to be compassionate with ourselves and others.

b. Vice-President Academic and Research Report

Vice President Naterer provides updates on five significant academic and research initiatives that have taken place over the last few months.

- **Research Fund** : This is tri-agency funding that supports the indirect costs of research at UPEI, mostly for salaries of staff members in the Office of Research Services. The allocations from RSF are determined largely based on grant funding through the Tri-Council agencies, NCERT, SHRT, and CIHR. Tri-Council funding has been increasing steadily year after year. And as a result, OR RSF funding has gone up by 12% in the past year, up to $1.17 million per year. This will go towards increasing support for researchers, patent costs, and upgrade of a systems. So special thanks here to all researchers, faculty members, graduate students who contributed to that, and the great team in research services.
- **English Academic Preparation Program:** With changes as to our international recruitment and with more recent changes from IRCC, the need for non-credit programs to improve English proficiency of full time and part time students has diminished to a point where there is no longer a need for them and they are being discontinued. Some courses will continue to be offered to students with intermediate to advanced levels of English proficiency on a part-time basis. For the few students still in the program we have arranged a partnership with Holland College and Study Abroad Canada for any affected students to secure their needed English proficiency.
- **Graduate admissions:** An external review of graduate program admissions has been conducted as per the university's Quality Assurance process and Senate policy with recommendations prepared by the external advisory team. Three overarching themes have emerged: (1) formalization institutional responsibility for graduate admissions, (2) improvement to communication and stakeholder engagement, And (3), establishment of institutional goals and service standards for the admission and onboarding processes for prospective students. In response, we have developed an Action Plan. Faculty members and students can expect some changes and improvements to graduate program admissions in the coming months.

- **Curriculum Coherence:** As this was discussed at Senate a few meetings ago at Senate some an update on our efforts regarding curriculum coherence is provided. Over the coming year, the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) will reach out to departments and programs that are leading QA reviews, to offer support and assist with data collection aligned with curricular coherence indicators. A curricular coherence initiative will be part of the self-study as part of quality assurance reviews looking to both quantitative and narrative components.
- **Student advising initiative**: With the current challenges in student enrolment, student retention and progression to graduation are going to be very important themes. As you know, Academic advising supports student success by providing personalized guidance on a student's program of study, helping them navigate their coursework and connecting their academic pursuits with future career goals. Work is underway within faculties to better coordinate advising models in the academic units with Dalton Hall.

c. Vice-President People and Culture Report

- **Action Plan**: We are progressing in the implementation of the Action Plan with leads across the university finalizing the year-two implementation plans. Those plans are posted online. Over the coming weeks, we will settle the audit plan for years zero and one of the Action Plan.
- **Human resources**: Engagement continues with unit leaders regarding the results of the Employee Engagement Survey. Human resources will start an initiative to determine the training needs of administrative assistants across the University, with a focus on systems, processes and gaps in standard operation procedures. We are in the go-live period for our new leave system. So the implementation for IBEW and QP 501 happens in the first part of May. Other employee groups will be phased into the new leave system over the next few months. Cost of living adjustments have been applied to staff pay effective May 1st, 2025. Faculty cost of living adjustments will be applied effective July 1st, 2025.
- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** : In collaboration with BIPOC partners, we are hosting the *Sexual Assault Resistance Education Program* from the University of Windsor for both campus and broader community members. Staff in the department have provided detailed reviews of the draft *Harassment and Discrimination Policy* to support the work of the *Fair Treatment Policy Replacement Committee*. Some may have seen an educational display for Red Dress Day. Red Dress Day acknowledges, and honors murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls.

6. Question Period

a. Questions and answers received from Placemats

Some questions were received regarding diversification of University revenues, as well as start of studies in January and dates of admission. These are taken away for consideration and Senate will come back to them.

b. Questions Received in Advance – no questions received in advance.

c. Questions Received from the Floor

Q: Will the Graduate Studies Advisory Committee be involved in the review of graduate admissions.
A: Yes, the Committee has endorsed the report presented to Senate today.
Q: There is concern that a new policy regarding payment to graduate students has changed the process for payment in a way that may put students at risk. The policy seems to have been developed without consultation or much communication.
A: We know that payment of graduate students is an ongoing issue for many universities in Canada as there is lack of clarity at the Canada Revenue Agency on what constitutes payment, what is taxable and what is not. There is now some clarity emerging, which may be what has led to the change in policy. We will look at options that will lessen the pressure on students, but we must ensure that we keep to the right side of the law.

7. **Senate Steering and Nominating Committee – W. Rodgers**
President Rodgers noted the vacancies on committees of Senate as outlined in the supporting documentation and called on Senators to look at those and either offer to serve or tap colleague that can.

8. **<u>Revised Course Materials Policy</u>**
Vice President Naderer provides some background to the draft policy. The current policy was enacted in 2002 and was due for review in 2007. It is, therefore, some two decades out of date and a lot has changed over that time. Over the year, students have brought forward concerns regarding the current policy. We have listened to those concerns. In March 2024, we struck a committee with broad representation to review the policy. The Committee includes faculty, librarians, students, staff from the bookstore and a dean. As special thanks goes to members of that committee for their dedicated work. As the Policy has broad implications, input of Senate is welcome. Any feedback received will be taken to the committee for consideration. It should be noted that this is a student focused process as the Policy is largely about students, while understanding that there are considerations for course instructors as well. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that students have fair, reasonable, and appropriate access to course materials and grading materials, that we have clear rules respecting the acquisition of course materials by students, as well as the promotion of openness, transparency, and accountability in the provision of course materials. The Committee has conducted a lot of consultation and received several ideas and concerns, even objections and has taken them all into consideration while churning over several iterations of the Policy. The Policy is tracking towards approval by the Board of Governors later this year.

A comment is brought forth regarding materials produced by professors that can only be rented, with the suggestion that there should be an option to purchase the material.

A quest arises about the communication of the policy and its enforcement, to ensure that instructors respect the Policy and offer students the free options provided under the Policy. The VPAR indicated that the University intend to fully communicate and socialize the policy within the University Community once approved by the Board.

Another question deals with bundled material, where there are no options for students to opt out of the material. The VPAR indicated that the policy encourages instructors to provide alternative forms of grading materials that are not bundled. There may be a need for some measure of exception where that is not possible, particularly in the case of learning software.

An issue regarding the timing of sessional teaching contracts. Some sessional instructors are hired so late that there is no possibility of meeting the deadline for the submission of course materials. The VPAR responded that this is a known issue for which a working group has been struck, with the aim of solving this issue.

The provisions of the Policy that direct students to the bookstore and proscribe reference to third-party sources by instructors may lead to higher prices for students. A quick search online often yields less costly options than those chosen by the bookstore. The VPAR noted the question and indicated that the Policy does not restrict students to the University Bookstore, so they could avail themselves of less costly options on their own. We can consider whether provision 8.5 is necessary.

The strict provisions forbidding the imposition of costs for grading material may be problematic. Some self-directed learning systems offer a complete learning package that includes evaluations. Those systems have shown their value and tend to improve the learning outcomes for students. The provision that provides for the Dean to authorize exceptions should be made more prominent and flanked with clear criteria framing the Dean's decision.

The limit to the cost of the grading material can also be a problem. It may direct course instructors to lesser products to the students' detriment. The VPAR will take that question back to the committee for consideration.

A concern is raised about the Board's jurisdiction on academic matters. The Policy seems to overlap the authority of the Board and Senate and may cause the Board to overstep into Senate's area of responsibility. The Secretary and the VPAR indicate that the Policy can be tuned as to clearly stay within the Board's authority.

9. <u>Policy on Academic Units</u>

Vice President Naterer expresses an often-heard desire on campus to have clarity, consistency and transparency around the governance of matters in academic units. This relates to matters such as the establishment of new units, processes to approve proposals coming to Senate from units, etc. The lack of transparency and uniformity in decision-making can create confusion, duplication of effort, and governance challenges. There is need to ensure transparent and collegial decisions to build trust and a sense of fairness in how decisions are made. The Policy would define criteria and factors to be considered when establishing a new academic unit, guidance on the roles, functions, authority, structure, and collegial decision making within that unit. An example a case where we would all benefit from clarity, are proposals for the creation of new departments as well as merging existing departments. Without a policy, there is no defined process or criteria upon which such decisions are based. We recommend the creation of a committee that would consider these matters and recommend a policy. The terms of this Ad Hoc Committee are provided in the meeting documents.

It was noted that, when a call goes out to populate the Committee, that a clear timeline for the Committee's work to help prospective members understand the related workload.

Motion: (G. Naterer/N. Mannholland) to create an ad hoc committee to develop and recommend a policy on academic units. CARRIED.

10. <u>Faculty of Medicine</u> – P. Smtih

Dean Smith provides an update on the launch of the Faculty of Medicine, noting that UPEI is engaged in a rare thing: a program being delivered conjointly by two universities in different provinces. The first students in the joint MD program will be on site in August. Dean Smith notes the addition of Dr. Peter McPherson to the team as Associate Dean. Admissions were opened a month ago, which has garnered much attention in social media and beyond. The administrative team has been building up to a group of about 50. An offer is extended to Senator to visit the new state-of-the-art facility the houses the Faculty of Medicine. The facility provides advanced venues for simulation, a growing component of health-sector education. Those facilities will have an impact well beyond the MD program, with other health professionals having access, namely nursing. The recruitment of teaching professionals is going well, as we are drawing in talent from all over the country. In some cases, we had more interested parties than we could accommodate. The Faculty will distill a report from broad engagement with the University Community to define how all can engage with the Faculty.

11. <u>Board report to Senate</u>

Senator Montelpare presents the report of the Board of Governors to Senate. A written report is available in the meeting materials. The Board has approved a new process for the review of the president's performance. The Board also received a presentation from Dr. Marvis Sweeney-Nixon on the organization of research at UPEI. The Board has appointed a new external auditor and chose Deloitte to audit the Action Plan. A new *Policy on non-disclosure agreements* was approved. Several new policies were enacted to manage the appointment of acting or interim officers of the university. The first tri-committee meeting of the Finance, Audit and Risk, Development, Fundraising and External Relations and Property and Environmental Sustainability committees was held on April 3rd to better coordinate the oversight of capital projects.

12. Shout Outs

Shout outs were sent to:

- our departing senators; George Jiang, Noah Manholland, Fatima Sadat, Anna McLaren, Adam McKenzie, Hexi Wang, Roseanne Agumbiade, Paul Bernard, Anne Braithwaite, Nancy Clark, Rachelle Gauthier, Bill Waterman, John McIntyre, and Donald Moses. And noting that Charles Adeyanju will be going on sabbatical leave.
- To the admissions team and the registrar's office who've been incredibly flexible and helpful.
- To the Bachelor of Education cohort who started yesterday.
- To our French Program, which has doubled the number of students; a record number of enrolments.
- To Dean Myers and her able assistant Kathy Hennessy, who have been managing the chaos happening in our building right now as we evacuate the top two floors. They have been great examples of grace under pressure these last couple of weeks.

13. Motion to Move to a Closed Agenda

MOTION: (M. A. McMahon/B. Montelpare) that Senate move to a closed session. CARRIED

14. Adjournment

MOTION: (B. Montelpare/H. Wang) that the Senate meeting be adjourned.