

Minutes of the Academic Senate of the University of Prince Edward Island
Friday, October 24, 2025, 3:00 – 5:00pm
Alumni Hall and via Zoom

Present: A. Hsiao, A. Trowbridge, A. Weenie, A. Braithwaite, B. Linkletter, C. Campeanu, C. VanLeeuwen, D. Magbanua, E. Reid, G. Naterer, I. Bhalesha, J. T. McClure, J. Sentance, J. Ngobia, J. McIntyre, K. Mears, L. Paredes, M. v. Eccher, M. Clapson, M. Sweeney-Nixon, M. A. McMahon, M. Buote, M. Turnbull, N. Clark, N. Etkin, P. Drake, P. Bernard, P. Smith, R. Hoersting, R. Deziel, R-A Dalton, S. Cassidy, S. Myers, S. Lloyd, S. Hamilton, S. Kresta, T. Mady, T. Jackson, T. Walker, W. Rodgers, W. Montelpare, W. Whelan, Y. Rashchupkina.

Regrets: Andrea Bourque, D. Griffon, P. Foley

Secretariat: P. Robichaud, R. Anwar, G. Tsoi

OPEN SESSION

1. Call to Order, Welcome, Land Acknowledgement and Opening Remarks from Chair and Vice-Chair

W. Rodgers called the meeting to order, welcome members at 3:03 pm and acknowledged the land.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: MOVED by W. Montelpare and SECONDED by A. Braithwaite that the agenda of Senate of October 24, 2025, be approved. CARRIED.

3. Minutes of September 26, 2025

MOTION : MOVED by J. Sentance and SECONDED by R. Deziel that the minutes of September 25, 2025, be approved. CARRIED.

Some needed corrections were noted, namely in the spelling of the name of some Senators and the name of the “Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office.” The Secretary will make the necessary corrections and re-post the minutes.

4. Business Arising from Minutes of September 26, 2025

None

5. Senior Administration Reports
a. President’s Report

The budget planning process has started with the aim of providing from now on, despite per annum funding from the Government of PEI, a three-year budgetary projection, with communications going out to the University Community on October 24. The University is still challenged by declining international student enrollment and the resulting projected

three-million-dollar-per-year deficit. To face this challenge, the University must increase domestic enrollment, improve retention of students and look to revenue generation that is in line with our mission. There will also be need for expense constraints, while keeping the future of the University in mind. This is not a “doing more with less” situation. As our research output is strengthening overall, we need to provide the required research infrastructure going forward.

Our rank in the 2026 University Rankings has dropped. It is incumbent on us all to look to our institutional reputation.

Deloitte delivered a clear audit of the implementation of the Action Plan, which has generated cautious optimism with the University Community. There is still more to do, including the reconstruction of the University’s EDI office, which is well underway.

As the University moves forward to tackle challenges and opportunities, we must be consistent and deliberate in reviewing what we do. To do this, we must commit to the idea that this requires work and commitment from all of us.

The Board and Senate jointly partook in a Blanket Exercise to act out the harmful elements of the colonization of Canada as we commemorated through and reconciliation.

b. Vice-President Academic and Research Report

Vice President Naterer mentioned several recent research successes at the University in the form of major publications, research partnerships, new grants and research chairs. Nat

The University Community is invited to an Open House on October 25. This year’s event is of a greater scale, aimed at attracting more prospective students and their parents. Some 411 prospective students have signed up, with a substantial increase in off-Island attendees.

The decrease in enrollment of a couple of years ago is influencing our current enrollment as a smaller cohort moves through its cursus of studies at UPEI. This has resulted in a 14% decrease in enrollment year- over-year. In much the same manner as at other Canadian universities, international student enrollment is depressed due to a shift in Federal immigration policy. Although UPEI has done comparatively well with the Atlantic region, this remains a source of concern as we look to implement and new Strategic Enrolment Management plan.

With much feedback from students, the University has improved its Campus Life Program. Several assistants have been hired to support student activities including recreational events, social media presence, athletics, etc.

c. Vice-President People and Culture Report

Following presentation of the Action Plan Implementation Audit Report to Senate and the Board of Governors, the results of which are made available throughout the

University Community, the report was presented to the Government of PEI. Going forward, the activities developed to give effect to the Action Plan are woven the University's steady state. Planning for the audit for year 2 of the implementation of the Action Plan is already underway.

Efforts continue to clean up human resources data and to develop classifications for positions at the University, with over 140 classifications done since September 2024.

The University is consulting across relevant units on capacity and needs for restorative justice practices across UPEI.

6. Question Period

a. Questions and answers received from Placemats
None received

b. Questions Received in Advance
None received

c. Questions Received from the Floor

Q1: Who are we as a brand? What is the vision that we are putting out there? Are we an undergraduate institution or a graduate one? **A1:** The Strategic Plan of the University provides a vision that moves us away from the traditional model of a primarily undergraduate liberal arts university. We aim to refocus the mission on a more comprehensive model. The Strategic Plan includes a commitment to review our vision. The University has put out a new viewbook that we can all use to promote the University by putting out the tagline "Big future starts here". We can make that material available to Senators.

7. Reports from Standing Committee

a. Update on Committee Business

Vice President Naterer delivered an oral report on the work of various committees of Senate. There were no questions.

b. Senate Steering and Nominating Committee

President Rodgers directed members to the written report from SSNC and opened the floor to questions. There were none.

c. Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee

Vice President Naterer brings to Senate 38 recommendations from the *Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee*, to be resolved via an omnibus motion that reads :

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by T. Jackson that Senate approve new course proposals, deletions and listings, changes to course titles, descriptions

and pre-requisites and Calendar entries as presented.

Senator Linkletter spoke to the motion and moved that recommendations 17 and 18 be removed from the omnibus motion and be debated as a separate motion.

MOTION: MOVED by B. Linkletter and SECONDED by W. Whelan that the main motion be split with recommendations 1 to 16 and 19 to 38 being one motion and recommendations 17 and 18 being another. CARRIED.

Debate on the motion to split the main motion centers around the impact of recommendations 17 and 18 on the delivery of courses as it would significantly constrain members of faculty. There is concern that the recommendation put undue restrictions on the delivery of courses to students. Student members spoke in favor of the recommendations, indicating that it is paramount that students know how they are performing in a course before the discontinuation date comes around. Vice President Naderer stresses that these provisions are student-oriented and aim to resolve an issue raised by many that arises where students go into their final exams having received no feedback on their academic performance in the course. The chosen time and deadlines provide opportunity for students to seek academic guidance to decide to continue or drop the course. This is a common provision in Canadian universities. Some Senators question the process through which this was developed and brought to Senate, pointing to lack of consultation with faculty. The VPAR indicates that this proposal was developed from feedback received through the Students' Union for some time and that work was done through the Registrar's Office to see what the best way would be to resolve the issue. The recommendation was endorsed unanimously by APCC, after several versions were considered by the Committee. Some Senators pointed to insufficient academic advising structure, which would be needed and should be a precursor to these provisions. Some spoke to the many exceptions in the provision, which, in their view, speaks to rules that would be difficult to implement. Others indicated that the proposed provisions should be in a different part of the Academic Regulations, under "grading". Further consideration of these provisions may need to be in the context of a revision to the discontinuation deadline.

Senator Linkletter moved that the motion dealing with recommendations 17 and 18 be tabled.

MOTION: MOVED by B. Linkletter and SECONDED by W. Whelan that the motion dealing with recommendations 17 and 18 be tabled and brought back for consideration at Senate in February. CARRIED

Debate on the motion to table centers on the need for greater consultation and the need to have a broader discussion about the discontinuation deadline. Some point to the need to consider the research literature on the link between early grading and retention, as these provisions are meant to improve retention.

d. Admissions and Degrees Committee

Vice President Naderer presents a report from the Admissions and Degrees Committee that bears a recommendation to include a mention of the major in undergraduate degree

parchments. The recommendation comes in the wake of the process to establish the Bachelor of Arts, Major in Indigenous Studies and the need for the degree parchment to be reflective of the nature of the awarded degree. As many other Canadian universities do include the major on degree parchments, it is felt that by not doing the same UPEI may be putting itself and its students at a disadvantage.

MOTION: MOVED by. G. Naterer and SECONDED by C. Campeanu, that UPEI includes the name of the major on graduation parchments. CARRIED

This motion comes into effect for the conferment of degrees in May 2025.

It is suggested that the University could look to add other mentions to the parchments. The VPAR agrees to continue discussions with the Committee with the intent to bring forward other recommendations to Senate and invites Senators to submit suggestions for the Committee's consideration.

8. Policies

a) Policy on the Sale of Course Materials

Vice President Naterer speaks to a policy meant to resolve issues of equity in course access by providing a more inclusive experience for students. He stresses that the Policy aligns with the University's values of access and fairness. Feedback received from the Senate was considered, and a broader consultation was carried out. The Policy comes to the Senate after a substantive review by a committee with broad representation. Although the Policy is under the authority of the Board of Governors, it is presented to the Senate for discussion.

Issues are raised regarding courses that are dependent on integrated materials, where the policy would be difficult to implement. Some computer-based systems require the participation of all students to work. Having some students opt out would be most problematic. The Policy could force a move to open access books and other means, which would put a lot of pressure on faculty to find alternate resources. There would need to look at support for this. It is mentioned that subject librarians may be able to help. Some mention that there is a growing issue of course materials going unsold, as students perceive their purchase as optional. The Policy could reinforce that perception.

Those who spoke in favor of the policy argued that the cost of course materials should not be a barrier to an education. The policy ensures that students are not limited in their learning options based on their ability to buy materials. There are many students who regularly skip buying textbooks because of cost. This policy helps balance the playing field between international and domestic students. When education is accessible, everyone wins.

The issue related to conflict of interest in the direct sale of self-produced course materials to students by members of faculty is not at issue or with the assignment of textbooks. The question of cost as a barrier to assessment is the key issue.

The VPAR will take the Policy back for further consideration and will bring it back to the Senate for discussion in November.

b) Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Vice President Naterer introduces the topic and speaks to the work of the Committee to develop the proposed policy and thanks all those involved in the process.

Dean Turnbull, Chair of the Committee, presents its recommendation and points out that the proposed policy is a complete rewrite that will replace the current policy.

MOTION: MOVED by M. Turnbull and SECONDED by N. Etkin, that the Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities be repealed and replaced and replaced. CARRIED

A concern is raised regarding the documentation required under the Policy considering the current state of the healthcare system in PEI which may be making the requirement of a diagnostic from a registered psychologist problematic. There is a suggestion that implementation of the Policy might be more effective if documentation could come from other health professionals. The Senate is informed that temporary accommodation can be granted internally while students seek further documentation. The University does not have the ability to assess the needs of students or the expertise to prescribe an accommodation. Most students who seek accommodation from the University come with documentation in hand. This may not be evident on reading the Policy and care should be given to inform members of the University Community. Turnbull reminds Senate that once the Policy is approved, procedures will be published and communicated widely within the Community. A set of guidelines for all members of the University Community, including faculty and students, are being prepared and should help inform everyone.

The question of the University's capacity to handle requests for accommodation is raised, with some Senators concerned that the University's capacity may be maxed out. Senate is informed that additional resources have been hired over the last few years. Although the growing number of cases is generating budgetary pressure, there is hope that the processes can be streamlined and made more efficient.

It is noted that the review period for the Policy is five years, which may be too long considering the rapidly evolving landscape. Senators are reminded that the review period is the latest that the Policy must be refreshed, but that it can come sooner if needed.

9. Senate Training Survey Results and Plan

One of the University's Commitment following the Governance Review is the development of a training plan for the Senate. P. Trainor describes for Senate the survey conducted to understand Senate's training needs and aspirations, with the results of the Survey shared with Senate as part of the meeting materials. From the results of the survey and with the collaboration of the University Secretary, a training plan was developed and presented to the Senate for approval.

MOTION: MOVED by M. Turnbull and SECONDED by T. Jackson that the Training Plan of Senate be approved. CARRIED

10. Transfer of Role of the Secretary of Senate

The Registrar speaks to a proposal reviewed by SSNC to transfer the role of Secretary of Senate from the Registrar to the University Secretary. With the creation of the new role of University Secretary at UPEI, the intent was that the incumbent would take over the governance support to Senate and SSNC.

MOTION: MOVED by A. Trowbridge and SECONDED by W. Montelpare that the Processes and Procedures of Senate be amended to transfer the responsibilities of the Secretary of Senate to the University Secretary. CARRIED.

11. Report of the Board of Governors to Senate

W. Montelpare speaks on activities of the Board of Governors since the last meeting of the Senate and directs members to a written report included in the meeting materials.

12. Shout Outs

- To Patti Wheatley, Charlene VanLeeuwen and Christina for putting together an EDI session for graduate supervisors (3 sessions) and students (one session).
- To the Department of Chemistry's Technicians who are on the ball to get all the teachings labs ready.
- To Senator Clark for successfully defending her PhD thesis on October 2.
- To Information Technology Support Services and Facilities Management for getting the Faculty of Medicine ready ahead of schedule and on budget.
- To Tim Walker and Facilities Management for streamlining the approval process for the use of rooms.

13. Adjournment

All business being concluded, the Chair adjourns the meeting at 4:58pm.

Pascal Robichaud,
University Secretary