Minutes of the Academic Senate of the University of Prince Edward Island

Friday, January 30, 2026, 3:00 – 5:00pm

Alumni Hall and via Teams

Present: K. Mears (Vice-Chair), A. Hsiao, A. Trowbridge, A. Weenie, A. Braithwaite, B. Linkletter, C. Campeanu, C. Chika, D. Magbanua, D. Griffon, E. Reid, G. Naterer, G. Geraghey, J. Sentance, J. Ngobia, J. McIntyre, L. Paredes, M. von Eccher, M. Clapson, M. Sweeney-Nixon, M. McMahon, M. Arfken, M. Turnbull, N. Clark, N. Etkin, P. Drake, P. Bernard, P. Foley, P. Smith, R. Hoersting, R. (Bob) Deziel, R. Dalton, S. Cassidy, S. Myers, S. Lloyd, S. Hamilton, S. Kresta, T. Mady, T. Jackson, T. Walker, W. Whelan, Y. Rashchupkina

Regrets: I. Bhalesha, J. T. McClure, W. Rodgers, W. Montelpare

Recorder: P. Robichaud (Secretary to Senate)

Guests: K. Browne, N. Mannholland

Secretariat: W. Anderson, K. Porter, G. Tsoi

OPEN SESSION

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

K. Mears called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. and delivered a land acknowledgement.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: MOVED by J. Sentance and T. Jackson that the agenda of Senate of January 30, 2026, be approved. CARRIED

3. Approval of minutes of December 19, 2025.

MOTION: MOVED by J. Sentance and T. Jackson Senate approve the open minutes of December 19, 2025, as circulated. CARRIED

It was agreed as a friendly amendment that the motion to elect members of the Working Group on the Composition of Senate should be reworded to indicate that a slate of four candidates was approved and that an election was to be held to select to members of the WG among them.

4. Business Arising from the minutes of December 19, 2025

At the request of Senate, Senator Walker provided a written update on the Belvedere Avenue property. There were no questions from the floor.

5. Senior Administration Reports

a) President's Report

K. Mears delivers the report to Senate. She welcomes a newly elected Student Senator, Gabriel Geraghey.

President sends regrets as she participates in missions to India with other Canadian University presidents and wishes all a happy 2026, as we are off to a good start. Consultations with the University Community bring out a consistent message about how we wish to live our values. We hear there is a need to enhance our communication and dispel a sense of secrecy. We are working hard on the improvement of governance records, where the absence of robust records has not served us well. Much is being done to ensure that all governance bodies, including the Senate, are well informed in support of their work.

Shout-out to the librarians and facilities workers who have gone above and beyond to deal with the snow, cold and a water break all this month.

b) Vice-President Academic and Research Report

The Vice President Academic presents his report to Senate starting with good news of significant year-over-year increase in federal support to UPEI through the annual Research Support Fund, from $1.17M to $1.39M, up 18% or $220K. These additional funds will mostly go back into greater institutional support for research. With over 80% growth in tri-council funding to UPEI over three years, this may mean to more Canadian Research Council chairs, while expending the University's grant portfolio.

As per enrolment for the Fall 2026 term, offers of admission to domestic undergraduate applicants have increased by 26% and 51% for international applicants. Receiving more qualified applications is a good sign. However, there is concern that acceptance of admissions among domestic undergraduate applicants has diminished by 4%. The reason for this is yet unknown, but we are investigating via admission funnel data. International undergraduate acceptance of admission offers are up 9%. There are also more accepted admissions from graduate applicants, which seems to result from changes to Provincial Attestation Letters.

The Prioritization and Implementation Committee struck under the Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Plan is developing an implementation plan, as we are finalizing the SEM governance structure. Vice President Naterer described several initiatives undertaken under the SEM Plan.

The Ad Hoc Committee on a Policy on Academic Units has met twice since the last report to Senate. It has chosen to focus its immediate work on the development of rules framing Faculty councils. After agreeing to the issues and types of rules that should frame the academic governance of faculties, the Committee tasked the University Secretary with draft rules. From a review of rules at other Canadian Universities, the Secretary prepared a first draft of rules for Faculty Councils that we discussed at the January 22 meeting of the Committee. if all goes well, the Committee intends to bring forward a recommendation to Senate on those rules next Spring. The Committee will continue its work on academic units in the meantime, with recommendations coming later on departments, schools and Faculties. Special thanks to the University Secretary for efforts on preparing draft.

c) Vice-President People and Culture Report

The University is now working on Year 2 of the implementation of the Action Plan, with the second round of the audit by Deloitte is coming up May 1. Vice President Ngobia pointed out that the University is communicating much more frequently on the implementation of the Action Plan. Senators may have noted that our Communication Service has published several Action Plan Impact stories, which share how the University is weaving our actions into how we operate from now on. An example of a new way of doing things is the implementation of an exit interview for every employee leaving their post at the University, which helps us deliver better informed managerial processes.

Leadership development is an important goal. We are developing a leadership series and training people on job classifications. Our onboarding process is limited, and we are working with the Community on a proposed new process.

The Human Rights office has delivered a lot of training to fulfill our EDI Plan. The Dean of Graduate Studies speaks to training delivered to graduate students and faculty broken down of four workshops all over campus.

In the Fall, a team of EDI practitioners from across the Country help conduct review of the EDI office. We are in the process of selecting an EDI expert to help us implement their recommendations. We are searching for an EDI director and currently at the stage of interviews.

The Committee reviewing the harassment and sexual violence policies wrapped up its work. The hope is that the policies will soon be ready to be submitted for approval. The policies are undergoing a final round of consultations before proceeding to approval.

6. <u>Question Period</u>

a) Questions and Answers Received from Placemats
None

b) Questions Received in Advance

Q: One question was received in advance of the meeting. It is in regard to the training offered to members of the Senate Appeals and Student Discipline Committee. **A:** The Chair of SASDAC indicates that the transfer of knowledge mostly comes from experience on the committee. There is normally overlapping membership that allows for that transfer.

Members indicate that there may be a lack of training for Senate committees and a concern that lack of training may not sufficiently empower committees to deliver on their mandate, especially regarding EDI and mental health. SASDAC in particular may benefit from training procedural justice, academic regulations, mental health, etc. Senators noted the benefit of including the chairs of Faculty appeals committees in such training. The University Secretary indicated that a training session for all members of the University Community who have a role in appeals is being discussed.

It is noted that the appeals process should pay special attention to professional programs and how their decisions interact with accreditation standards. Include the chairs of the Faculty appeals committees in training.

c) Questions Received from the floor

Q: About academic units, can you tell us what we are trying to fix with academic units? **A**: Senate established a committee with a rationale that can be found in the records of Senate. There are several mandates for the Committee; one of them is recommending terms and conditions for the establishment, merger or disestablishment of academic units. There are no rules on that right now, and it was felt by Senate that this needed to be remedied. Also, the existence of faculty councils, which are a norm across Canada, as a collegial academic governance body of Faculties is without official structure or form at the University. Making those structures official and providing for a broad array of voices to be heard in collegial Faculty governance is of paramount importance. The University has never defined what is a department, a school or a Faculty, although there is a requirement under the Act that we establish them. The Board of Governors establishes those units on a recommendation of Senate, while we haven't defined how we come to that recommendation. There is a need to come to an understanding of the criteria for the establishment and maintenance of academic units. We have also not defined their area of action – what do they do and don't do within the university. There needs to be a clear line of authority from Senate to Faculty, to departments. The conversation starts with a decision as to whether we are to have Faculty Councils and what is their scope of action; how they interact with Deans.

Members noted that the collective agreement of the Faculty Association includes some provisions that speak to the governance of departments; provisions that need to be considered in developing the Policy. There may be value in engaging with the Faculty

Association in developing the Policy. There could be language in the CA on the Library Council that could be repurposed for the Faculty Councils.

Q: Is this Policy going to restrict the way that departments make decisions? **A:** The Committee has not yet tackled that topic as it is currently focused on Faculty Councils. However, the Policy should define what is the authority and the jurisdiction of each academic decision-making body, and inherent in definition is limitation. The intent of the mandate given to the Committee by Senate is not to limit collegial governance, but rather to make it clear.

Q: Should the first step of the committee's work be to define the process to create departments? Are Faculty Councils part of the terms of the Committee. **A:** In the April 2025 meeting documents, the briefing note does speak to the role, authority, and structure of academic units, which covers faculty councils. The pivot to faculty council was driven by urgency regarding faculties that manage professionally accredited programs that must demonstrate that they have property established faculty governance. There is also tension in the system as to where the domain of the collegium stands and where the managerial responsibilities of the Deans begin. The terms of the Committee speak to a greater need to clarify the rules, to have greater clarity and transparency.

7. <u>Policy on Sale of Course Materials</u>

Vice President Naterer speaks to the updated draft of the Sale of Course Materials Policy.

This Board policy has been discussed at two previous meetings of Senate in April and October 2025. Several issues and problems are addressed through this revised policy. The principal issue to be addressed is that students have raised concerns about how current practices have placed required course assessment materials behind a paywall. The third issue is around disclosure if an instructor assigns course materials from which they receive royalty payments or sales revenue themselves personally.

A review committee has taken the feedback from the last Senate meeting and made further revisions to the policy. On of the concerns has been around the concept of assessments free of charge, or else an alternative way to access the assessment. The committee has come forward with a creative alternative solution to address this point – a review committee to evaluate requested exemptions. Special thanks to the committee, chaired by John McIntyre, as they have worked on this matter for the past 1 ½ years. At this point, I'd like to pass it over to them for a more detailed presentation.

The Chair of the Policy Review Committee drafting the Policy, presents the process of review and the current draft of the Policy. The Committee was struck in 2024 in response of sustained requests from Students that we deal with an issue of monetization of access to course materials and evaluations. The Policy was created in 2002 and has been overdue for review since 2007.

Q: The general principle is supported, but there is concern about the execution. Is it anti-innovation? Is there a clear understanding of the difference between pedagogical material and assessment materials? If the aim is to stop the wrongful monetization of materials, that could be subsumed under the Conflict-of-Interest Policy. There doesn't seem to be any burden of proof on the student to establish financial need. The process of approval via a committee could be quite slow, as opposed to decanal approval. There are no terms of reference for the Committee; it seems to define its own process, and membership is loosely defined. What would be in place to ensure that there is content domain expertise to speak to the viability of alternative means of assessment? There is no guarantee of psychometric expertise on the committee. **A:** It was intentional not to base provisions of the Policy on financial need as that could lead to students with more means having better access to materials. The Committee comes into play where there is not a viable alternative and to determine whether there is a reasonable exception. The idea of having this in the form of a committee rather than being a decanal call, was mainly rooted in concepts of academic freedom.

Q: The reference to the Board appointing the librarian seems to be too much intervention by the Board. **A:** The indication here is simply that the Head Librarian is appointed to that position by the Board. The reference to the Board is confusing and can be removed.

Q: What is the best way to inform students that there will be material to be purchased above and beyond tuition for a course? **A:** The course syllabus would carry that information.

Q: Some assessments in labs of specialty equipment come with videos in support of the assessment. Educators cannot replicate that content. What resources will be given to help do that? **A:** This does not obviate the need for the policy, but there are some resource concerns.

Q: 5.7, is there a term for approval of the Committee? If we do this one week before September, there will not be time to do this. Should this be done once based on the nature of the course rather than for each course offering? **A:** That can be defined in the Terms of Reference of the Committee, to come.

Q: Should this be added to requests for accommodation? **A:** Not all students need accommodation, so it would catch all students who have need.

Q: Encourage Senate to be careful about policy. Faculty could be subject to disciplinary processes for non-compliance. There should be a mechanism for feedback on issues in the implementation of the Policy, so that it can be assessed. Should be passed on to the Board. **A:** Noted.

Q: Some textbooks are quite a bit more expensive if offered through the bookstore. Is it against the rules to direct students to less expensive alternatives. **A:** No. Student can get their books anywhere.

8. Reports from Standing Committees

a. Senate Steering and Nominating Committee

Vice Chair Mears speaks to the report of SSNC, especially regarding elections to Senate and Committees of Senate. She stresses the need to have more faculty members on the Honorary Degrees Committee as it must soon proceed to the adjudication of honorary degrees. Senators are invited to keep an eye open for the next call for nominations.

ii. Report of the Working Group on the Composition of Senate

The Secretary speaks to the report of the Working Group, pointing to a report and briefing note in the meeting materials. He explains that the December 19 decision of Senate to add four seats to itself was based on an ill-informed recommendation on his part. The original recommendation was based on the number of faculty seats prescribed under the Act and those that were added to Senate under section 3.2 of the Processes and Procedures of Senate. It turns out that another three seats were added to Senate, for which there is no record of approval by Senate. Therefore, to ensure that Senate is composed of no less than one half of faculty members, only one seat needed to be added. Considering that Senate has proceeded from enormous information, it was felt best to return to Senate and have it reconsidered the matter.

The Working Group also recommends that the annual election of Senators be delayed till the first week of March to provide time for the Working Group to present to Senate in February, with recommendations on the allocation of additional seats.

Working Group on Senate Composition

MOTION: Moved by N. Etkin and J. Sentance that the number of seats to be added to the Senate be reconsidered. Not CARRIED

MOTION: Moved by that all additional added to Senate be codified under section 3.2 of the Processes and Procedures of Senate. CARRIED

MOTION: Moved by W. Whelan and N. Etkin to extend Senate meetings by 15 minutes. CARRIED

MOTION: Moved by P. Drake and A. Braithwaite that the launch of the annual election of Senators be postponed until the first week of March. CARRIED

The next motion is to codify the additional seats at Senate under the Processes and Procedures of Senate. This would apply not only to the four seats added on December 19, but also to the three other seats for which there is no record. This does not hold up the call for election for the new four seats added to Senate.

b. Report on the Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee.

Vice President Naterer points to the curricular report in the meeting materials. Five groups of changes by Faculty are presented.

For the Faculty of Arts, items 1 to 12 in the report.

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by M. Clapson that for the Faculty of Arts, new courses and changes to course descriptions and cross-listing of courses be approved as presented. CARRIED

For the Faculty of IKERAS, item 13 in the report.

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by P. Drake that for the Faculty of IKERAS, a deletion of a cross-listed course with nursing and an update to a course description be approved as presented. CARRIED

For the Faculty of Nursing, item 14 in the report.

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by E. Reid that for the Faculty of Nursing, a cross-listing change course be approved as presented. CARRIED

For the Faculty of Science, items 15 to 18 in the report.

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by N. Etkin that, For the Faculty of Science, creation of new courses, course descriptions and changes to course prerequisites be approved as presented. CARRIED

For the Faculty of Science, items 19 and 20 in the report.

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by N. Etkin that calendar entries for program modifications in analytics and data science be approved as presented. - CARRIED. CARRIED.

c. Report of the Committee on Scholarships and Awards

The report is considered to be received. A question that had been raised at the last meeting of Senate should be answered in the report.

Q: The report also deals with financial aid. Is this in the terms of the Committee? One of the table seems to characterize the Student Impact Payment as a scholarship, is that correct? **A:** As per the Impact Payment, it will be investigated to clarify.

9. <u>Shout outs</u>

The Chair asks Senators if they wish to send a shout out to members of the University Community.

Facilities services for their work to keep the University running under difficult circumstances of late.

To a retired colleague Richard Lemm, for an event on November 13 where he gave his last lecture to a very full room. He has been teaching creative writing since the 90s and there were students in the class from that era. He is known for building bridges in the Community and supporting student retention.

10. <u>Closed Session</u>

MOTION: Moved by T. Mady and M. Turnbull that Senate move to a closed session. CARRIED

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by S. Myers, that Senate approve the credentials for the 45 candidates listed as having completed the requirements for the Faculty of Arts. CARRIED

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by T. Mady, that Senate approve the credentials for the 82 candidates listed as having completed the requirements for the Faculty of Business. CARRIED

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by M. Turnbull, that Senate approve the credentials for the 46 candidates listed as having completed the requirements for the Faculty of Education. CARRIED

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by S. Myers, that Senate approve the credentials for the 1 candidate listed as having completed the requirements for the Faculty of Graduate Studies. CARRIED

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by P. Drake, that Senate approve the credentials for the 26 candidates listed as having completed the requirements for the Faculty of Nursing. CARRIED

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by N. Etkin, that Senate approve the credentials for the 67 candidates listed as having completed the requirements for the Faculty of Science. CARRIED

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by S. Kresta, that Senate approve the credentials for the candidate listed as having completed the requirements for the Faculty of Sustainable Design Engineering. CARRIED

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by A. Braithwaite, that Senate approve the credentials for the 4 candidates listed as having completed the requirements for the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. CARRIED

MOTION: MOVED by G. Naterer and SECONDED by M. Turnbull, to empower the President, the relevant Dean and Registrar acting together in full agreement, to approve any degrees, diplomas or certificates that may may surface as unexpected cases. CARRIED

MOTION: Moved by M. Turnbull and N. Etkin that Senate move to an open session. CARRIED

11. Adjournment

There being no further business; the Chair calls the meeting to an end at 5:15 p.m.