

Minutes of the Academic Senate of the University of Prince Edward Island
Friday, April 24, 2026, 3:00 – 5:00pm
Alumni Hall and via Teams

- Present:** W. Rodgers (Chair), K. Mears (Vice-Chair), M. Arfken, P. Bernard, A. Braithwaite, S. Brown, C. Campeanu, A. Carrothers, S. Cassidy, R. Deziel, N. Etkin, P. Foley, D. Griffon, D. Hardy Cox, R. Hoersting, T. Jackson, G. Jia, S. Kochkina, S. Kresta, B. Linkletter, S. Lloyd, S. MacKinnon, D. Magbanua, J.T. McClure, M. McMahon, W. Montelpare, S. Myers, J. Ngobia, L. Paredes, M. Pascal, Y. Rashchupkina, E. Reid, T. Saksida, J. Sentance, P. Smith, H. Sulman, M. Sweeney-Nixon, A. Trowbridge, M. Turnbull, M. von Eccher, T. Walker, A. Weenie
- Regrets:** R. Avoine-Dalton, I. Bhalesha, R. Carragher, C. Chike, M. Clapson, N. Clark, P. Drake, M. Fast, G. Geraghty, A. Hsiao, H. Mady, J. McIntyre, W. Whelan
- Recorder:** K. Porter, S. McCool
- Secretariat:** P. Robichaud

OPEN SESSION

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

The Chair of the Senate calls the meeting to order at 3:02pm and welcomes Senators. She welcomes new and returning Senators, along with acknowledging that it is the last meeting for Student Senators. She thanks them for their term and appreciates their time and commitment to Senate and welcomes the new student senators. Congratulations to the students on the inclusive projects they completed this year.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: MOVED by T. Jackson and SECONDED by W. Montelpare that the agenda for April 24, 2026, be approved. CARRIED.

3. Approval of Minutes of March 27, 2026

MOTION: MOVED by M. McMahon and SECONDED by J. Sentance that the minutes of the open session of March 27, 2026, be approved. CARRIED.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes of March 27, 2026

Question arose regarding whether the Senate has a legal pathway to oppose a decision by the Board. In response, in Section 2 of the University Act, it stipulates what composes the University and that includes the Board of Governors and the Senate; they do not exist as separate body politic. The University is a single corporate entity, and its subcomponents do not have a legal pathway against each other.

5. Senior Administration Reports

a. President's Report

President Rodgers acknowledged the significant efforts of those supporting students and instructors during the end of term period, including exams, grading, etc. Appreciation was extended to Student Services and the Student Culture Office for their support initiatives that included everything from cookies to therapy dogs.

An update was provided on Town Halls, noting increased feedback on both progress made and areas requiring further change. While there remains strong support for ongoing change, there is a recognized need to prioritize initiatives to avoid overburdening the community. In addition to the Town Halls, 26 Listening Sessions were hosted, and common themes emerging included the need for process improvements, fostering a respectful workplace, and promoting kindness and support.

The importance of strategic enrollment management was highlighted, including enhancing and promoting student experience. All members of the University community were encouraged to contribute to recruitment and retention efforts. The President concluded by thanking the University community for their continued work leading up to convocation and encouraged self-recognition of individual contributions.

b. Vice-President Academic & Research Report

Interim Vice-President Academic and Research Hardy Cox acknowledges the intensity of the end-of-term period for students, faculty and staff and emphasized the importance of supporting student well-being. It was noted that a strong student experience contributes to retention, institutional reputation, alumni engagement, and community impact. Recent initiatives included the Office of Student Culture and Community Standards creating a stress-free zone in the library lobby where students were welcomed with pop up surprises such as treats and light activities. A wellness table has also been available and has seen strong student participation. To further accommodate students, the library, in partnership with other offices, has extended their hours to support students' late-night studying. Efforts to support students affected by global and political challenges were also highlighted.

The Office of Student Culture and Community Standards is collaborating with Alumni colleagues to host mixer events for new graduates. These events are well attended and highly engaging and help students mark the transition from learner to graduate and begin to see themselves as engaged Alumni in our community. A call for expressions of interest for the "Time to Write" retreat will be issued, and colleagues are encouraged to apply. The Teaching and Learning Centre is developing on-demand faculty academy sessions to support onboarding new and sessional instructors. Senate committee work, in particular Professor Emeritus and Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee, continues to be active for this meeting.

Enrollment updates indicate a 5% decline in undergraduate applications over last year; 17% decline a decline in international applications, and 2.7% decline in domestic applications. Registration for confirmed students is up by 8%, and confirmed graduate applications are up 44% over last year. Summer course registrations are also up 22%. Recruitment and conversion remain key institutional priorities.

Research updates included ongoing applications for Canadian Research chairs, with a current submission in the Faculty of Science and with AVC, notification if successful will be

late fall 2026. UPEI received a NSERC Canada Graduate Research Scholarship Doctoral award, a NSERC post-doctoral award, an impact doctoral award and an impact post-doctoral award. Looking forward to welcoming these outstanding junior colleagues to our campus, along with several interns this summer.

Interim Vice-President Hardy-Cox concluded by recognizing the faculty of Sustainable Design and Engineering on their event this afternoon, seeing all the prospective students coming to visit our campus and learn about it was exciting.

c. Vice-President People & Culture Report

Vice-President Ngobia, of People and Culture, notes that under the strategic priority of “Thriving People & Culture”, HR initiatives continue to focus on capacity building and employee recognition. A focus on equipping management teams with hard soft skills including Excel, restorative practices targeting 120 leaders, and AI for managers, among others. Continue to recognize employees who are making remarkable contributions throughout the year. The month of May includes two events: “Recognizing Remarkable Colleagues”, an in-person event for all individuals recognized through peer to peer as well as their supervisors (expect 140 in attendance). The “Celebration of Colleagues” event will be a celebration of years of service at UPEI in 5 year increments up to 40 years (celebrating 113 employees).

HR services continue to improve to support business units through a distributed model – HR Liaison officers will be assigned to designated departments to support their HR needs related to recruitment/staffing, employee relations and performance management and implementation of Collective Agreements and policy interpretation and application.

Collaborative efforts continue with colleagues and associations to sources and negotiate better and improved benefits for our academic colleagues, including securing a better and improved Faculty Health & Dental Plan recommended by the Joint Benefits Management Committee, with implementation effective May 1, 2026. In addition, a new Emergency Travel Benefit and Flight Delay Services came into effect on April 1, 2026, for those already enrolled with Medavie Blue Cross.

Vice President Ngobia indicates that UPEI turnover rate remains much lower than Canadian labour market (10-15% according to Statistics Canada data), and UPEI was ranked as a top employer by Forbes Canada.

The University is following a structured and transparent approach to collective bargaining, with a clear process in place for regular updates provided to the University community and ongoing information shared on the UPEI labour relations webpage, which she encourages everyone to visit. A new bargaining unit, the Public Service Alliance of Canada (“PSAC”), was recently certified at the University. The bargaining unit will be composed of post-Doctoral research associates. The new PSAC bargaining unit has provided notice to bargain for its first collective agreement with the University. It has not been assigned a Local number by PSAC. For reference, the existing PSAC86000 bargaining unit represents graduate students who are employed as research assistants, lab instructors, and tutorial assistants.

6. Question Period

a. Questions and Answers Received from the Placemats

The Chair notes that there was no placemat questions brought forth at the March meeting of Senate. Reminder that everyone has a sticky note and pencil on the placemat to write any questions or comments; this allows time for a response.

b. Questions Received in Advance

The Chair notes that there were no questions received in advance.

c. Questions from the Floor

Q: Disappointed in the communication to Senators regarding the 2026-2027 budget. We received links to the media release and UPEI release announcing it but would have liked to see a direct link to the budget included. In the University Act, it is also a requirement that the Board share a financial report with Senate, and this is something we have not seen for the last few years. **A:** VPAF notes that communication can be improved in terms of putting links into documents. The budget document is also available on the UPEI website and is available publicly for any member to view. Regarding financial statements, VPAR will coordinate to get that information to the Senate should it be part of the regulations.

Q: Great to hear that summer enrollments are up, has there been any consideration around having different or extended hours for food establishments and facilities since there will be more people on campus as it has been a recurring student concern. **A:** AVC Café will continue their pilot project and be open again this summer. The challenge has been cost recovery. Currently in the beginning stages of working with Dana at Dexterra on what the future holds for the entire campus and how to make this sustainable on a long-term basis. Encourage everyone to utilize the AVC Café to ensure profitability during the summer months.

7. Reports from Standing Committees

a. Senate Steering and Nominating Committee

i) Committee Report

The Chair of Senate notes that the Committee's report is included in the meeting materials and is considered received.

ii) Faculty of Medicine – Faculty Council

A motion was brought forward to establish an Interim Faculty Council for the Faculty of Medicine and to approve associated statutes. This interim structure is required to enable necessary academic governance, including curriculum development and other academic decisions. The Interim Faculty Council will operate under the authority of the Senate and through the Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee (APCC) and will transition to a permanent structure once University-wide guidelines for faculty councils are finalized. This approach aligns with models used in the development of other faculty on campus and other medical schools.

Since UPEI is now in applicant status, Dean Smith and team recently attended the national meeting of the Association of Faculties of Medicine in Canada board meeting as an observer. The UPEI team participated in multiple networks and committees at the conference which provide valuable opportunities for collaboration, professional learning, and peer problem-solving across Canadian medical schools. UPEI was warmly received, and the University was acknowledged positively by peers for its development of a medical school.

The Chair notes that it is very rare that a University gets the chance to start a medical program from scratch. An interdisciplinary and inclusive approach is being used in the development of the curriculum for the future UPEI medical program. Thanks to Dean Preston and all the medical colleagues online that are working on this.

Q: Can you walk us through the process and timeline for establishing the Faculty of Medicine, including accreditation steps and how responsibilities will transition from Memorial University's current program. Due to facility constraints, there is a limit of 30 students. Could enrolment numbers increase once the Faculty of Medicine is formally established at UPEI? How are regional campus arrangements and financial considerations being managed during and after the transition, including the relationship between Memorial University and UPEI in operating and funding the program? **A:** The current program operates under a regional campus model, which is well-established and tightly regulated form of distributed medical education in Canada. In this model, an existing medical school (Memorial University) delivers an identical curriculum, assessment, and student experience at a partner site, with accreditation standards requiring full comparability. UPEI is initially adopting this model to enable a faster launch of the medical program (beginning in 2025), with students in early cohorts completing their degrees under Memorial University. This arrangement is intended as an interim step; from 2029 onward, UPEI is expected to operate its own medical school, develop its own curriculum in partnership with Memorial, hold its own accreditation, and issue UPEI degrees. Medical schools in Canada are not allowed to transfer students between schools, requiring the two models to run in parallel during the transition period. Regarding enrolment, student numbers are set and regulated by provincial governments, and increasing enrolment does not necessarily generate financial benefit, as medical education is largely dependent on government funding for clinical teaching rather than tuition revenue.

C: Investment in education, particularly medical education, can yield long-term financial and research benefits despite initial costs. Trained graduates can generate significant returns over time. **A:** In big medical schools, like UofTM, there is certainly a big return on investment. But we may have a cash flow problem if we tried to bring in more students than the province was willing to fund.

Q: Regarding the membership of interim council members, it is noted that all faculty members and faculty association members, what does that mean? Does it include sessional instructors? **A:** Yes, it is inclusive.

MOTION: MOVED by P. Smith and SECONDED by B. Montelpare, that the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Medicine be established and that its Statutes be approved. CARRIED.

iii) Schedule of Meetings of Senate & SSNC

A structured, forward-looking Senate meeting schedule has been developed by the University Secretariat to provide a predictable timetable for up to three years in advance. The schedule includes flexibility for adjustments, including the possibility of cancelling meetings if insufficient business is identified.

MOTION: MOVED by M. McMahon and SECONDED by S. Kresta, that the three-year schedule of meetings for Senate and SSNC from 2026-2029 be approved. CARRIED.

b. Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee

i) Eighth Curriculum Report

The Chair of Senate points out for members that routine recommendations from APCC are grouped in omnibus motions so that they can be dealt with quickly, with more substantial items having their own motions and separate documentation. This is meant to ensure efficient discussions and focus our attention on the most important matters. Of course, none of this prevents members from debating recommendations that are part of omnibus motions.

Vice President Hardy Cox speaks to the recommendations from APCC. The report from APCC contains 229 recommendations to be resolved through motions grouped by Faculty.

Vice President Hardy Cox expressed her appreciation for the significant collaborative effort across faculties and the Registrar's office in supporting this work. Going forward, this process will be more streamlined to enhance the student experience, as these changes can be completed before students register, so they are able to navigate their program more easily going forward.

For the Faculty of Arts, recommendations 1 to 141.

Motion 1 – MOVED by D. Hardy Cox and SECONDED by S. Myers that the creation of new courses, the deletion of courses, changes to course descriptions, titles, requisites, cross-listing and numbers and concordant Calendar entries for the Faculty of Arts be approved.

For the Faculty of Arts, recommendation 142

Motion 2 – MOVED by D. Hardy Cox and SECONDED by S. Myers that the minor in Acadian studies be deleted.

For the Faculty of Arts, recommendation 143

Motion 3 - MOVED by D. Hardy Cox and SECONDED by S. Myers that the Major in Spanish be deleted.

For the McDougall Faculty of Business, recommendations 144 and 145

Motion 4 - MOVED by D. Hardy Cox and SECONDED by T. Saksida that an update to elective options in the Organizational Management Specialization and the addition of BUS 3330 to the Accounting Specialization for the McDougall Faculty of Business be approved.

For the Faculty of Education, recommendations 146 to 181

Motion 5 - MOVED by D. Hardy Cox and SECONDED by M. Turnbull that new course proposals, updates to the BEd program regulations and admissions requirements to the BEd (français langue seconde) and concordant Calendar entries for the Faculty of Education, be approved.

For the Faculty of Sustainable Development Engineering, recommendations 182 to 187

Motion 6 - MOVED by D. Hardy Cox and SECONDED by S. Kresta that course cross listings and changes to prerequisites for the Faculty of Sustainable Design Engineering be approved.

For the Faculty of IKERAS, recommendations 188 to 193

Motion 7 - MOVED by D. Hardy Cox and SECONDED by A. Weenie that course cross-listing and changes to course prerequisites for the Faculty of IKERAS be approved.

For the Faculty of Science, recommendations 194 to 225

Motion 8 - MOVED by D. Hardy Cox and SECONDED by N. Etkin that a new course proposal and changes to course prerequisites, names, descriptions, a course deletion and concordant Calendar entries for the Faculty of Science, be approved.

For the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, recommendations 226 to 229

Motion 9 - MOVED by D. Hardy Cox and SECONDED by D. Griffon that four new courses for the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, be approved.

Additional Motions

Motion 10 – MOVED by D. Hardy Cox and SECONDED by T. Saksida that modifications to the MBA in Global Leadership (MBA-GL) program, including the formalization of a 20-month program pathway and targeted curriculum adjustments, be approved.

Motion 11 – MOVED by D. Hardy Cox and SECONDED by H. Sulman that the addition of a course-based stream to the Master of Nursing Program be approved in principle and submitted to the MPHEC for review.

ii) Notices of Intent

The Chair reminds members that two proposals for the deletion of programs are received by the Senate as a Notice of Intent, with the final decision to be taken at a future meeting of the Senate.

- Deletion of the Minor in Medieval and Renaissance Studies

Dean Myers speaks to this notice of intent, indicating that the program has not captured student interest, and some of the courses included under the program are either no longer offered or rarely offered.

- Deletion of the Certificate in Adult Education as a post-degree certificate

Dean Turnbull speaks to this notice of intent, indicating that this certificate is part of Holland College. Originally, Holland College did not have the capacity to deliver this on

its own and invited UPEI to collaborate by offering three courses per year. Due to student and financial decline at Holland College, they are not employing this credential, and enrollment is no longer viable.

8. Shout Outs

- To Darcy McCardle and Nish Weerananarayana Mudalige in helping prepare and process curriculum report
- To Elizabeth Blake, who successfully defended her PhD this week, and is now Dr. Blake, Assistant Professor, congratulations!
- To the Operations Team and Engineering team who pulled off an amazing event this afternoon. Also, to the communications and publications team who got us on various media platforms – we had indigenous feature, a francophone feature, feature of the National Engineering Competition, and then two specific design projects, one of which will be a follow up this evening. A lot of activity and positive attention that included 800 students from across PEI, plus school chaperones, judges, and clinic partners. Check out the student videos available online to learn more.
- To the Student Union, following their social media accounts, and there is so many amazing activities that they are hosting during exams
- To faculty members supporting upcoming graduating students, such a huge impact on the student's lives.
- To Student Senators (outgoing / ingoing), thank you to Senators for being respectful to students and appreciate students participating in Senate, we value your opinion
- To SMCS Actuarial Club, who placed 3rd out of 37 teams at ANSA case competition in Ottawa

9. Closed Session

MOTION: MOVED by P. Benard and SECONDED by R. Hoersting that Senate proceed to a closed session.

MOTION: MOVED by P. Benard and SECONDED by R. Hoersting that Senate proceed to an open session.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business; the Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:25pm.