

Office of the Senate Secretariat

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Minutes of the Senate Meeting of Monday September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

A meeting of the Senate of Acadia University occurred on Monday September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 beginning at 4:00 p.m., with Chair A. Kieft presiding and 42 Senators present. The meeting took place in BAC 132.

- 1) **Approval of Agenda**

The Chair called the meeting to order, noting that there was quorum at present.

**Motion to approve the agenda. Moved by D. Benoit and seconded by J. Dymont.**

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA CARRIED.
- 2) **Minutes of the Meeting of Senate - Wednesday June 9th, 2021**

**Motion to approve the Minutes of Wednesday June 9th, 2021. Moved by M. Robertson and seconded by M. Lukeman.**

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES CARRIED.
- 3) **Minutes of the Special Meeting of Senate – Tuesday June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021**

**Motion to approve the Minutes of Tuesday June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021. Moved by A. Quema and seconded by R. Murphy.**

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES CARRIED.
- 4) **Announcements:**
  - a) **Link for updated list of membership of all standing and ad-hoc committees of Senate:**

The Chair referred Senators to the link to the updated list of membership of all standing and ad-hoc committees of Senate:  
[http://senate.acadiau.ca/Senate\\_Comm\\_Membership.html](http://senate.acadiau.ca/Senate_Comm_Membership.html)
  - b) **Senate Orientation Meeting information:**

The Chair announced that the Senate Orientation meeting would be held on Monday September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. The meeting was scheduled to take place in BAC 132 but there was a possibility of a Teams meeting instead.
  - c) **Other Announcements:**

The Chair noted regrets from L. Matos, N. O'Driscoll, S. Thomas, H. Dahringer, C. Lu, M. Sweatman, M. Stanbrook, A. Pash and N. Kennedy.

The Chair explained the Question Period which would follow the written announcements and comprise of questions specifically for the President and the Provost and VP Academic that did not pertain to the written announcements.

**i) From the President:**

President Ricketts welcomed everyone and expressed appreciation for the last 18 months and for the start of the term, noting that a great deal of hard work had been carried out to make it a success.

President Ricketts noted that an announcement would be forthcoming regarding the new President and CEO of EduNova.

President Ricketts noted that the Nova Scotia Government expected to move to Phase 5 of the reopening plan for the Province on September 15<sup>th</sup>. This would result in changes but he noted that organizations could continue to require masks and other precautions if they decided to and as a result Acadia will be continuing to enforce the public health restrictions that were in place for the time being.

President Ricketts also stated that by October 4<sup>th</sup> a proof of vaccination would be required Provincially for discretionary activities. President Ricketts recognized that if Acadia could get through the first two weeks of term without COVID a better assessment could be made. He commented that the public were still not allowed on campus and that only very limited events were being offered.

President Ricketts stated that the University administration were engaging with the Province for further clarity on what the proof of vaccination process would be. It was expected to have a QR code which would produce a green check or a red check, but that initially only Nova Scotians would be included.

J. Fowles asked when there would be clarification regarding the various community programs run by Kinesiology and the interaction with Varsity Athletics.

President Ricketts expected that by the end of September there would be information forthcoming.

C. Mutlu asked about the check in system that the President had noted in his report. This suggested that 97% of students were fully vaccinated.

President Ricketts explained that the safe check in system was for out of Province students who were required to complete it in order to enter Nova Scotia. 97% of those students were fully vaccinated, plus .9% partially vaccinated.

C. Mutlu asked why so many students were visiting the pop up clinics if this was the case.

President Ricketts pointed out that a vaccination clinic had been added to allow the international students to get vaccinated. Prior to September 1<sup>st</sup> the figure was 80% fully vaccinated. He noted that this data was from the Province and was high level data without any names being provided. Residence students had been required to provide information regarding their vaccination status.

President Ricketts noted that students had responded to a survey and that the data was very consistent with that of other universities.

C. Mutlu pointed out that 73 COVID cases had been reported during the weekend and that these were mostly amongst 20-30 year olds. He was concerned about the lack of air circulation in many classrooms and asked whether President Ricketts would feel comfortable teaching in a classroom.

President Ricketts commented that he would be and noted that he was vaccinated, getting tested regularly and following public health guidelines.

A. Quema asked whether Occupational Health Nurse C. Landry could be invited to Senate to speak to these issues.

A. Quema asked about a First Nations event the previous week.

President Ricketts stated that this was part of the lead up to the Mawio'mi.

Z. Whitman commented that every Friday there would be a different individual at the K.C. Irving Centre during September.

L. Carlsson noted that there were students working in the community, in schools and at the Wolfville Farmers' Market, and she asked whether they would follow Public Health guidelines as they applied to the outer community.

President Ricketts expected that this would be the case.

M. Adam was concerned at a mixed message because Varsity athletes needed to be vaccinated but others did not. The grey area was proving difficult for experiential learning and he would have liked to see a vaccine mandate at Acadia.

President Ricketts stated that other institutions were having to work out how to do this. It was easy in those instances to make a wrong assumption that everyone was vaccinated and to drop other precautions. He noted that the University had been advised by Dr. Strang and his team to not have mandatory vaccination policies. He pointed out that if the University was unable to get the required results, mandatory vaccination would be introduced. There was no evidence that this was necessary at this time.

N. D'Amato stated that other institutions did not have their Senate meetings in person; their meetings were still being conducted virtually.

D. Benoit was more concerned about adequate testing. He felt that if the seriousness of COVID was not understood by some, they were likely to come to work with symptoms, and he preferred mandatory testing.

**ii) From the Provost and  
VPA**

D. Keefe welcomed H. Saunders, the Dean of Libraries and Archives, to Acadia.

D. Keefe provided an update on the Academic Plan. The APC had received Faculty plans on Friday. At the October Senate meeting information would be provided on the Academic Plan.

S. Duguay provided a brief update on the current enrolment. 4215 applications had been received which was similar to the previous year and he acknowledged the work of the recruitment and enrolment staff. There were 1377 students that accepted offers and he was now seeing a first year enrolment of 1072. This was a 19% increase over the previous year and more importantly, 16% over the 2021-20 numbers.

S. Duguay also noted that 698 2<sup>nd</sup> year students had returned, which also matched the previous year. Acadia overall enrolment was currently 3538 which represented a 4% increase over last year and a .5% increase from 2019-20.

S. Duguay reported that residence occupation was 1287 students. Approximately 100 students had paid a deposit but not appeared at this time.

H. Teismann pointed out that in a class of 106 students he only had 65 attending in the classroom which raised the issue of possible 'ghosts' on a large scale.

D. Keefe stated that residence numbers were good so he was surprised at this, and offered to look into it. Student Accounts would be checking as in previous years.

A. Quema referred to D. Keefe's ACE Colleague update and pointed out the burden that Directors, Coordinators and Heads had taken on to try to learn and deal with the new system. For three weeks this had been extremely difficult and she highlighted the lack of communication and the complete lack of training for all. She had been forced to rely on information gleaned from her administrative assistant.

A. Quema had a large advising role and was finding that the students were struggling with the registration process. She pointed out that first year students in particular needed both technical and academic knowledge and this was very difficult for them. She anticipated that this could be a huge problem next March when registration began for all students. A. Quema recommended training the current students. Students switching programs or new to the University were particularly impacted by the change.

D. Keefe recognised the challenge. He stated that a student planning module would be coming on-line later in September which would provide them with a dashboard to clearly show what was missing in their program and whether this was an elective or a required course.

D. Keefe recognised that more training could have been offered but in fact the project was under resourced. As a result training was offered by modules and webinars that everyone had to work through alone.

P. Callaghan agreed that this had been a rough period of learning three systems and that the lack of communication in June and July had made this difficult. The need for requests for access and the lack of clarity of what the objectives were made things very difficult. He noted that all students did not know the content of their programs.

D. Keefe had received reports from the Registrar and the Project Team listing the problems experienced by the students.

D. Seamone pointed out that there were so many places where faculty would normally interact with students and she noted that the 7 minute training video was quite insufficient. Hours had been spent trying to understand the new system and all of her department members were in the same situation. She requested that adequate training sessions be offered.

R. Newman agreed that it had been a horrible three weeks and very unexpected in the final weeks of August. The problems were not just the system itself, they were exacerbated by the control of who had access to what screen and the fact that admin assistants were unable to even look up a GPA of a student. R. Newman noted that there had been no validation of the stress imposed on the Heads, Directors, students, faculty, and staff.

R. Newman asked M. Bishop to express thanks to S. Sponagle and S. Singleton and others in the Registrar's Office because she was having to forward over 40 requests from students to them every day now that her admin assistant had no access to carry out the normal functions of her job.

R. Newman also noted the inequities that existed because some administrative assistants had access to screens that others did not. Students had been extremely frustrated, which was not advantageous for Acadia, and R. Newman noted that after the difficult year of COVID it was insulting to be thanked for adapting to a new system when so much stress had been added.

C. Mutlu asked about the timing of the system change which had made everyone more anxious right before the start of classes.

D. Keefe stated that there had been a conscious decision to make the change at this time. He stated that staff had agreed that late July would be the best time to lock the system down for two weeks and make the changeover. D. Keefe commented that other universities had been consulted to ask when they did their switch to Colleague.

C. Mutlu asked if lessons had been learned.

D. Keefe stated that the Project team would be leaving at the end of December but that a number of people had been seconded from their departments to work on this project and would now return to their units. Support would be provided by Tech Services.

C. Mutlu stated that a technical move of this magnitude got rid of the power of deliberative bodies such as Senate. Senate should oversee the educational policy of the University and each shift removed the power to do that. He felt that there were no lessons learned and that there would be no reflection on the technological emphasis of the University's educational sector.

D. Keefe pointed out that the Colleague project was a system and did not impact Senate's authority.

C. Mutlu disagreed.

D. Keefe stated that Eden was on the point of collapse and had been in place for 20+ years. It was essential to shift to a new system.

H. Saunders noted that she had heard that lessons learned were going to be shared and D. Keefe clarified that he didn't intend to imply the opposite.

M. Adam pointed out that the technical support staff on campus had been exemplary, but that he could feel the weight that was upon them as they were flooded with requests.

M. Adam was finding issues with the Colleague system that would need to go through to the Provost Office because they affected the way that they could deliver their program. He was concerned that despite D. Keefe's assurances that the roll out of Colleague was not affecting the academic program, this was not the case and program delivery was having to be changed just because the system was unable to recognise, for example, six credit-hour courses. This had a profound effect on pedagogy.

M. Adam did not feel that this level of stress and overload could be sustainable for more than another two weeks.

V. Provencal was only now hearing about Informer and requested an explanation about the new system detailing what had changed. He was finding that information was patchy and spread in different places. Having found something he would then find that access could only be granted from a higher authority. An ordered list of who had what access would be helpful.

V. Provencal felt that there appeared to be a new management approach with the Colleague system.

A. Quema asked that those in the trenches be properly involved in the process including the Heads, Directors and Coordinators. If knowledge was provided to them they could then have passed information on to their faculty.

P. Callaghan agreed that those who had been deeply involved in Colleague could assist with training others.

D. Benoit pointed out the inconsistency of who got what information. When he managed to get access to Informer he was asked what reports he needed but it was impossible to know what options existed. Information was being handed out in a piecemeal fashion.

D. Benoit noted the problem of not knowing what he didn't know and urged D. Keefe to provide information and training to Directors and Heads so that they could train their staff.

D. Keefe stated that there were 700 customized reports in EDEN. Some of these reports were being built into Informer.

**iii) From the Associate VP  
Research and Dean  
of Graduate Studies**

A. Redden encouraged Senators to look through the report from Research and Graduate Studies and to note the significant amount of work that had taken place through the summer in seeking funding and successfully obtaining funding for faculty research projects and research students.

A. Redden noted an omission under the Co-operative Education and Work Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL) Awards listed: C. Alexander was recently offered a second CEWIL award. These two, coupled with the three CEWIL awards to M. Sheppard, G. Bissix and M. Sweatman, total \$360,910.

A. Redden also highlighted that there was a Harrison McCain Foundation call underway for research proposals from early career researchers and she advised Senators to encourage applications from early career researchers in their academic units.

A. Quema noted that it was excellent to see this sort of report and great to celebrate the achievements of the faculty.

**iv) From the President of the ASU**

M. Cyr stated that the ASU had hired a new Financial Manager and a Marketing Specialist which would allow them to extend their marketing outreach with the return of in-person learning.

**v) From the College of Divinity and Faculty of Theology**

A. Robbins stated that all classes would be hybrid in the Divinity College. Students would have the option to be in-person or virtual. The building was completed now.

**5) Old Business**

**a) Senate Committee Annual Reports**

**i) Admissions and Academic Standing (Appeals) Committee Report, Part 2 (2020-2021)**

The Chair asked if there were any questions of the report.

There being none, the Admissions and Academic Standing (Appeals) report was received.

**6) New Business**

**a) Election/Acclamation of Senate Executive Committee members for 2021-2022**

The Chair stated that M. Robertson, K. Pinder and M. Adam had been nominated to serve on Senate Executive for 2021-2022.

These three Senators were elected by acclamation.

**b) Election/Acclamation of Faculty Elections Officer for 2021-2022**

The Chair stated that R. Sandapen had been nominated to serve as the Faculty Elections Officer.

R. Sandapen was elected by acclamation.

**7) Question Period – President/Provost and VP Academic**

H. Teismann cited situations where students had emailed that they were experiencing symptoms and he urged them not to come to class and to get tested for COVID which they did. He asked whether he should be informing the class.

President Ricketts felt that information such as this should not be passed on.

D. Keefe stated that no advice should be given to students but that the professor should refer students to C. Landry or to Safety and Security. At this point Public Health will contact the students directly.

H. Teismann asked why the Colleague system had been rolled out without a beta version.

D. Keefe stated that a test simulation had been carried out in June.

H. Teismann pointed out that the new system did not allow for the uploading of photos of students. Previously this had been possible and he had taken the time to learn the student names and faces. This was part and parcel of the sort of institution that Acadia was and the educational model. He understood that this would not be possible with Colleague because Acadia had only purchased a version that did not allow for modifications.

D. Keefe stated that photos were a customization under the EDEN system and was one of the reasons why EDEN could not be updated. As a result the University had decided not to do any customization of Colleague because it was always expensive to reconfigure all of the customizations.

The Chair commented that on ACORN/moodle students could upload their photos and asked whether this could be done in a centralized manner.

It was noted that this was not possible.

D. Seamone agreed that the loss of pictures was an issue.

D. Seamone asked whether faculty would know if there was a positive case of COVID, and when they would be notified.

D. Keefe stated that this had happened in the Spring. Public Health came in to make their assessment of risk and conduct contact tracing to notify those assessed to be close contacts. Once all this was done the University would send out a notice to say that there had been a positive case on campus.

D. Seamone asked how to assess her own risk since she was teaching in BAC in classrooms filled completely with minimal air exchange. She asked whether she could carry out an anonymous survey with her class to ask whether they were vaccinated.

D. Keefe did not have an answer at this time.

V. Provencal asked whether faculty would be asked whether they were or were not in favour of lifting the mask policy once October 4<sup>th</sup> arrived.

D. Keefe stated that the COVID Task Force would be consulted on that matter but that decisions would be made based upon Occupational Health and Safety and the advice given by the professionals. Risk in different environments would be considered.

V. Provencal stated that some classrooms should be shut down and that faculty should be petitioned and their concerns given some priority.



D. Keefe stated that concerns would be a part of the decision but would not be the overriding factor. Occupational health and safety would be the primary factor in decision making.

D. Looker pointed out that if the Province recommended stricter guidelines the University would be required to follow those. If on the other hand the Province relaxed the guidelines, the University would be able to keep stricter guidelines.

M. Adam assumed that there was no secure way to collect personal private health information from a student.

D. Keefe agreed to look into this.

The Chair pointed out that it was one minute to six p.m.

C. Mutlu asked whether it was necessary for Senate to meet in person.

The Chair responded that Senate was meeting in person because the University had returned to fully in-person operations. She was open to the will of Senators and understood that some Senators were unhappy with the decision to meet in person. She was hearing feedback at this meeting and through other correspondence and was open to surveying Senators before the next meeting. She herself, as a faculty member, had been uncomfortable with some of the circumstances surrounding the return to in-person teaching this fall. As Senate Chair, the decision for Senate to meet in person was separate from that and was guided by the nature of Senate as a body and by the wider University operational decisions.

A. Quema pointed out that everyone was supposed to be vaccinated already and she noted that the quality of the discussion from a democratic point of view was much better in person.

D. Seamone noted that with masks on it was hard to lip read and that the seating in BAC made it hard to hear Senators with masks on.

P. Callaghan suggested opting for the hybrid model and felt that a survey would be good. He noted that students were expected to show up in class every day.

The Chair agreed to look into a hybrid approach to Senate.

J. Fowles asked what would be decided if any less than 99% of Senators agreed to one format or another.

N. D'Amato noted that other Universities did not feel that it was safe to meet in person.

D. Rice had first-hand experience with COVID and stressed the fact that no one wanted to contract it.

The Chair asked Senators to contact her by the end of the week if they wanted to work with her to think through practical ideas for how to conduct hybrid Senate meetings effectively.

J. Banks felt that the hybrid approach was the most difficult format to have an engaging conversation without technology to support a hybrid classroom.

C. Mutlu felt that meeting in person was an unnecessary risk and he expected that if Senate continued to meet in person he may be resigning his position on Senate. He noted that at Senate a number of individuals were meeting for over two hours and were a mix of people that might not otherwise share a physical space.

M. Adam suggested that the Senate Executive meet to discuss this next week and conduct a short survey for Senators.

The Chair thanked Senators for the discussion and feedback.

**8) Other Business**

There was no other business.

**9) Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn at 6.10 p.m. Moved by D. Benoit.

**ORIGINAL SIGNED**

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R. Hare, Recording Secretary

**Admissions and Academic Standing (Appeals) Committee  
Report to Acadia University Senate, Part 2 (2020-2021)  
September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

For the 2020-2021 academic year, a revised process was again recommended to Senate and subsequently passed by Senate at its December 2020 meeting. Students on probation could still appeal their probation academic standing in the established way, but students on dismissal could instead complete a Declaration of Intent to Return to Studies process for this year rather than complete a full appeal process. The entire committee reviewed and decided upon the appeals of probation standing, whereas a subcommittee reviewed the Declarations of Intent to Return to Studies questionnaires for completeness.

There were two deadlines for appeals of probation academic standing and for submission of Declaration of Intent to Return to Studies for this year:

June 11, 2021- for students who received notification of dismissal or probation by May 14

July 23, 2021- for students who received notification of dismissal or probation after May 14 (due to grade changes, etc)

**75 students were notified of Dismissal academic standing and were eligible to submit a Declaration of Intent to Return to Studies**

- 42 students submitted Declaration of Intent to Return to Studies questionnaires (academic standing changed from Dismissal to Probation)

**48 students were notified of Probation academic standing and were eligible to submit an Appeal**

- 7 students appealed
- 0 appeals granted (no academic standing changed from Probation to Good Standing)

The committee for 2020-2021 was:

Chair (Chair of Senate): Anna Kieft — ex-officio

Registrar or Delegate (non voting): Mark Bishop — ex-officio

Executive Director of Student Services or Delegate (non voting): James Sanford — ex-officio

1 Arts faculty member: Jeffrey Sachs

1 Arts faculty member: James Sedgwick

1 Prof. St. faculty member: Harish Kapoor

1 Prof. St. faculty member: Jeff Torbert

1 P&A Sc. faculty member: John Murimboh

1 P&A Sc. faculty member: Cindy Trudel

1 Theology faculty member: Anna Robbins

1 Student: Lydia Houck (until April 2021), Megan Cyr (as of May 2021)

Others invited to attend, non-voting: Shawna Singleton, Associate Registrar

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Kieft

Chair