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The Senate of Acadia University acknowledges that we are located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

Minutes of the Senate Meeting of Monday, December 11, 2023

A hybrid meeting of the Senate of Acadia University occurred on Monday, December 11, 2023, beginning at 9:00 a.m., with Chair A. Kiefte presiding. The meeting took place in hybrid format in the Langley Classroom of the Divinity College and using Zoom, with 41 Senators in attendance, 20 people attending in person and 21 people attending virtually using Zoom.

- 1) Approval of Agenda** The Chair called the meeting to order, noting that there was a quorum of Senators present.

Motion to approve the agenda. Moved by D. Benoit and seconded by S. Fleckenstein.

The Chair confirmed that the agenda is Version 2 which was distributed by email on December 8th, and that the only additions were the VPA Report as well as the Report from the Scholarships, Prizes and Awards Committee. The Chair announced an addition to the agenda, a Transition Report by the Senate Curriculum Committee (Policy), that was just circulated by email, and would be added as Item 4(b).

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA CARRIED.

2) Minutes

- a) Meeting of Senate – Monday, November 13th, 2023** **Motion to approve the Minutes of Monday, November 13th, 2023. Moved by D. Benoit and seconded by J. Sachs.**

No amendments to the Minutes.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES CARRIED.

3) Announcements and Communications

a) Announcements from the Chair of Senate

The Chair announced regrets from D. Kruisselbrink and J. Shirokov.

The Chair drew Senators' attention to the item on page 3 of the agenda, under Senate Chair Announcements. The Senate Executive is proposing trying out the use of a new section of the agenda, which is within *Roberts' Rules*, the Consent Calendar. The intent would be to put items that are deemed non-controversial that may not require a lot of discussion within the Consent Calendar portion of the agenda. It is proposed that this be used as part of the next Senate meeting in January, listing the Consent Calendar as its own section. Senate will make a motion to approve all of those items at once and discuss or clarify as needed. Items would include such things as approval of Minutes, announcements, and any reports that do not have motions attached to them. If there is any item that a voting member of Senate feels should not be part of the Consent Calendar, they can request that it be placed at another part of the agenda as a separate item. This can be done when approving the agenda, or before the Senate meeting.

J. Fowles asked for clarification regarding discussion of items in the Consent Calendar.

The Chair confirmed there would be no cutting off of discussion, that questions can still be asked about items within this portion of the agenda. The purpose is that they are being addressed all at one time, and Senators should come to the meeting having read all portions of the agenda, prepared for what they want to ask about. The Chair stated that if something becomes more substantial, it can be brought into another agenda item.

It was agreed that the Consent Calendar will be used on a trial basis during the January meeting of Senate.

b) From the President

President Hennessy had one addition to announcements, with respect to the second item, NDA Pledge. To assign credit where it should have been assigned, this was first brought forward by James Sanford and Scott Duguay who championed it through the leadership, but was also originally flagged by Allison Smith, Acadia's Sexualized Violence Response and Education

Coordinator, who was really the leader in this and championed it all the way through.

President Hennessy welcomed questions and comments pertaining to his report.

D. Benoit asked about the possible common application portal, stating that there already seems to be a barrier in talking with international students, as external agents communicate with the students. He wondered whether this would create yet another barrier in having direct contact with prospective students. He stated that in one of his programs, there is supposed to be a large number of incoming students in January, but there is really no way to tell whether the students are registering in classes or whether anyone has reached out to them to see if they are actually going to be attending. President Hennessy stated this is a good question, and that he was at a meeting about this last week where he raised concerns that were received from Acadia people and he will continue to raise these issues. He stated that a benefit of the common application portal may be that once a student has accepted a position at a university, they would then be removed from all of the other universities applied to, and he used the nursing program as an example. Another benefit would be tracking students in data gathering. A concern is the potential loss of personalization. Acadia's recruitment team has an incredible level of responsiveness, and we want to maintain that. A study is being done over the next few months to determine feasibility.

The Chair thanked the President for his report.

c) From the Provost and VPA

K. Ashley had a few things to speak about in addition to her written report.

She welcomed Dr. S. Currie into her new role as Associate Vice-President Research, Innovation and Graduate Studies. Today she is attending her first Senate meeting since assuming this role.

K. Ashley mentioned that in her report under Program Updates, she wanted to include that there is a course-based option, as well, for the M.Sc. in Computer Science program. It should be corrected to say project-based and course-based.

During the most recent Senate Executive meeting, she had mentioned that an announcement would come out about an AI panel taking place in January. The announcement has been

delayed but will be coming out very soon. The panel will take place on January 10th from 4:00 to 6:00 pm.

K. Ashley stated that documents were sent from MPHEC about a program change to the B.Ed. Program at CBU, to create a new stream of the program, which is an eight-month online degree with practicum. This does not affect Acadia directly, however MPHEC has requested feedback from universities, and this will take place. She flagged that a day after receiving the documents, the government made an announcement that the program is starting this January, which does not allow for the normal MPHEC approval process. It was announced as a pilot program, however the government stated in its announcement that it is academically sound, fulfilling a need in the province in terms of education. This is something to watch in terms of university autonomy.

C. Rushton asked what the process will be for people updates, and how K. Ashley sees that unfolding moving forward.

K. Ashley stated that she has been asking the Deans if they have any news that they would like to share that wouldn't be captured typically. She believes in celebrating people, so some of it is simply role changes, some is highlighting work of students, and some is reflective of important career milestones for faculty.

K. Pinder stated that she hopes that the Deans would contact the units so that they are aware of everything that should be mentioned and celebrated.

K. Pinder then asked if there was a response from the MPHEC to the government announcement regarding the B.Ed. program.

President Hennessy indicated that he had contacted the CEO of the MPHEC and was told that basically since this is an update to their delivery of a program rather than a new program, it does not go through the same rigorous quality assurance control. MPHEC will review it to determine that it still covers all of their curriculum that has already been approved, and that it meets the regulatory requirements for licensing. Once that is determined to have been met, it will go through fairly quickly.

D. Seamone stated she is supportive of the Assistant Deans EDI, positions, but would like to hear about the rationale behind the decisions to create the roles.

K. Ashley stated that the creation of the roles arose as part of discussions around how to address EDI institutionally, and there was talk about how it would be good to have someone to champion EDI at the faculty level, in all three faculties. She also said that the library has been doing a lot of work in this area. The hope is that going forward, there will be lots of discussion and cross-pollination, and that these roles will look at the needs of the faculties and help to identify where changes could be made to curriculum or processes. There is some flexibility with respect to timelines. December 5th was the deadline for applications, and there will be a hiring committee for each faculty. K. Ashley will be checking for updates.

K. Pinder asked about what was meant by possible changes to curriculum. In hearing that, it sounds like a faculty member could possibly audit another faculty member's curriculum to make recommendations.

K. Ashley stated that this is not the idea. It would be done at the request of a faculty member who is seeking advice or assistance in terms of resources. A section of the PART report calls for action to create unit-level EDI audits, and this could be some of the work that an Assistant Dean EDI could do. The position will be there to support, not to tell people what they need to do.

K. Pinder asked if this would fall under any of the Senate subcommittees.

K. Ashley sees it as more of an advisory role. There would be work with the Senate EDI committee to determine what needs there are at an institution level.

G. Gibson asked whether there could be an organizational chart of all the different EDIAR initiatives across campus once the new hires are in place.

K. Ashley agreed that once the three Assistant Deans and the Associate Vice President are in place, that could be looked at.

J. Sachs opposed the creation of the positions on two grounds. He stated that it seems dreadfully inequitable to trigger a process that will require part-time hiring and for more responsibilities to be placed on faculty members within units, considering how overworked the faculty already are. His second objection is in relation to Senate versus Board responsibilities. He stated that if Acadia wants to put together EDI advisory positions for faculty and create advisors who can talk to heads about EDI and

curriculum, then this would be a Senate responsibility, and he sees this as the Board overstepping its role.

K. Ashley responded by saying that she was surprised to hear J. Sachs' opinion given that he had put his name to be on the search committee for the Assistant Dean EDI for the Faculty of Arts. She believes that some assumptions are being made about the roles, but institutionally this is something of value and EDI initiatives need to be pursued. Curriculum is a part of it, but there is a lot more that can be done, such as outreach to students.

President Hennessy urged the Senate to make a distinction between the Board and the leadership. Many have a role to play in curriculum development. The idea is that this would be a resource for faculty to assist with EDI initiatives.

K. Pinder responded that she sees the need for the leadership side, and that where it becomes grey is the curriculum portion. She suggests that we need to be careful, reminding everyone that the current process for curriculum development changes begins with faculty members within their units, proposals going to the faculty councils, and those proposals coming through the Senate Curriculum Committee and to Senate. This should continue to be in place.

The Chair thanked K. Ashley for her report.

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

S. Currie stated that she had nothing to add to the report.

S. Currie addressed C. Rushton's previous comments about the collection and communication of updates. There are so many amazing things happening, and she would like to see a balance in the reporting of both inputs and outputs. This is something that she would like to come back to Senate about after meeting with the Deans and AVPs.

The Chair stated that one of the benefits of the introduction of the written announcements a few years ago is that the length of the reports is less of an issue now that they are not presented verbally. What is chosen to be included is not as much of a concern from the Senate perspective.

J. Fowles stated that now that it's the standard practice to list all the different grants and things going on, this is very helpful information, and he appreciates this thorough listing.

J. Fowles mentioned that in looking at the Graduate Studies Committee Report, it states that all units with graduate programs have a member on the committee. Kinesiology has a new graduate program and does not have a member on the Graduate Studies Committee, and he is wondering if this is an omission.

The Chair stated that she remembered this program being created a couple of years ago. She felt that this was a housekeeping detail that nobody had noticed since the creation of the program, and she will bring this to the By-Laws Committee.

J. Fowles stated that the coordinator of the program is M. Vierma, currently on sabbatical, and that C. Shields is the replacement at this time.

The Chair suggested to S. Currie that there is no reason a representative from Kinesiology couldn't be invited as a guest to the Graduate Studies Committee until this is addressed formally.

The Chair thanked S. Currie for her report.

**e) From the Vice-
President
Student
Experience**

S. Duguay had nothing to add to the report. Moving forward, he will share the same report that he presents to the Board of Governors at their meetings.

The Chair asked if he would like his report or announcements to be a standing item or whether he would prefer that they be added periodically.

S. Duguay stated that he normally reports to the Board four times per year, and is happy to take direction from Senate on this.

The Chair indicated that having the timing of his reports to Senate aligning with the reports to the Board should work well. There was general agreement about this.

T. McGillivray mentioned the reference to the Prep Academy focusing on creating paths to post-secondary education for students of African descent, with a new initiative this fall bussing 54 students to campus. She asked whether this had taken place, and if so how it went.

S. Duguay mentioned it did take place, and from all reports it was quite successful. The students were on campus for an individualized tour, and the intention is to continue doing this.

G. Gibson stated it was nice to see such a positive increase in the number of applications for the upcoming year. She asked what actions the enrolment group is taking to try to divert students away from the oversubscribed programs, and how units can be involved in discussions and getting resources they need if their student numbers do increase.

S. Duguay stated the numbers are slightly misleading at face value because the new program in nursing is generating a lot of that increase, and that the numbers are actually closer to where they were pre-pandemic in terms of applications overall. He indicated that numbers are being tracked closely, and for example biology numbers are fairly close to where they had been in the past. The enrolment planning needs to be aligned with the academic processes, and there are multiple sides to that. Students are applying to programs based on their interests in high school, but those often change after their first year when they see what is available at university. We need to think about how we can expose students to what they can take at university that is different from high school. Half of the students change their major before completing university which means that a lot of them are not sure what they want to do when they enter. S. Duguay said that he is happy to be a part of any conversation around that, and it's a bigger conversation than just the recruitment effort.

S. Currie asked whether graduate student enrolment data could also be included in future reports.

S. Duguay stated that traditionally the enrolment management team has not been responsible for graduate recruitment, but it would be good to talk about how the units can support each other, and the data could certainly be included in the reports. His team has been working hard on the data and how to present it so that any decision makers on campus can access real time information about enrolment and retention in a way that assists in making informed decisions. Graduate student data could certainly be a part of that, as well.

H. Teismann asked how this picture aligns with the university's goal of increasing enrolment to 4,000 students. He asked whether the outcome was a surprise or was expected, comparing what was known in September to what is known now. This is in relation to the fact that quite a few students on class lists don't attend or disappear very quickly after the beginning of the term.

S. Duguay stated that that's part of the issue with the data. The process the university uses is based around student accounts. When there are no payments made by a certain date the students are pulled out of the system. They are talking about things like reinstating early warning systems and getting a better handle on seeing whether students are attending much earlier in the term, so that we can help when it's appropriate and also have more accurate data. He stated that he looks at registration numbers on a daily and weekly basis and is not aware of a pattern this term that has been different than in other years. Students seem more engaged this year in fact, and colleagues at other universities feel the same way.

H. Teismann stated that it seems like the class registration was in flux much longer than in other years, with students arriving late and sometimes almost halfway into the term.

S. Duguay stated this is an issue they continue to work on. There is no real solution. There is a lot more communication happening now with students that will be shared with the university community. It is a communication challenge, and we want to make sure we all have the same information. There have been recent changes in government policy which requires international students to show that they have \$20,000 instead of \$10,000 in funds available, so this puts students in a different situation. They will not be able to come to study in Canada without showing this. There are different policies that will impact that transition, and they are working hard to meet that standard. S. Duguay stated that the 4,000 number is about holding the domestic numbers where they are now, and returning international students to what they were pre-pandemic. Where our international students are coming from is changing rapidly, which is another level of complexity.

The Chair thanked S. Duguay for his report.

f) Acadia Students' Union

The Chair stated that there was no submitted report from the Acadia Students' Union, and neither the President nor the Vice-President Academic/External are present, so unless there are any questions anyone would like recorded for ASU, there will be no report this month.

There were no comments or questions.

**g) Acadia Divinity
College and
Faculty of
Theology**

A. Robbins stated there was nothing to be added to the report.

T. McGillivray asked about the Bethel Bible Seminary and the opportunity to switch parchments up to 2027. She asked whether the ADC is still co-delivering any of the courses for those particular cohorts or is this being proposed because the students had already enrolled with a particular understanding and Acadia is following through with it for that reason.

A. Robbins stated this is an item later in the agenda with a motion, but she would be willing to answer it now if Senate agreed. There was general agreement from Senate.

A. Robbins answered that the Bethel Bible Seminary is fully delivering the courses themselves, and that she was recently there for a visit and that they are an excellent school in very strong shape. The situation is different than it was in 1997 when the MOU was developed. She stated that the ADC is confident about the quality of what is being offered there, and the students cannot receive both parchments and can only make the swap if they are current students.

**h) Other
Announcements**

There were no other announcements.

**4. Transition Reports
from Senate
Subcommittees**

**a) Scholarships, Prizes
and Awards
Committee**

D. Seamone stated that last winter semester, there was a conversation regarding students who are not beginning their university studies right after high school and are not eligible for most of our entrance scholarships. She has found many of these students to be eminently outstanding high achievers. She noted a particular concern for single parents and other equity seeking individuals, and she would like for the Committee to discuss this.

The Chair asked if anyone was prepared to speak to whether the committee had discussed this. It was confirmed that there were no members of that committee present. The Chair agreed to send the request along to the committee and copy D. Seamone.

**b) Senate Curriculum
Committee (Policy)**

The Chair indicated that this report was forwarded to Senate just before the start of today's meeting, and confirmed that the report

had been added to the approved agenda earlier in the meeting and that the agenda document would be updated accordingly.

D. Benoit asked about the “Nomenclature project” that was listed in the goals for the year.

M. Bishop stated that this has been a longstanding item wherein a variety of academic activities and credentials are named in different ways. The intent behind this project is to capture information about the existing ones and hopefully facilitate more consistency in the future as well.

D. Benoit asked if this would apply to naming different course activities such as labs, studios, and tutorials, and whether changes would need to be made.

M. Bishop responded that it’s not necessarily about changing existing things, it is really to make sure that the committee has an understanding and can share that broadly with the University community. This work has been on a bit of a hiatus, and now the committee would like to complete it.

K. Ashley stated that this project will be useful and important in terms of the MPHEC institutional review for 2025 where there will need to clarity around the naming of things and what it means within the institution.

D. Benoit stated that the reason he asked the question about this is because he believes it would be worthwhile for the University as a whole to use the same terminology when we mean the same things across different units, making it easier for students. For example, for some activities one program may call them labs while others may call them studios, and he would be happy to see a document that sets out a common practice.

There were no further questions or comments, and the Chair thanked the Senate for receiving the report this morning at short notice.

5. Old Business

a) Ad Hoc Committee on Microcredentials Report and Motion

The Chair indicated that this motion had been tabled at the November 13 Senate meeting.

Motion to take the Ad Hoc Committee’s Microcredential Motion from the table. Moved by J. Sachs, seconded by C. Stanley.

MOTION CARRIED.

J. Sachs indicated that changes had been made to the document since the last Senate meeting, clarifying that everything up to the “Definitions” section remained the same. He reminded the Senate that the intent of the motion is two-fold: to define what a microcredential is at Acadia and to affirm that microcredentials are Senate business and that they are properly under the authority of the Board of Open Acadia, a Senate committee. The updated document is an attempt to address concerns raised at the last Senate meeting that the definitions provided were too broad.

There are five bullet points in the definition, and changes were made to the third and fifth. The third bullet now reads, “Includes a letter of Completion that verifies **to the public** that the learner has achieved a level of performance in completing all tasks as part of the microcredential program that would indicate proficiency.” This is to signal that microcredential certifications are primarily outward facing.

The fifth bullet point was not contained in the first iteration, and states, “Is not a learning activity offered by academic or administrative units of Acadia University to employees for the purposes of professional development, training, or other similar opportunities.” For example, if the HR department wants to offer training on a new software package to its team, this would not be included under microcredentials. Another example is if a department wants to offer an opportunity to faculty on decolonization, this should not be a microcredential and would not go through Senate.

J. Sachs recommended that if this motion were to be adopted, the definition should be included.

L. Finniss asked whether the motion is asking the Board of Open Acadia to create policies related to the creation, approval, discontinuance, and oversight of microcredentials and for those to then be approved by Senate.

J. Sachs stated the motion does not direct the Board of Open Acadia to create the policies, it simply states that should the Senate wish for there to be policies and processes, it would be the Board of Open Acadia that would develop them.

L. Finniss asked for further clarification, whether it would be the case that when a microcredential is created, it would not always

need to go before Senate, but would need to abide by a policy that is in place.

J. Sachs stated that that would be up to the Board of Open Acadia and Senate. He stated that this definition would relate only to non-credit programming.

G. Gibson asked for clarification that academic units could voluntarily participate in this program, and would not be required to do so, and that if they were already offering skills training in a particular area, they would not need to participate.

J. Sachs indicated that this is correct, the motion has no bearing on that. What the motion is saying is that decisions of that nature would be made by this committee, and duly authorized and approved by Senate, but in no way requires participation. Passing this motion will not create a particular microcredential program.

G. Gibson requested further clarification, asking for confirmation that if a unit is already providing programming that could be considered a microcredential but already needs to meet national external accreditation standards rather than internal Acadia standards, they would not be in a situation in the future where they are required to become a microcredential program at Acadia.

J. Sachs stated that if it follows the microcredential definition, then they would need to follow whatever process is created by the Board of Open Acadia.

G. Gibson stated that if that were the case, that would be a problem for her unit, and she would have to vote against this motion. She spoke about animal care training already provided within her unit to students who work with animals in research. The training follows the Canada Council on Animal Care guidelines and regulations, and her unit does not have the flexibility to answer to another level of internal administration. Everything done related to animal care is through this process already. G. Gibson confirmed that this training is not directly a part of the degree programs but has to do with the ability to complete research involving animals.

J. Sachs stated that if completing the training described in any way contributes towards getting an Acadia certificate or degree or diploma, then it's not a microcredential. This motion only

includes things that do not contribute to these existing Acadia programs.

S. Currie referred to the microcredential framework developed at the provincial level that she had been a part of when she was Dean of Science. What this Senate committee is working on is in the spirit of what was talked about at the provincial level. The intention was that every institution that wishes to offer microcredentials will set up their own framework, possibly credit or possibly noncredit, and that would be up to the institution. The animal care training that G. Gibson was discussing was not the type of thing that would be considered a microcredential at the provincial level based on her experience within those discussions. S. Currie stated that her reading of the motion and the related documents is that it is consistent with what the province has already done, which she supports.

J. Sachs confirmed that some of the language in the document and motion presented is directly drawn from the provincial working document.

S. Currie suggested that referencing the provincial document within our internal documents is important.

J. Fowles asked for clarification from G. Gibson. He asked whether the certificate of completion for students is from the national animal care body or from Acadia.

G. Gibson confirmed that an Acadia body provides the training and certificate, and the student gets a number that counts at a national level. It is issued by an Acadia committee, but follows national standards.

J. Fowles asked if it would then not be a microcredential.

J. Sachs explained the distinction. If it is offered by an Acadia committee and as part of an Acadia degree, it is not a microcredential.

G. Gibson re-iterated that it does not count towards the biology degree. Only students who are doing certain types of research require this training, and it is related to national standards. She stated that this may be a grey area, and that there may be more in other programs, and suggested that language be added that academic units can opt into this for the skills training they provide, and that it could be determined on a case-by-case basis.

J. Fowles stated that in the kinesiology program there are several programs similar to this, for example a certified personal trainer course or CPR, where an external certificate and exam take place but Acadia provides the training internally. He stated that he would be inclined to vote against the motion at this point until there is further clarification and an understanding of the impact on the delivery of existing programs.

The Chair asked whether it may be a good idea for the Associate Vice-President Research, Innovation, and Graduate Studies to be on the Board of Open Acadia if she is not already, given that many of the things being discussed are related to research related requirements.

S. Currie reiterated that these things never came up at the provincial level for microcredentials.

The Chair asked S. Currie whether the provincial working group still exists or whether their work had been completed.

S. Currie stated that she believes that there is going to be a second iteration of the working group to talk about the next stages, such as implementation and a database, giving some level of consistency. She also stated that Dalhousie is far ahead in this area and it may be worth looking at what they are doing, as they have been offering noncredit microcredentials and there are some great sources of information available.

The Chair asked whether the institutional representatives have been selected for the next iteration of this work.

K. Ashley stated that there are currently three people from Acadia on the provincial microcredential working group: K. Ashley, L. Finnis, and J. Duguay. She also confirmed that the definition in the motion is based on the definition within the provincial framework, which was designed to create consistency. In the discussions taking place in that group, microcredentials are considered to be outward facing and that is why it makes sense to put them within Open Acadia. They are not focused on our own employees or students, but more as an extension of who the university serves. Microcredentials are often under the umbrella of “continuing education” units at other institutions. The purpose of the motion is not to set in stone what microcredentials would look like, but to direct that work toward the Board of Open Acadia to determine the processes. Some of the conversations Senate is having are topics that the Board of Open Acadia will discuss if the motion is passed.

K. Pinder asked for confirmation of her understanding that if something already exists in the Acadia Academic Calendar because it has previously been approved by Senate, it does not need to be revisited. Some of the kinesiology courses fit into that description. This motion and subsequent processes would address things that don't quite fit into the regular curriculum processes but could be opportunities in the future.

K. Ashley agreed.

S. Fleckenstein thanked the committee for all the work done on this. The examples given by Senators definitely seem relevant and perhaps an addition of one more bullet point could help to clarify. She suggested something like "is not a learning activity offered by academic or administrative units of Acadia University to students for the purposes of completion of their chosen programs".

The Chair asked if there is any reason this could not be added to bullet 5, so the insertion of "or students", right after the words "to employees", and confirmed with S. Fleckenstein that this is the intention of her suggestion.

A motion to amend the main motion was made.

Motion to insert the words "or students" (directly following "to employees") to bullet 5 in the definition of microcredentials. Moved by C. Stanley and seconded by S. Fleckenstein.

D. Benoit stated that unfortunately, when someone registers with Open Acadia, they are registered as a student, so this will not work. Perhaps the insertion of "full-time students" would be more appropriate as opposed to the undeclared students who are just registering for an external course.

The Chair asked D. Benoit to clarify whether when he said full-time student did he in fact mean any student enrolled in an Acadia program.

D. Benoit stated that yes, he did mean to include both part-time and full-time students. He felt that we needed a way to clarify between outside facing versus inward facing.

The Chair asked S. Fleckenstein and C. Stanley if they would be comfortable with the wording being "for students enrolled in an

Acadia degree program” to clarify this. They both agreed to this wording of their amendment.

K. Pinder stated that she appreciates all of the work that the committee members have done, and that there are many individual cases that are complicated. She will vote against the amendment as many of the people she is talking to who are most interested in microcredentials are graduate students who would benefit from some of these types of opportunities if they are offered.

L. Finniss stated that there are a lot of other learning opportunities that are happening around campus for students, and there really is not a good record of what all of those are to be able to cross reference them with what is in this motion. This might be an interesting activity for the committee to work on, to identify the existing opportunities and partnerships. She added that she would find it hard to vote for this motion with the information available.

The Chair asked L. Finniss if she is speaking against the amendment, and she confirmed that she is.

D. Seamone stated that with respect to K. Pinder’s comments, it may be helpful to insert the word “contributes” to the obtaining of an Acadia degree rather than simply “enrollment”. Her understanding is they would be doing that in addition to their degree, so if some other word was added in the motion, she would not need to vote against it.

J. Sachs stated that he shares K. Pinder’s concerns, and would be willing to work on an updated version with the committee after conferring with others, and then bring it back to Senate. J. Sachs proposed tabling the motion.

The Chair stated that there is also the option to withdraw the amendment.

C. Stanley and S. Fleckenstein withdrew the amendment.

The Chair asked J. Sachs if he wants move to table the motion.

Motion to table the motion until the January meeting of Senate. Moved by J. Sachs, seconded by K. Ashley.

MOTION CARRIED.

J. Sachs stated that he will reach out to those who raised concerns for input.

H. Teismann stated that everyone on campus should be aware that this is taking place.

The Chair offered to send out a communication to faculty members requesting that input and comments be sent to J. Sachs.

J. Sachs suggested that she mention the concerns raised at Senate in the communication.

The Chair stated that she would send a draft of the communication to J. Sachs for his input before sending it out.

b) Discussion item: Policy on Institutional Neutrality

President Hennessy stated that although this is not purely a Senate matter, it does have some academic tentacles that merit a good discussion at Senate before action is taken by the Board or by senior administration. This was first brought to his attention by J. Sachs, who is the author of this draft statement. The context around it is the situation in Israel. There were many bot-generated emails received calling on organizations to declare unequivocal support for Israel. In discussions on what to do with this in terms of an institutional statement, it was decided to communicate support for anyone suffering from this situation, but not to declare any kind of university position on it. Other universities have made more direct statements. The rationale is that the university has experts in this area, and the University making a statement, one way or another, removes the agency of those scholars to exercise academic freedom to discuss and not be at odds with the institution, which seems clear, although still somewhat controversial. President Hennessy referred to a 1967 report produced during the War in Vietnam and the Civil Rights era and wondered what the 2024 version of this type of idea is. He stated there are times when the University should make statements, and gave an example of the Waterloo attacks, as it was a hate motivated attack on students, academics, and academic freedom, and also gave the example of Black Lives Matter. The University would probably not make a statement from the institution either pro or against police or military. The advantage to having this kind of policy is that it can be used to answer calls for public statements from the media, the public, or from activist groups, and the idea is that the University itself is not a public critic, but a home for critical and analytical thinkers. President Hennessy is interested to hear what Senators think about this because of the academic freedom component and is

asking Senators to consider if the University should have this kind of policy, and if so, give input as to whether the draft wording is on the right track.

K. Pinder stated one of the things that strikes her as confusing is the name of the policy, and she does not believe the institution is neutral on a whole host of things, whether we're stating that explicitly or not. She believes the title is misleading and that it is basically a communications policy and is about what the institution is going to say on certain topics, not necessarily what stance or actions the institution might end up taking in relation to things. The word "neutrality" has been criticized, especially by scholars in her field. Her suggestion would be to reconsider the language being used and the ideologies that are implied in proposing a statement of institutional neutrality that is actually a communications policy.

D. Seamone stated that part of what she wanted to raise was already clearly articulated by K. Pinder. She then gave a hypothetical example of the media reaching out to a faculty member to comment on a topic such as the issue in Quebec around religious symbols. The proposed statement doesn't address the right of a faculty member to speak on something like this, and if we are going to uphold academic freedom then people have to be free to speak about things.

E. Patterson stated that libraries have been discussing the topic of neutrality for a long time as well. The consensus is that neutrality is fiction, and there's a big difference between neutrality and being able to hold more than one thought. She read some comments she was asked to share, and these included: "Neutrality is a myth."; "Remaining neutral, Acadia will implicitly be siding with the status quo."; "I'm concerned about the potential impacts of this policy on members of the Acadia community, especially members whose identities are politicized."; "I could see this neutrality being used as a way for the university to make decisions that would directly negatively impact community members."; "Acadia needs to be able to speak out against xenophobia, transphobia, and racism to create a space for diverse thought."; "To support Acadia's mission, we must not be neutral, and instead challenge systems of oppression that prevent us and other academic institutions from being places with a diversity of thinkers."; "What is the point of this policy if the policy is that on certain occasions we will say something? What occasions?"; "Releasing a policy on neutrality during a time when colonial genocide and war crimes are unfolding for the world to see is inappropriate. At the very least, we should be

making our stand clear on violence: zero tolerance. Our priority should be protecting the vulnerable students. Violence toward each community has spiked. We need to express our outrage and intolerance of antisemitism and islamophobia and state how we will keep our community safe. Taking a neutral stance harms our campus community and sends a message to Black and Indigenous students that not only are we neutral on violence, we are neutral on colonial violence. This is unacceptable. We cannot claim to be committed to decolonization if we take this stance.”; “We’ve already taken many, many positions on a wide variety of topics important to the public committed to decolonization and indigenization. We openly support and champion our LGBTQIA2S students and have striven to create safe spaces for that community. We’ve voiced the horror at the war in Ukraine, we’ve held any number of ceremonies to remember or commemorate or raise awareness about a variety of topics related to the safety and freedom of people here and around the globe. This document basically flies in the face of much of what Acadia has tried to do, especially in the last little while as a liberal arts institution filled with human beings. Speaking of human beings, saying that we, as an institution won’t comment on things that impact the scholarly or educational community doesn't make sense as the scholarly and educational community is made of people, humans, public. So pretty much anything that impacts people impacts the community.”.

E. Patterson stated that although we might currently be focused on the events unfolding surrounding Israel and Palestine, she is also very concerned about the implications of such a policy on future important issues that come up surrounding any marginalized and vulnerable minority community. In short, she thinks this policy is bad. Neutrality is the position of the privileged, and it is a luxury that many folks on campus and the community at large cannot afford. E. Patterson thanked the Senate for giving her the time to bring the comments forward from her unit.

J. Sachs spoke of the concerns raised by D. Seamone and stated that he believes that the final paragraph of the statement addresses one of the concerns she raised. The paragraph states “This principle of neutrality is binding on the University as a corporate institution”. This is a Board policy, and it states that it does not affect students, faculty, outside speakers and guests, and members of the broader community. He also read out the statement from the proposed policy “Such individuals are encouraged to speak out whenever and however they feel is

appropriate, while still respecting the mission of the University”. It certainly is not meant in any way to bind anybody other than the Board. It affects the Board alone and would not even affect the Senate. It is a Board policy.

The Chair asked J. Sachs about his word choice, noting that he was speaking about the proposal as though it had already been adopted by the university.

J. Sachs corrected himself, saying that if it were to be adopted as a policy in this form, it would affect members of the Board as a Board policy. He stated that maybe it is better described as a policy on communicative neutrality or communicative silence on certain issues. It is ultimately a communications principle, one meant to safeguard the academic freedom of students and faculty. J. Sachs does not want to see his employer articulating positions on complex political issues, and cannot think of anything more intimidating to a faculty member or student who comes from a marginalized community.

J. Sachs stated that if you are confident that the Board will always adopt the right position, that the Board’s ideology is identical to yours, then by all means, oppose this. But if you think there will be times when the Board might have a position that differs from yours, then maybe there’s value in having a policy where the Board doesn’t stake out positions.

M. Ramsay stated that he has conflicting thoughts on the policy, and that he does not have the same objection to the use of the language of neutrality as many have stated. He believes he has read the statement as intended, as protective of academic freedom. The language of neutrality is objectionable to some, but the idea that universities respect academic freedom is seriously in question and it is at some point in the near future going to be used against universities. Some statement along these lines could be useful.

H. Teismann did not have much to add to the previous two speakers, stating that they basically made his point. He finds it scary to think about the University making statements on these things. There are examples from the United States where pressure was exerted that he would not want to see happen here. The phrasing of the policy may not be perfect, but the general gist is a good one.

K. Ashley stated that it might be useful to add the definition of academic freedom from the collective agreement, which actually

does use the word “neutrality” and states that faculty members are not required to be neutral. It might tie together some of the discussion and make it clear that the objective is to allow faculty members to voice their opinions and share their expertise on very sensitive issues without fear of any repercussions and enable the university to fully support students who are involved in some way in the issues that are in the news at a given moment. She added that it is our duty to support all of our students through what are undoubtedly terrible circumstances in their lives. She sees the policy as a way of letting the University fulfill its obligations to students, but linking to the academic freedom piece may be helpful.

D. Seamone stated this is a good suggestion, and it would address part of her concern. She is confused by the title of the document that states it is a policy for the Board, but then throughout the document, it refers to the University. If it is a policy of the Board’s position on neutrality, does that determine the actions of the President, for example, or the Senate. It is not clear who the University is. She does not think of the Board as the University, but as a body responsible for part of the governance of the University.

President Hennessy agreed with D. Seamone’s comments, stating that sometimes we are conflating the Board as the governance body and the Board as the President or the leadership. When something happens and the university is preparing a statement, usually he would be in conversations with the communications team or legal counsel on what is to be said. Certainly there will be times when we should speak out against something, but in the absence of some kind of principle, there may be demands to make statements that are politically charged, and he is not sure that that is always something that we should do as a university, as an institution. Statements should be made by members of the university, the academic community. When he is making a statement, he is representing the university. And that is where it becomes a challenge.

The Chair shared that from her perspective, a lot of the comments being made appear to be built on the principles of the institution, on things protecting our members, and are referring to the university’s mission and values and identity statements. It feels as though the President’s comments rest upon those principles, and that it is not necessarily institutional neutrality that is being sought, but an assurance that any public statements fall within those principles.

President Hennessy agreed, stating that this is a good conversation for us to have. Sometimes what we wrestle with is that we want to establish values as an institution and stick to these and want to define who we are from that perspective. Usually that is easy, but sometimes values come into conflict. We have a value of academic freedom and we have a value of equitable accessibility that co-exist, for example. When they come into conflict, we want to know what to do with this.

S. Fleckenstein asked whether this is about neutrality or about abstinence of communication.

The Chair said that she had heard the words “silence” and “restraint” used during this conversation, and she felt that these words are related yet distinct.

C. Stanley asked whether the University has a current statement of values.

President Hennessy responded that we do have a mission statement.

C. Stanley suggested that we should be referencing it in this proposed policy.

President Hennessy responded that it is mentioned in the first sentence, “Part of the mission of Acadia University ...”.

C. Stanley stated that it is not only the mission statement, that other values statements might interact in this context.

President Hennessy stated that in the 2025 strategic plan there is also a statement of values.

D. Benoit referred to the last paragraph of the statement, saying that he does not agree with the statement “... but it does affect those who are properly engaged in the educational and scholarly enterprise.” from the academic freedom perspective of what is allowed to be said and what is not allowed to be said. That could easily be interpreted as saying that the people who are allowed to voice an opinion on a particular issue are only the people who have particular in-depth knowledge of an issue. The wording implies that if you're not engaged with a topic in a particular way, that you shouldn't really be saying anything about it. To be fair, someone may want to take the opinion of someone who has studied or is familiar with a topic over a random opinion, however he would prefer to not be in a situation where the

university tells him what it is that his opinion should be and that an opinion voiced appears to be going against the institution.

The Chair stated that it is now 11:01 a.m., and there are still items on the agenda that are motions. She asked about the time sensitivity of the remaining motion items.

K. Ashley stated that she would like for the Academic Planning Committee report to be revisited.

A. Robbins stated that the ADC motions were time sensitive.

The Chair suggested that a motion be made to extend the meeting in that case, noting that remaining items would need to be time limited.

**Motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes, to 11:15 a.m.
Moved by D. Benoit, seconded by G. Gibson.**

MOTION TO EXTEND THE MEETING BY 15 MINUTES, TO 11:15 A.M. CARRIED.

L. Price stated she took the policy back to her unit, the Department of Psychology, and they also have concerns about it. One concern is that they wanted to know who decides when an opinion can be expressed. She gave the example of a professor publicly harassing students under the guise of academic freedom. She asked what would happen in a case like this from the perspective of this policy.

The Chair asked the President whether this item would be brought back for further discussion at Senate.

The President stated that it would be.

**c) Academic Planning
Committee Report**

K. Ashley stated that this report was from November, and the committee has met again since then. She drew the Senators' attention to the academic priorities identified, to support teaching assistants, student resilience, accessibility and universal design, maintaining professional standards, and open entry degrees. These will be discussion items for the APC this year.

K. Pinder stated that she hopes that increased support for student teaching assistants will include graduate students.

J. Fowles sought clarification about the budget role relative to the increased program support for professional and/or industry standards for these types of programs.

K. Ashley clarified that these are two different things. One of the items the APC will discuss will be the role of budget information and unit plan documents, and that these are documents that are prepared as part of the position request process. The other bullet is increased program support, including things like the need for newer equipment, software, et cetera.

J. Fowles asked whether this was being investigated as part of the APC process for units and programs to submit budget requests for that, or just advocating for more budget allocations for those types of resources.

K. Ashley stated this has not yet been discussed but has been put on the list of items to deal with this year.

J. Fowles also asked for clarification in relation to the note about splitting or combining the tenure track versus instructor position requests and rankings. He asked whether this will be discussed in the future and will input be solicited about this.

K. Ashley stated this is going to be an ongoing discussion, and that the committee will come back to it closer to the time when units are preparing their plans for next year.

The Chair thanked K. Ashley for the report.

6. New Business

a) Motion on Arts in Theology Degree Parchments

It is moved that the Senate approve the following designations on the degree parchments for the Master of Arts in Theology: Master of Arts in Theology (Biblical Studies); Master of Arts in Theology (Christian Theology); Master of Arts in Theology (Christian History); Master of Arts in Theology (Practical Theology); Master of Arts in Theology (Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care); Master of Arts in Theology (without specialization). Moved by A. Robbins, seconded by D. Zacharias.

A. Robbins stated that there is a preamble included with the motion. D. Zacharias has met with the Registrar and the Vice-President Academic, and the ADC understands that this has become the practice across the University, and it enables the students as graduates to have their specialty listed on their

parchment, which is particularly helpful if they want to go on to further doctoral studies and so on.

D. Zacharias added that in initial conversations with the Registrar, they were not certain if this needed to come to Senate but determined it probably should. He also stated that this is mirroring what is currently done for other degrees.

MOTION CARRIED.

b) Motion on Bethel Bible Seminary MOU

It is moved that Senate approve the dissolution of the 1997 MOU with Bethel Bible Seminary of Hong Kong, providing a period of four years, concluding the Fall graduation of 2027, where current students may exchange their Bethel Bible Seminary degree parchments for the equivalent Acadia University degree parchments. Moved by A. Robbins, seconded by K. Ashley.

A. Robbins stated she had mentioned this was coming previously, and that the request was made when she visited the Bethel Bible Seminary, and they believe the four years is enough time to see out the current registered students to the end of their programs. It will not be a required exchange because as things change, it may not actually be an advantage to have an Acadia degree, but this will allow the exchange if it is requested. This has the support of the Registrar and the Vice-President Academic.

K. Ashley stated that in the discussions with D. Zacharias, she believes this is a fair outcome for students who are currently registered in the program and will not impose any kind of problem in terms of academic integrity for the University.

D. Benoit asked whether this allows students in the program who are currently on leave and delayed by a year to take advantage of this option.

A. Robbins responded that the Bethel Bible Seminary asked for the four years, believing this is sufficient to see everyone through.

MOTION CARRIED.

c) Motion on Acadia Divinity College –

It is moved that Senate approve the amended course titles and descriptions as submitted by the Acadia Divinity College

**Course Title and
Description
Changes**

**and Faculty of Theology. Moved by A. Robbins, seconded by
D. Zacharias.**

A. Robbins stated that some changes were made to the course, and they hope to offer it very soon in the new format. This is a course taken by Baptists across the country, and as part of their qualification for serving, they need to be aware of who they are as Baptists, and this course provides this opportunity for learning. It is a very particular type of approach.

D. Zacharias stated that this is coming up a bit earlier than usual, and that this is a bit of a move from a more historical approach. It addresses what it means today.

C. Stanley asked about the courses having the same name but different course codes.

A. Robbins explained that the different codes specify undergraduate or graduate courses.

MOTION CARRIED.

The Chair asked whether Senate wanted to continue with the next motion, and stated that if Senate wanted to continue with its business today, the meeting would need to be extended again.

There was no motion to extend the meeting any further.

The Chair stated that the final motion on today's agenda would be carried over to the next meeting.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 11:15 a.m. Moved by C. Stanley.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

J. Peckham,
Recording Secretary of Senate and University Secretary

Announcements

SENATE CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS TO SENATE – DECEMBER 2023

Meeting regrets, late arrivals, early departures, and guest attendance will be announced verbally at the meeting.

At the January 2024 meeting of Senate, we will be experimenting with the meeting agenda/flow. Senate Executive would like to try introducing a new section of the agenda, the **Consent Calendar** section. In this section, we will include approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, receipt of written announcements from members of Senate, receipt of reports from Senate committees, and any other routine or noncontroversial items. At the beginning of this item, a motion will be made to approve all items in this section of the agenda. Discussion and questions related to this section will take place prior to approving this portion. The intent of this is to enable a more efficient flow to the meeting. Senators will know in advance which items are in that section, and Senators may ask for any items to instead be moved into another section of the agenda either in advance or at the meeting. After we try this in January, Senators will be asked for feedback about how it worked and we will decide whether we will try this practice again at future meetings.

Consent Calendar Section in “Order of Business” portion of Robert’s Rules of Order, 11th Edition, page 361:

Consent Calendar. Legislatures, city, town, or county councils, or other assemblies which have a heavy work load including a large number of routine or noncontroversial matters may find a consent calendar a useful tool for disposing of such items of business. Commonly, when such a matter has been introduced or reported by a committee for consideration in the assembly, its sponsor, or, sometimes, an administrator, may seek to have it placed on the consent calendar. This calendar is called over periodically at a point established in the agenda by special rule of order, at least preceding standing committee reports. The matters listed on it are taken up in order, unless objected to, in which case they are restored to the ordinary process by which they are placed in line for consideration on the regular agenda. The special rule of order establishing a consent calendar may provide that, when the matters on the calendar are called up, they may be considered in gross or without debate or amendment. Otherwise, they are considered under the rules just as any other business, in which case the "consent" relates only to permitting the matter to be on the calendar for consideration without conforming to the usual, more onerous, rules for reaching measures in the body.

PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR REPORT TO SENATE – DECEMBER 2023

Common Application Portal

The Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP) initiated discussions last year on the idea of creating a common university applications portal for Nova Scotia Universities, similar to Ontario (OUAC). Universities (including Acadia) were surveyed regarding potential impacts. The benefits to Acadia would mainly centre around enhanced data gathering, and there may be some additional revenue potential (though this is unclear). The main risk to Acadia would be in the potential loss of personalization and direct control over some aspects of the application and enrolment process. CONSUP has committed to supporting a feasibility study and analysis report.


NDA Pledge

Acadia will be signing the following pledge initiated by the public advocacy group *Can't Buy My Silence*: “Acadia University commits to not using Non-Disclosure Agreements to silence people who come forward to raise complaints of sexual harassment, abuse or misconduct, or other forms of harassment and bullying.” Acadia and the University of King’s College will be the first two universities in Nova Scotia to sign this pledge, and we will each announce this simultaneously. This will not completely prohibit the use of confidentiality agreements as there are many cases where they remain appropriate, but the pledge will prohibit the university from forcing the use of these as a means of silencing victims.

PVPA Search

[The job advertisement for the Provost and Vice President Academic role](#) has now been posted and we will begin receiving applications immediately with the aim for a July 1, 2024 start date. This role will no longer include recruitment, enrolment management, and student services as part of its portfolio as this accountability now falls with the VP Student Experience. The designation of *Provost* is meant to amplify this role as the Chief Academic Officer of the university, accountable for the university’s mission (academic). I want to thank the members of the search committee for their excellent work to date on this important search process. The process follows the [Board Guidelines for the Appointment and Review of Senior Academic Officers](#).

Respectfully submitted,



Jeffrey J. Hennessy, Ph.D. (he/him)
President and Vice Chancellor

VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC REPORT TO SENATE – DECEMBER 2023

ACADEMIC UPDATES:

- Science Atlantic held its annual board meeting at Université de Moncton in November, attended by the deans of 15 Atlantic Canada universities. The organization approved some significant changes in its bylaws and reviewed the highlights of its recent 60th anniversary celebrations.

ARTICULATION AND COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

- The School of Education is restarting its 4-month B.Ed. Shanghai Practicum in February. The practicum has been in place since 2002 but has been paused since the pandemic.
- Acadia has entered cooperation/articulation agreements with the following institutions and programs this fall. These are designed to increase international mobility and exchange opportunities and to supplement Acadia's on-campus course offerings:
 - The American College of Greece (5-year student exchange agreement)
 - Anadolu University (Turkey) (5-year cooperation agreement)
 - NSCC Community Recreation Diploma Program (5-year 2+2 agreement with Acadia's Bachelor of Community Development)
 - University of Plymouth (England) (5-year student exchange agreement)
 - U.S. Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (1 year renewing archeology project partnership agreement)

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

- A space in the Library has been renovated so that it can be used as an alternate testing location for students with accommodations. This is to address the growing complexity of scheduling alternate test sites.
- The Access 2023 Conference was held 23-25 October at the Prince George Hotel in Halifax. Jennifer Richard, Acting Dean of Libraries and Archives, was the conference chair and treasurer, and she was supported by a broader committee of librarians from Dalhousie, St. Mary's, StFX, MSVU & NSCAD. Access is Canada's premier library technology conference bringing librarians, technicians, developers, programmers, and managers together to discuss cutting-edge library technologies. Access is a single stream conference featuring in-depth analyses, panel discussions, poster presentations, lightning talks, and a hackfest. Keynote speakers included Stacey Allison Cassin from Dalhousie who shared reflections on disruption with a focus on the National Indigenous Knowledge & Language Alliance's Respectful Terminology project, and the David Binkley Memorial Lecture was presented by former Acadia colleague and scholar Cynthia Bruce, who is now an Associate Professor of Music Therapy and Chair of the Department of Creative Arts Therapies at Concordia University in Montreal. Maggie Neilson, Academic Librarian, presented at the conference, moderating and contributing to a session on the importance of accessibility in our physical and digital spaces.

PEOPLE UPDATES:

- Amanda Peters, of the Department of English and Theatre, and one of Acadia's recent cluster hires, has won the 2023 Barnes and Noble Discover Prize for her novel *The Berry Pickers*. According to B&N,

The Discover Prize shortlist is a new prize that celebrates the very best new authors, elevating the joy of spotting fresh voices early on in their careers. Barnes & Noble booksellers have been reading hundreds of debut authors to narrow down to the six books that make up this year's shortlist. Spanning historical fiction, works of mind-bending realities and harsh truths, equal parts painstakingly tragic and beautiful - these stories have permanently imprinted into our hearts, minds and bookshelves.

- Mark Mallory and Carolyn Mallory were inducted as Fellows of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS), for their work on research, art, education and ambassadorship for Arctic Canada.
- Rob Raeside retired as secretary of the CCCESD (Council of Chairs of Canadian Earth Science Departments), a position he has held for about 27 years. The CCCESD maintains communication among the Earth Science departments, collects statistics on enrolment, and engages with NSERC, CFI and other funding agencies on behalf of the university Earth Science community. He is succeeded by Deanne van Rooyen, conveniently maintaining CCCESD records at Acadia University.
- Sarah Pittoello (Counselling), Liesel Carlsson (School of Nutrition and Dietetics) and Katherine Eckert (SND grad) have all contributed chapters to *the Routledge Handbook of Sustainable Diets*, which is the handbook of importance to policy makers, researchers, educators, business leaders, and change agents working to accelerate the pace towards food sustainability and social stability. The book launch is on 8 December 2023.
- Acadia graduate Hayley van Kroonenburg has been appointed Associate Registrar. This appointment fills a significant gap in the Registrar's Office.
- Suzie Currie has begun her term as interim Associate Vice-President, Research, Innovation and Graduate Studies, a role she will occupy until June 30, 2024.
- Jeff Hooper has been appointed interim Dean of the Faculty of Pure and Applied Science from January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.
- The Mathematics & Statistics and the Computer Science division held their student conference at UPEI in October.
- The Atlantic Universities Geoscience Conference was held at MUN in October. Acadia student Hayley Newell was the winner of the Imperial Oil Best Poster Award at the AUGC and Keaton Markham and Jonathan Koulouras were the winners of the Canadian Society of Exploration Geophysicists Challenge Bowl, which will result in them participating in the national competition in Calgary in May.

PROGRAM UPDATES:

M.Sc in COMPUTER SCIENCE

A program modification of the M.Sc in Computer Science has been submitted to the MPHEC. The modification is to add a project-based and a course-based option to the M.Sc.

M.Ed. in COUNSELLING and M.Ed in CURRICULUM

Program modifications for these M.Ed programs have been submitted to the MPHEC. The modifications formalize both the thesis and course-based routes, which were approved by Senate in 1999 but never sent to MPHEC.

TEACHING AND LEARNING UPDATES:

- Plans are underway to renovate two spaces in the Library to be used by the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning for teaching development workshops and initiatives.
- A call for proposals for the Teaching and Learning Enhancements Awards (TLEA) has gone out to faculty with an application deadline of February 8, 2024. With a maximum value of \$2500 each per project, these awards will help support initiatives to enhance the quality and creativity of teaching at Acadia University. Last year's call funded 4 projects:
 - M. Lynn Aylward (Education) - The Case of Luke Elwood
 - Dan Blustein (Psychology) - Interactive learning demonstrations in large enrollment introductory psychology class
 - Eva Curry (Mathematics and Statistics) - Acadia Open Calculus Resources
 - Conor Vibert (Business) - Enhancing the Attractiveness of Casenet for Instructors and Case Competitions

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Kate Ashley
Vice-President Academic (Interim)

ASSOCIATE VICE-PRESIDENT RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND GRADUATE STUDIES REPORT TO SENATE – DECEMBER 2023

Associate VP Research, Innovation and Graduate Studies Report to Senate – December 2023

It has been a busy month for the Acadia RIGS team. December's report includes our faculty's many successes with internal and external grants, research, and service agreements, as well as other awards and research funding. Congratulations! Our **Office of Industry and Community Engagement (ICE)** hosted several engaging, well-attended events on Intellectual Property and alternative funding opportunities as well as the annual *Harvest-End Breakfast*, co-hosted breakfast with Horticulture NS. Thanks to ICE for also hosting a wonderful meeting and campus tour for the XXV Joint Commission for Regional Cooperation between the Territorial Collectivity of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon and the Canadian Atlantic Provinces. Acadia's **Launchbox** shared learnings from local leaders with a stimulating Women in Business Event.

Finally, warm thanks to Dr. Anna Redden, the outgoing Associate Vice-President Research, Innovation, and Graduate Studies for her inspired leadership and dedication over the past six years+!

INTERNAL GRANTS AWARDED TO FACULTY

Acadia University Research Fund (Article 25.55) Fall Competition; Total Awarded = \$76,070 (N=17)

- **Dr. Trevor Avery** (Biology) - *Overwintering Grounds: Annapolis River Small-bodied and Juvenile Fish Surveys* - **\$5,000**
- **Dr. Iain Beaton** (Mathematics & Statistics) - *Distributions of Dominating Sets* - **\$5,000.**
- **Dr. Kim Borden Penney** (Women's & Gender Studies) - *An Innovating Balancing Act: Canadian Black Engineers Sector Experiences* - **\$5,000**
- **Dr. Lydia Bouzar-Benlabiod** (Computer Science) - *Adding interpretability and explainability to 'Black Box' Artificial Intelligence models for X-Ray images classification* - **\$5,000**
- **Dr. Michelle Boyd** (Music) - *The Singing IN Flanders Fields Project: Perspectives of a Student Composer* - **\$5,000**
- **Dr. Rachel Brickner & Dr. Rebecca Casey** (Politics & Sociology) - *The Experiences of Retail Workers in Nova Scotia in the Shift from the Worst of the COVID-19 Pandemic* - **\$4,092**
- **Dr. Rabindra Chaulagain** (Sociology) - *Nepali Healthcare Workers in Nova Scotia: Navigation of Pre- and Post-Migration Experiences* - **\$3,000**
- **Dr. Nicoletta Faraone** (Chemistry) - *Behavioural and neuropharmacological investigation of psilocybin using fruit flies as model* - **\$4,861**
- **Dr. Chelsea Gardner** (History & Classics) - *Digital Media and Online Resources in Ancient Mediterranean Teaching* - **\$5,000**

- **Dr. Kirk Hillier** (Biology) - *Development and testing of novel acaricides and repellent compounds* - **\$5,000**
- **Dr. Emily Lockhart** (Sociology) - *The Regulation of Space and the Criminalization of the Unhoused: Experiences from Rural Nova Scotia* - **\$3,236**
- **Dr. Foroogh Mohammadi** (Sociology) - *Race and Racialization in the Atlantic Cities: The Everyday Negotiation of Boundaries of Belonging among the Second-Generation Immigrant Youth from the Middle East* - **\$5,000**
- **Dr. Alicia Noreiga-Mundaroy** (Community Development) - *Beyond the University's Walls: Black University Students' Experiences Fostering Connections with their University's Town* - **\$4,849**
- **Dr. Matthew Orr** (Psychology) - *CyberNurturers or Digital Distractors: Unraveling the Influence of Streaming Video on Young Minds* - **\$3,867**
- **Dr. Dawn Ryan** (Psychology) - *Episodic simulation in older men and women: The role of verbal and scene construction abilities* - **\$2,305**
- **Dr. Natalie Swain** (History & Classics) - *Narrative in Ovid's Amores: Comic's Theory, Elegy, & Segmentary Narrative* - **\$5,000**
- **Dr. Deborah Toope** (Education) - *Engaging in culturally responsive teaching and learning literacy practices within rural Nova Scotia* - **\$4,860**

EXTERNAL GRANTS TO FACULTY

Dalhousie University/Atlantic Indigenous Mentorship Network– Funding Sub-Agreement

- **Dr. Jennifer Tinkham** (Education) received **\$15,000** in funding as a Co-investigator for the project entitled: *Wabanaki-Labrador Indigenous Health Research Network*. Dr. Tinkham is the academic supervisor for PhD student, Ashley Julian. As part of the Kausattumi Student Grants Program (Atlantic Indigenous Mentorship Network), a Kausattumi Doctoral Scholarship is awarded to Ashley to undertake community informed and supported health research that serves to benefit Indigenous communities in Atlantic Canada.

RESEARCH & SERVICE AGREEMENTS

Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia – Services Agreement

- **Dr. Andrew McIntyre** (Computer Science) will receive **\$24,480** for Phase 3 of the project entitled: *Advanced Prototype Development with Deep Learning Neural Networks and Pre-trained SOTA (State-of-the-Art) Models*.

Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute Inc. – Collaboration Agreement

- **Dr. Emily Bremer** (Kinesiology) received **\$63,835** in funding for the “*International Study of 24-Hour Movement Behaviours in the Early Years: The SUNRISE Main Study*”. The World Health Organization (WHO) identified the prevention of obesity in young children as one of its key priorities for the 21st Century. In response, the SUNRISE International Study of Movement Behaviours in the Early Years was developed. The primary aim of this study is to examine the proportion of 3- and 4-year-old children who meet the WHO Global Guidelines for physical activity, sedentary and sleep behaviour for children under the age of 5.

OTHER AWARDS/RESEARCH FUNDING

Springboard Atlantic – Innovation Mobilization Funding – Industry Engagement

- Acadia’s Office of Industry & Community Engagement) was awarded **\$1,573** for the “*Harvest End Breakfast 2023*” event held on November 16, 2023, in partnership with Horticulture Nova Scotia.
- Acadia’s Office of Industry & Community Engagement was awarded **\$5,000** for the “*Scotia Horticultural Congress 2024*” reception and banquet that will be hosted on campus on January 22, 2024, in partnership with Horticulture Nova Scotia.

OTHER EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Launchbox Event - Women in Business: Learning From Local Leaders

- **November 15th** (Top Floor Patterson Hall) – In partnership with the student Women in Business Society, Launchbox, Acadia’s student entrepreneurship centre, hosted a panel presentation to discuss entrepreneurial journeys and accomplishments, and the unique challenges faced by women in business. The panelists included Dr. Kim Borden Penney (Women and Gender Studies, Acadia), Beatrice Stutz - Grand Pré Wines, Jane MacDonald - Janes Again Wolfville, Katherine McNeill – Mycaro, and Paula Milbradt – Empowermil. It was an extremely successful event that will be followed by a much larger event later this Spring.

Intellectual Property, Copyright and Generative AI: What Artists and Creatives Should Know

- **November 23rd** (BAC 235) - This special session was hosted by Acadia’s Office of Industry & Community Engagement, and delivered by Adam Haller, JD from Dalhousie University. This popular presentation covered what artists and creatives should know about IP and copyright generally, including legal issues arising in Canada around the use of generative AI.

Looking Beyond Your Horizons: Sources of Alternative Research Funding - CLARI

- On November 29, 2023, Acadia’s Office of Industry & Community Engagement (ICE) hosted the second information session in the Looking Beyond Your Horizons: Sources of Alternative Research Funding Series. During this session, Ray MacNeil, Network Manager, Change Lab Action Research Initiative (CLARI), joined us to present information about CLARI’s community research partnership funding program. This session was very well attended by faculty, staff and students (20+) from many disciplines.

Harvest End Breakfast Event with Horticulture Nova Scotia

- On November 16, 2023, the **Office of Industry & Community Engagement (ICE)**, together with Horticulture Nova Scotia hosted the annual “*Harvest End Breakfast*” event that attracted almost 40 attendees, including members from Horticulture NS, government and not-for-profits, SMU, NSCC various Acadia’s faculty members and students. Dr. Zoë Migicovsky (Biology) and Dr. Clarissa Sit (Saint Mary’s university) presented recent research relevant to the agriculture sector.

Meeting and Campus Tour for the XXV Joint Commission for Regional Cooperation between the Territorial Collectivity of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon and the Canadian Atlantic Provinces

On November 21, 2023, Acadia's Office of Industry & Community Engagement (ICE) hosted a meeting and campus tour for approximately 50 delegates from the Federal Government, including the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), and Saint-Pierre and Miquelon (SPM), including the Prefect, Mr. Bruno Andre, and the Honorary Consul of France in Halifax, Mr. Robert-Yves Mazerolle. The delegation was welcomed by Dr. Kate Ashley, and then followed by a presentation by Leigh Huestis to provide highlights about Acadia's success/innovation in the agriculture sector. Dr Danny Silver (Acadia Institute for Data Analytics) and Dr. Zoë Migicovsky (Biology) also presented. This was followed by a campus tour to further highlight Acadia's applied research initiatives in agriculture, including a visit to the K.C. Irving Environmental Science Centre and the Huestis Innovation Pavilion (ALAB and the AgriTech Lab).

RESEARCH FUNDING PROGRAMS – APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATES

Internal

- University Research Fund (Article 25.55) - October 15; February 1
- Harrison McCain Foundation Grants - anticipated in Spring, date TBA
- SSHRC Institutional Grants (SIG) - 2024 (TBA)
- Summer undergraduate student research awards (HSRA, USRA, Donor) – February

External

- SSHRC Insight Grants - October 1
- SSHRC Connection Grants - November 1, February 1, May 1, August 1
- SSHRC Partnership Development Grants - November 15
- SSHRC Partnership Engage Grants - June 15, September 15, December 15 and March 15
- NSERC Research Tools and Instruments - October 25
- NSERC Discovery Grant - November 1
- NSERC Alliance (partnership) Grants – Open Call
- Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI-JELF) - October 15, February 15, June 15
- NS Habitat Conservation Fund - October 15
- MITACS (student and post-doc internships; various programs) – Open
- CLARI (Change Lab Action Research Initiative) – Open Call
- Research NS – note new “Intentional” Research Funding - Open Call (contact RIGS for additional information)

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Suzie Currie

Interim Associate VP Research, Innovation & Graduate Studies

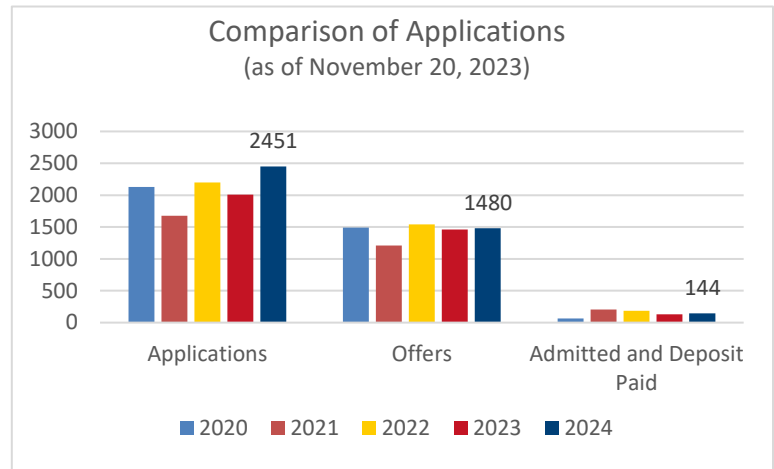
VICE-PRESIDENT STUDENT EXPERIENCE REPORT TO SENATE – DECEMBER 2023

Enrolment Statistics

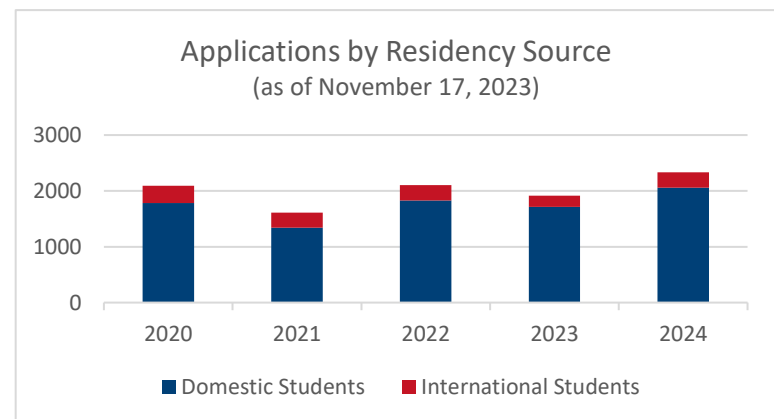
The enrolment plan calls for sustaining domestic enrolment and returning international students to pre-pandemic levels, the combination of which will bring enrolment to 4,000 students a year. Recruitment teams (both domestic and international) are actively working to recruit the next class of Acadia students using a variety of strategies. Both teams are now fully staffed with a combination of returning Enrolment Advisors and strong leadership.

Total Applications

The number of new student applications received by this point in the calendar cycle is the highest it has been in recent years, although it is important to note that the Nursing program has generated over 200 applications. At 2,451 applications for Fall 2024, Acadia has generated 22% more applications over last year at this point in time.

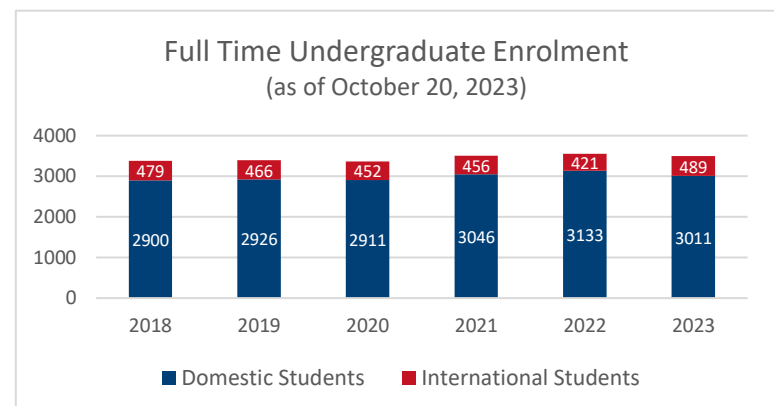


Applications from international students tend to be received in the later part of the admissions cycle. At present, 276 applications have been received from international students.



Total Enrolment

Full-time undergraduate enrolment remains at approximately 3500. The number of international students studying at Acadia this year is the highest in available data.



January 2024

The application cycle for January 2024 has now closed. A record number of international students (196 as of November 17) have been admitted for the winter semester. Current Government of Canada study permit processing wait times are at approximately 11 weeks. Acadia staff will continue to support these students to ensure as many as possible are able to begin their studies in January.

Fall 2023 Open Houses

Two successful open houses were hosted by the recruitment and campus events team in September and October. The October event reached registration capacity 11 days before it took place, which necessitated careful planning by the event teams. For future years, additional events will be added and, ideally, one will be hosted on a Saturday. This allows for flexibility for the participants and the event planner. The number of new student applications resulting from the open house was strong, including approximately 35 for the new nursing program.

	September Open House	October Open House
Students Registered	221	398
Students Attended	153	291
Total Guests (students & family)	249	553
Did not attend	68	107

Admissions

The Admissions Office is up to date on all application processing and offers. The first round of nursing offers will be sent out by the second last week of November after a meeting with Cape Breton University. Bachelor of Education admissions have opened with a great deal of interest.

Admissions staff are receiving training from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) on the new study permit process and how universities will be involved.

INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIES HIGHLIGHTS

There are many strategic initiatives designed to address priorities related to new student recruitment and retention of current students. A sample of these activities is described here to highlight the strong focus on offering a high-quality student experience for those studying at Acadia.

One Stop Shop Project Update

The final report by consultant, Nous Group, was presented to the Senior Leadership Team in a workshop in November. The Leadership Team will now be meeting to discuss the proposed next steps for this project. The working team is continuing to meet with other universities on best practices for implementation and to learn from their experience.

Data Management Plan

One of the cornerstones of effective enrolment planning is having access to timely, reliable, and consistent information to support Acadia's enrolment goals. To this end, team members from Enrolment Management and Technology Services are working on a project to develop a series of dashboards which will display data from student information systems. These dashboards will allow university staff to track progress on enrolment goals and find areas for action. This tool will allow information to be easily filtered on a variety of student attributes (age, admission decision, home region, reason for attending, etc.) and discover areas where greater support may be needed. This will be used for both the recruitment/admission phase and ongoing student persistence phase.

Domestic Student Recruitment

The fall recruitment travel season is now beginning to slow after several very busy months. As of November 15, 2023, Enrolment Advisors had attended 201 school fairs and made 59 independent school visits across Canada over the last three months. In-person evening events were hosted for parents and students in Ottawa, Calgary, Victoria, and Vancouver in early November. Additional events will be held in Saint John & Moncton later in November and in Charlottetown & Fredericton in the first week of December.

The planning for Experience Acadia Day is underway and this landmark event will be hosted on February 23, 2024. This event is a major conversion activity that brings students to campus to experience a day in the life of an Acadia student. Enrolment Advisors will also be travelling throughout Canada in the winter months to host a version of Experience Acadia on the road.

The team is working closely with Prep Academy, focused on creating paths to post-secondary education for African Descent students in Nova Scotia, with a new initiative this fall where we will be bussing 54 students to campus. The event was originally scheduled for October but the Academy asked for it to be moved to November. The event will include campus tours, a mock lecture, lunch at Wheelock and programming with Janique Ellis, African Descent and Indigenous Student Opportunity and Success Coordinator.

International Student Recruitment

Throughout fall 2023, International Enrolment Advisors have travelled to 21 countries for recruitment activities. Staff with Acadia International have held extensive meetings with agents to discuss Fall 2024 targets and ensure the terms of their recruitment contracts are clear. These conversations have been productive, and agents have expressed appreciation for clear targets and a coordinated plan around recruitment events, marketing, school visits, and market visits by Acadia personnel. Additional work is being done to improve Acadia's online recruitment presence abroad through enhancement to our partnership with IDP, the world's largest international student placement company. Acadia International continues to build on existing partnerships and agreements by completing partner visits by having at least one meeting with six partner institutions this fall.

International Student Support Programming

Additional investments have been made in programming by the Wong International Centre (WIC) so we can offer a more vibrant student experience and engage more students, both international and domestic. Feedback has been very positive and engagement has been high. Most recently, 100 international and domestic students participated in a WIC-hosted event (Taco Night). The WIC will also be hosting cultural nights over the next few months. A different culture will be celebrated each time, with students from that culture helping to organize the food, music and activities, and all students are invited to participate. This year there will be a full winter orientation schedule, much the same as the fall orientation, with involvement and representation from all parts of campus.

Exchange / Study Abroad

Global learning opportunities are considered a high-impact educational practice that are beneficial to university students and result in increased persistence and student engagement. The Acadia program has evolved beyond its very humble beginnings. There is an intentional focus on personal development through pre-departure workshops that explore living abroad, immersion in different cultures, and self-reflection that questions what students expect to gain personally and academically. The Coordinator also meets personally with all incoming exchange students, holds welcome activities with them, elicits feedback regarding processes and their experiences, and holds a group activity involving all visiting and outbound exchange students.

Scholarships & Financial Aid

Just over \$364,000 has been disbursed so far to 113 students through the awards application process for students who applied by October 13. The next deadline is January 31. Bursary applications have slowed for international students but continue to come in from domestic students. 219 applications have been received so far this year. 63% of the Acadia bursary budget has been allocated to students with unmet need. The deadline is January 31.

Health, Counselling & Accessible Learning

These units continue to offer extensive individual services to students daily and offer a suite of programming including:

- Mental Health Week held on November 13-17 in partnership with The Wong International Centre and the Acadia Mental Health Initiative.
- Brain Health Rewards night held on Nov 14.
- A Meningitis B vaccine clinic held on Nov 8.
- 6-week mindfulness group taking place from Oct 17–Nov 30.
- Accessible Learning hosts test-taking strategies workshop on Nov 15, Self-Care workshop on Nov 20, and a test-taking workshop on Nov 24.

Residence & Student Life

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As of November 20, 2023, there are 1336 students in residence for the fall 2023 term. There are currently 1354 students with bookings for the winter 2024 term in residence.

The student support advising has grown to include three staff working to help students navigate the academic and non-academic landscape of the university. On-campus student conduct issues are down significantly from the previous three years. Off-campus, there have been zero incidents referred to the University by the Town of Wolfville during the Fall 2023 term, marking the longest period with no referrals since the MOU was signed.

Under the new Community Development Model, the Residence Life team has provided over 216 educational, social, and developmental events for students in residence since the start of the Fall 2023 term.

Brand and Marketing

At the beginning of October, a bi-weekly student newsletter was launched, which provides students with a cohesive and consolidated overview of upcoming events, resources, and key information they need to know. To elevate brand awareness and reach Acadia's target audience where they are, Acadia partnered with Cineplex to launch a 30-second showtime video ad, which ran specifically before the Taylor Swift movie over four weeks in Ontario & Atlantic Canada.

Building relationships with the African Descent community is a key priority for Acadia and the recruitment team. To support these efforts, the marketing team has created tailored recruitment material that is more visually representative and highlights Acadia's campus services that are of particular interest to this community.

Staffing Changes (since the October 2023 Board Report)

Adam Detienne has moved from his prior role as Coordinator, Student Advising to fill the new Manager, Student Support position.

Sheri Donovan has joined the domestic recruitment team in the role of Campus Tour and Event Coordinator. Sheri will be working a 16-month contract to cover a maternity leave. Sheri brings a wealth of knowledge, including extensive managerial and event planning skills. She will be a great resource as she takes over the executive of all on-campus recruitment efforts, manages the student ambassadors, and operates the campus tour program.

Charles Douglas has moved from his prior role as Residence Life Coordinator to fill the Coordinator, Student Advising role.

Lexie Henderson has joined the Residence & Student Life Department in the role of Residence Life Coordinator.

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ACADIA STUDENTS' UNION REPORT TO SENATE – NOVEMBER 13, 2023

No announcements received as of December 8, 2023.

ACADIA DIVINITY COLLEGE AND FACULTY OF THEOLOGY REPORT TO SENATE – DECEMBER 2023

Dr. Anna Robbins recently visited Acadia's affiliated college Faculté de Théologie Évangélique (FTÉ) in Montreal.

Acadia Divinity College hosted the inaugural meeting of the Canadian Learning Community for Decolonization and Innovation in Theological Education. Funded by the Lilly Endowment: Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative, this project is a partnership between NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community, Acadia Divinity College, Tyndale University, and Ambrose University.

Dr. Melody Maxwell, Associate Professor of Christian History, has published *Baptists and Gender: Papers for the Ninth International Conference on Baptist Studies*. Co-edited with Laine Scales. (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2023).

**REPORT OF THE SCHOLARSHIPS, PRIZES AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (SPAC)
DECEMBER 2023**

SPAC COMMITTEE CHAIR

Scott Landry will chair the committee to Fall 2024.

MEETINGS DATES

The committee will meet remotely via Teams.

The committee met via Teams on December 1, 2023

Additional meetings for the 2023-2024 year are expected to be held in:

February 2024

March 2024

April 2024

The Awards and Appeals Committee of SPAC will also meet remotely, as needed.

PURPOSE AND DUTIES OF COMMITTEE

The committee reviewed the purpose and duties below. No changes were made.

1. To decide policy and process by which recipients of scholarships, prizes, bursaries, scholar-bursaries, awards, and convocation medals are to be selected and to gather all information it considers necessary for the selection;
2. To select the recipients of undergraduate entrance scholarships, prizes and awards and some in-course scholarships, prizes, and awards;
3. To periodically review the scholarships, prizes and awards program and to recommend improvements (increased funds, new scholarships, more prizes, etc.) to those involved in the program;
4. To promote interest in the scholarship program;
5. To consider such other matters as the Senate may from time to time entrust to the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Bird
Secretary

Scott Landry
Chair

**Report of the Senate Curriculum Committee (Policy)
December 2023**

Membership:

Prof Studies: Roxanne Seaman

Arts: Kim Borden Penney

Chair of Curriculum Committee (Admin.) : Allison Walker

Dean of Libraries and Archives (Acting): Jennifer Richard

Pure and Applied Science: Jeff Banks

Registrar: Mark Bishop

Theology: Chris Killacky

Student: Vacant

Chair: Roxanne Seaman

Meeting Modality for the year: Teams

The duties of the Curriculum Committee (Policy) shall be:

- 1) to investigate innovative and alternative methods of provision of undergraduate curriculum, and to make recommendations to Senate concerning such methods.
- 2) to develop policies to ensure that undergraduate curriculum is consistently provided and administered across faculties and to make recommendations to Senate concerning such policies.
- 3) to ensure that the implementation of Senate approved policies for undergraduate curriculum is managed, revised, evaluated and disseminated in a coherent and coordinated fashion.
- 4) to collaborate with the Curriculum Committee (Administrative) to ensure the maintenance of an appropriate structure for the consideration of curricular changes.
- 5) to consider such matters as Senate may from time to time entrust to the Committee.

SCC (Policy) goals for the year:

1. Minors
2. Nomenclature project
3. Nursing program.

Dec. 11th next meeting set via Teams at 11:30am.

Submitted on behalf of Committee.

Mark Bishop

Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Microcredentials

Current Membership: Kate Ashley, Benjamin Morris, Lisa Price, Christianne Rushton, Jeffrey Sachs (chair), Danny Zacharias, layperson (vacant)

Past Membership: Dale Keefe, Dianne Looker, Sadie McAlear, Lisa Price, Christianne Rushton, Jeffrey Sachs (chair), Danny Zacharias

Duties:

1. To examine the matter of microcredentials from the perspective of Senate;
2. To determine the role of Senate in the creation and on-going supervision of micro-credential programs;
3. To determine whether these programs fall under the jurisdiction of an existing standing committee or whether a new standing committee needs to be created.

The committee met on May 9, 2023 via Teams. Present were Dale Keefe, Dianne Looker, Sadie McAlear, Lisa Price, Christianne Rushton, Jeffrey Sachs, Danny Zacharias, and Benjamin Morris (non-voting).

Jeffrey Sachs was elected as Chair and the agenda was accepted by the committee. The committee's mandate was reviewed and discussed.

The committee met again on October 30, 2023 in hybrid Teams/in person format. Present were Kate Ashley, Lisa Price, Christianne Rushton, Jeffrey Sachs, and Danny Zacharias.

At each meeting, committee members expressed concern that without Senate oversight, the quality of microcredentials could be quite low, tarnishing Acadia's reputation and harming students.

Members cited the Professional Certificate in Maritime Security as one example of a microcredential that was established without Senate oversight. There was also some concern that microcredentials could, over time, expand to the point of encroaching on core course offerings from academic units.

Based on a review of microcredentials in other post-secondary institutions and as described in the Microcredential Framework developed by the Nova Scotia government, the committee identified three general characteristics of microcredentials that distinguish them from certificates, degrees, and diplomas: 1) They recognize a level of competence or proficiency in a specific skill or narrow

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area of knowledge; 2) They do not confer academic credit; and 3) They do not appear on a student's academic transcript. The committee noted that many universities offer microcredentials through their Departments of Continuing Education. A survey of programs at other universities revealed no consistent role for faculty senates in the creation or oversight of microcredentials, but a rule-of-thumb appears to be that wherever a university's act of incorporation vests in senate the authority to set educational policy, that institution's senate will have oversight over microcredentials. Roughly half of all Canadian universities with microcredential programs vest oversight in their faculty senates.

At the October 30th meeting, it was decided that governance of microcredentials falls under "educational policy" as defined in Acadia's Act of Incorporation. Therefore, the committee unanimously determined that all policies related to the creation, approval, discontinuance, and oversight of microcredentials fall under Senate's authority. The committee also unanimously determined that these responsibilities ought to be vested in the Board of Open Acadia Committee, though multiple members of the committee proposed that perhaps the composition of the Board of Open Acadia Committee would need to be altered to ensure appropriate microcredential governance.

In a subsequent email exchange, the committee members agreed that microcredentials offered through the Acadia Divinity College should be administered separately by the college's senate.

The committee drafted and unanimously supports a proposed motion for consideration by Senate to this effect, which is included below.

Motion on Microcredentials

Whereas the Senate of Acadia University has directed this committee to examine the matter of microcredentials from the perspective of Senate jurisdiction, and to determine the role of Senate in the creation and on-going supervision of microcredential programs;

And Whereas the committee was directed to determine whether these programs fall under the jurisdiction of Senate, and if so, whether they fall under the jurisdiction of an existing standing committee, or whether a new standing committee needs to be created;

And Whereas the provincial government has established a Microcredential Framework, which emphasizes the importance of developing a process to ensure quality assurance;

It is moved that all microcredential programs offered by Acadia University, as defined in this motion, fall under the jurisdiction of Senate.

Furthermore, it is moved that all policies related to the creation, approval, discontinuance, and oversight of microcredential programs be vested in the authority of the Board of Open Acadia Committee, excepting those offered by the Acadia Divinity College. These policies shall be presented to the Senate for approval.

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Furthermore, it is moved that the Board of Open Acadia shall present annually to Senate a report containing details of these programs, including but not limited to information regarding the creation, elimination, or redevelopment of microcredential programs, registration and completion rates, and participant feedback.

Definitions:

A microcredential is a certification offered by Acadia University that:

- Recognizes a competency or skill earned through a short-duration or applied learning experience that aligns with sector, employer, profession, community, or learner needs;
- Involves a formal assessment that participants have achieved a level of competence or met a particular standard of performance;
- Includes a Letter of Completion that verifies to the public that the learner has achieved a level of performance in completing all tasks as part of the microcredential program that would indicate proficiency;
- Does not confer on the learner any credit nor contribute toward the completion of an Acadia University certificate, degree, or diploma; and
- Is not a learning activity offered by academic or administrative units of Acadia University to employees for the purposes of professional development, training, or other similar opportunities.

Proposed Policy on Institutional Neutrality for the Board of Acadia University

Part of the mission of Acadia University is to “promote a robust and respectful scholarly community” and to “inspire a diversity of thinkers.”

In order to fulfill this mission, the University is committed to a principle of institutional neutrality. It does not, as an institution, adopt or articulate a position on the issues of the day. Were the University to take sides on important matters of public concern, it would threaten the conditions of free and open inquiry necessary for a diversity of thought and the robust exchange of ideas.

This principle of institutional neutrality does not require that the University remain silent in every instance. On certain occasions, when a matter arises that directly affects the institution or the broader educational and scholarly community of which it is a part, it may be appropriate for the University to articulate its values. However, such occasions must be narrowly construed, and any opinions expressed must be carefully phrased. Moreover, when such occasions arise, the University must also endeavor to reflect the broad consensus of its members and respect principles of shared governance.

The neutrality of the University as an institution should not be misconstrued as a lack of courage or indifference toward matters of public concern. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is precisely because the University values so highly its duty toward the public that it commits itself to this principle.

Lastly, this principle of neutrality is binding on the University as a corporate institution, but it does not affect those who are properly engaged in the educational and scholarly enterprise. This includes students, faculty, outside speakers and guests, and members of the broader community. Such individuals are encouraged to speak out whenever and however they feel is appropriate, while still respecting the mission of the University.

**Academic Planning Committee (APC)
Report to Senate
6 November 2023**

Membership:

Vice-President Academic: Kate Ashley
Dean, Faculty of Arts: David Duke
Dean, Faculty of Professional Studies: Corinne Haigh
Dean, Faculty of Pure & Applied Science: Rob Raeside
Dean: Libraries and Archives: Jennifer Richard
Faculty, Faculty of Arts: Paul Abela
Faculty, Faculty of Professional Studies: Janna Wentzell
Faculty, Faculty of Pure & Applied Science: Jeff Banks
Faculty, IDST Program: Donna Seamone
Student: Benjamin Morris

The Academic Planning Committee met on 6 November 2023. At its meeting, the committee requested/recommended:

- That Deans consult with their units and, if unit heads/directors/coordinators so desired, invite APC members to discussions of faculty position rankings;
- That Deans solicit feedback from their units on the unit plan document and report back to the committee by the January APC meeting;
- That units submit their plans to Deans by 1 June, and that Deans submit faculty plans to the APC by 1 July, to allow time for review by the APC during its summer meetings.

The committee determined that the following were priorities for its own work this year:

- Whether to split or combine tenure-track and instructor position requests
- To clarify the role of budget information in unit plan documents

The APC also identified the following as academic priorities for 2024-2025:

- Increased support for student Teaching Assistants (low cost, but high impact on program delivery and student experience)
- Student resilience and the transition from high school to first-year university
- Accessibility and universal design in teaching
- Increased program support to maintain currency with professional and/or industry standards (e.g., equipment; technology/software for pedagogical use; lab consumables)
- Open entry degrees (e.g., General B.A., General B.Sc.) so students don't need to declare a major from the outset.

The APC meets again on 7 December 2023.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate Ashley, Chair

Senate Motion on Master of Arts in Theology Degree Parchments

Approved by ADC Senate on November 27, 2023

Preamble: In 1978 the Senate of Acadia University approved the Master of Arts in Theology (MAT) degree for Acadia Divinity College. Since that time, the MAT has grown into the wider disciplines broadly covered by the label theology, such as biblical studies, Christian history, practical theology, and chaplaincy.

In April 2022, the Senate of Acadia University approved a set of program outcomes that specify certain specializations within the Master of Arts in Theology delivered by Acadia Divinity College:

- Specialization in Biblical Studies
- Specialization in Theology
- Specialization in Christian History
- Specialization in Practical Theology
- Specialization in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care
- Without specialization

To date, the printing of degree parchments for graduates has not reflected their specialization.

It is moved that Senate approve the following designations on the degree parchments for the Master of Arts in Theology:

- **Master of Arts in Theology (Biblical Studies)**
- **Master of Arts in Theology (Christian Theology)**
- **Master of Arts in Theology (Christian History)**
- **Master of Arts in Theology (Practical Theology)**
- **Master of Arts in Theology (Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care)**
- **Master of Arts in Theology (without specialization)**

Bethel Bible Seminary MOU Dissolution

Approved by ADC Senate on November 27, 2023

Preamble: Bethel Bible Seminary has had an MOU with Acadia University to award joint degrees since 1997, a relationship that has been stewarded by Acadia Divinity College on behalf of the University.

In April of 2023, the Education Bureau in Hong Kong informed Bethel Bible Seminary that they could no longer offer joint degrees. Beginning in 2024, Bethel Bible Seminary will award only their own degree parchments.

ADC is keen to conclude this relationship well and in a way that honours the work of the 110 current Bethel Bible Seminary students in the programs who were expecting joint degrees. Our proposal has been discussed with the Vice-President Academic and the Registrar of Acadia University. The provision would allow the 110 current Bethel Bible Seminary students (the list of names has already been submitted by Bethel Bible Seminary) to exchange their Bethel degree parchments for Acadia University degree parchments, upon request, until the Fall graduation of 2027.

It is moved that Senate approve the dissolution of the 1997 MOU with Bethel Bible Seminary of Hong Kong, providing a period of four years, concluding the Fall graduation of 2027, where current students may exchange their Bethel Bible Seminary degree parchments for the equivalent Acadia University degree parchments.

Acadia Divinity College- Course Title and Description Changes

Approved by ADC Senate on November 27, 2023

Current Course Titles:

CHUR 4013 Baptist History and Polity
CHUR 6013 Baptist History and Polity

This course is a survey of Baptist history and of Baptist principles and polity. Baptist principles and polity flow from both Baptist history and their distinct theological interpretations drawn from Scripture. Students will learn to understand both the past and the present of the people called Baptists. This course will satisfy the history and polity ordination requirement within the Canadian Baptist context.

Proposed Course Titles:

CHUR 4013 Baptist Identity
CHUR 6013 Baptist Identity

Baptist identity has arisen over more than four hundred years through a variety of local and global factors. In this course, students will explore the history, polity, distinctives, relationships, and contemporary issues that shape Baptist identity today. This course will satisfy the history and polity ordination requirement within the Canadian Baptist context.

It is moved that Senate approve the amended course titles and descriptions as submitted by the Acadia Divinity College and Faculty of Theology.