

**Nipissing University**  
**Minutes of the Academic Senate Meeting**  
**July 14, 2023**  
**10:30 a.m.**  
**Room F210 & Zoom Videoconference**

**Members Present:**

A. Graff (Vice-Chair), C. Sutton, B. Law, C. Mady, P. Maher, D. Walters, D. Iafrate, N. Black

L. Chen, R. Davis, H. Earl, R. Gendron, A. Hatef, G. McCann, J. Murton, S. O'Hagan, G. Phillips, S. Renshaw, S. Srigley, T. Smith, N. Stevens, L. Thielen-Wilson, R. Vernescu, A. Weeks, R. Wenghofer, H. Zhu

A. Adler, J. Barker, K. Ferguson, C. Greco, D. Hay (Deputy Speaker), P. Millar, J. Muterera, G. Raymer, T. Sibbald (Speaker), M. Sullivan, J. Thornborrow, R. Vanderlee, V. Williams

C. Irwin, L. Sinclair

R. Hehn

R. McEntee, E. Cooke, H. Panchal, S. Greco

**Absent With Regrets:**

K. Wamsley, S. Winters, O. Pokorny, T. Horton, T. McParland, A. Schinkel-Ivy, P. English

The Senate Speaker offered a Traditional Territory acknowledgement.

**Approval of the Agenda of the Senate Meeting of: July 14, 2023**

Motion 1: Moved by N. Black, seconded by D. Hay that the agenda of the Senate meeting of July 14, 2023 be approved with an amendment that the COU Academic Colleague will provide a brief oral report.  
CARRIED

**Adoption of the Minutes of the Senate Meeting of: June 26, 2023**

Following a formal request that the June 26, 2023, Senate minutes be amended to include the four questions regarding the removal of the ACAD 1601 course requirement provided to the Senate Secretary following the Senate meeting, the following motion was moved:

Motion 2: Moved by G. Phillips, seconded by J. Murton that the June 26, 2023, Senate minutes be amended to include the four questions regarding the removal of the ACAD 1601 course requirement provided to the Senate Secretary following the Senate meeting.  
CARRIED

Motion 3: Moved by R. Wenghofer, seconded by D. Iafrate that the minutes of the Senate meeting of June 26, 2023 be adopted with revisions.  
CARRIED

### **Business Arising From the Minutes of June 26, 2023**

Motion: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by D. Iafrate that Senate approve that the following statement **be removed** from the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Fine Arts degree requirements:

*"Must successfully complete ACAD 1601 within the first 60 Nipissing credits. ACAD 1601 will count towards three credits of the Humanities (Group I) requirement."*

Following a lengthy discussion including the pros and cons of removing the ACAD 1601 course requirement, a request for a secret ballot was made. As there was no way to ensure confidentiality during the meeting for the on-line Senators, it was decided that an email including an anonymous Microsoft Forms poll be sent to only those Senators in attendance in-person and on-line. The results of the poll were announced by email following the vote. The motion was DEFEATED.

As noted in the July 6, 2023 Senate Executive Committee Report, as per Senate By-laws Article 7.5(c), the request that the motion be moved to conduct a secret ballot should have been moved, seconded, and put forward for a vote. Members of the Senate Executive Committee acknowledged this oversight and were satisfied that the minor procedural detail was addressed and considers the vote to be legitimate. It was noted that the Senate By-laws will be followed for future such requests.

### **Reports From Other Bodies**

The Provost and Vice-President Academic (PVPA) provided a written report. The report is attached to the minutes. She advised that President Wamsley was participating in a PhD defence and unable to attend Senate.

The Board of Governors provided a written report. The report is attached to the minutes.

The Council of Ontario Universities Academic Colleague provided a report. The link to the report is listed below:

[Attach 1 T Vaillancourt presentation to Academic Colleagues, May 2023.pdf](#)

NUSU provided a written report. The report is attached to the minutes.

### **Question Period**

In response to concerns expressed regarding amendments to Bill 26 – Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act, 2022, the PVPA advised that the policy is still under review and feedback is being received with respect to the provisions in the policy. In regard to investigation and support, privacy considerations are being looked at and research is ongoing. The feedback that has been received has been integral in developing a strong policy.

As a preamble, the Nipissing University Act, Article 22, Duties of the Senate (22.1), was quoted: *"The Senate shall establish the educational policies of the University and may make recommendations to the Board with respect to any matter of academic concern to the University."*

The following concerns were raised:

- the Biology/Chemistry and Geography departments do not support the merger
- the mergers took place with little to no faculty consultation
- department votes against the mergers were not respected and ignored
- the mergers are in violation of the Nipissing University Act
- significant cost savings were not identified
- no criteria for merging the departments was provided, i.e.: number of faculty and students
- there are no synergies that support the merging of the departments
- several departments currently do not have a Chair
- upcoming faculty retirements, members on leave and cross appointments
- upcoming IQAP program reviews
- program Chairs having to field questions from students about program requirements in which the Chair has no academic background or knowledge
- it was a Senate responsibility to make these decisions

In response to the concerns expressed, the Dean of Arts and Science advised that the rationale had been discussed at previous Senate meetings, and that the mergers are not all about cost savings. The mergers are part of a regrouping strategy and the groupings do have an academic alignment. From an academic programming perspective there is a lot of overlap of content and synergies to deliver degree programs. He advised that there were 15 Chairs and a disproportionate distribution of students. The initiative undertaken over the last 18 months was to work together to develop a more efficient organizational structure in respect to addressing enrollment issues.

The PVPA expressed a procedural concern about what was voted on today and given the complexity of Motion 4, suggested that the motion should have been provided as a notice of motion.

She advised that her understanding is that the intention of the motion is that **the process for coupling** or other mechanisms to reorganize academic units will be discussed at the Joint Committee so that it aligns with the expectations of the NU Act. If a process can be found that satisfies everyone then there could be a host of ways in which we could work cooperatively and collaboratively. The Joint Committee can provide a framework moving forward under the assumption that departmental combination may be necessary and advise what this will look like and how these conditions, as well as the needs of individuals who may not have an understanding as to how other department operate, can be satisfied. She expressed concerns in respect to ongoing student supports and how these functions will be fulfilled and students advised. Decisions about structure should be taken deliberately, as they are not simple to reverse.

In response to the PVPA's comments, it was noted that the Joint Committee will review the process on the question of jurisdiction, authority, and procedure. The goal is to define a path forward recognizing that there are ongoing questions about whether the process followed in the last academic year aligned with the spirit or the letter of the NU Act, and whether the unit mergers had been approved by Senate by virtue of being reported to Senate from a delegated committee. Given the specific nature of the changes to structure that were adopted, it is necessary to highlight that Senate is not in a position to make these decisions on its own and must work in collaboration with the Board of Governors. The Joint Committee is to perform this work.

The following motion was put forward for recommendation to the Joint Committee of the Board and Senate to be discussed as a collegial body:

Motion 4: Moved by G. McCann, seconded by D. Tabachnick that whereas the merger of Biology/Chemistry and Geography was not supported by their respective faculty members, and whereas no sufficient rationale was provided prior to this decision, that the merger be tabled pending discussion by the Joint Committee of the Board and Senate.  
CARRIED

The NUSU President requested that it be noted in the minutes that NUSU supports this motion. He advised that he met with the President of the Biology Society as well as the President of the Geography Club to receive input on the students' thoughts regarding the merger. Prior to his meeting with the students, they had completed a petition against the merger. He reminded that the merger is not only a faculty concern, it is also a student concern.

### **Reports of Standing Committees and Faculty or University Councils**

#### **Senate Executive Committee**

Motion 5: Moved by A. Graff, seconded by D. Hay that the Report of the Senate Executive Committee dated July 6, 2023 be received.  
CARRIED

#### **Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee (AQAPC)**

Motion 6: Moved by A. Graff, seconded by R. Hehn that the Report of the Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee dated June 23, 2023 be received.  
CARRIED

Motion 7: Moved by A. Graff, seconded by L. Chen that Senate approve the Computer Science IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.  
CARRIED

Motion 8: Moved by A. Graff, seconded by N. Black that Senate approve the Gender Equality and Social Justice IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.  
CARRIED

Motion 9: Moved by A. Graff, seconded by L. Sinclair that Senate approve the Religions and Cultures IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.  
CARRIED

#### **Amendment of By-Laws**

##### Rationale:

To streamline the election nomination process, the following language was recommended:

4.3 Annual Election Procedures for Representatives Allocated to Each Faculty  
(c) Nominations shall be submitted in writing to the Dean, signed by the nominator who is an eligible voter, not later than 28 February each year.

Motion 10: Moved by A. Graff, seconded by D. Tabachnick that Senate By-laws Article 4.3(c) be amended as outlined above.  
CARRIED

**Elections**

- Elect two (2) faculty Senate representatives to serve on the Joint Committee of the Board and Senate on Governance for three-year terms effective July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2026. *(to replace Dr. Sarah Winters and Dr. Anahit Armenakyan)*

**ACCLAIMED: D. Tabachnick**

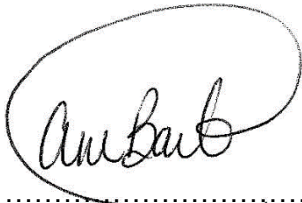
*As only one nomination was received, an election will be included in the August 11, 2023 Senate agenda.*

- Elect one (1) faculty Senate representative to serve on the Senate Budget Advisory Committee for a three-year term effective July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2026. *(to replace Dr. Murat Tuncali)*

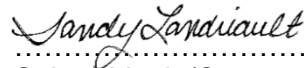
**ACCLAIMED: R. Gendron**

**Adjournment**

Senate was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.



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A. Graff (Vice-Chair)



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S. Landriault (Senate Secretary)

**Senate Report**  
**Provost and Vice-President, Academic**  
**July 14, 2023**

1. As communicated in emails from the Teaching Hub, the university will be transitioning from Blackboard Learn to Blackboard Ultra. The Teaching Hub is sending email updates regarding workshops etc.

As you consider this transition, please consider the following **5 Things You Need to Know About the Transition to Blackboard Learn Ultra**, courtesy of Kyle Charron:

1. Attend workshops and keep an eye on the [Teaching Hub website](#) for further resources. The workshops provide an opportunity to have a group discussion and share specific use cases not only with the LSTs but other Instructors.
2. Please ensure that all course material is backed up outside of Blackboard as soon as possible, but no later than August 1, 2023. Please note that doing regular backups is best practice.
3. LSTs will not be copying from old shells automatically for the Blackboard version change.
4. You must import your own content for the move to Blackboard Learn Ultra.
5. New shells will be available 2-3 weeks after the course offerings for fall are finalized by the Deans' Offices and Registrar's Office.



## Board of Governors Report to Senate - June 2023

### Board of Governors Meeting June 27, 2023

The Board of Governors met on June 27, 2023, in the President's Boardroom (F303) and via Zoom remote conferencing, where "Pathways: Our Commitments to Water, Land and People," the 2024-2029 Nipissing University Strategic Plan was presented and subsequently approved.

To meet a recommendation from the Auditor General's report, the Board approved revisions to the Capital Debt Policy. The policy is intended to define the responsibilities for the approval of new external debts, maximum limits of external debt and reporting on capital debt. All Board-approved policies are available for viewing on the Nipissing University website.

Recommendations to appoint the following Individuals to the Research Ethics Board:

- **Dr. Anahita Baregheh**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education and Professional Studies (3-year term – July 2023, renewable);
- **Dr. Christine Lalonde**, Instructor, Graduate Studies and Research (3-year term – July 2023, renewable);
- **Dr. Adam Davis**, Canadore College (3-year term, renewable); and
- **Dr. Anna-Liisa Mottonen**, Canadore College (3-year term, renewable).

The Board Chair thanked those Board members whose terms are coming to an end: Lisa Snider, Wenda Caswell, Jeff Scott and Bobby Ray, and she spoke to their dedication to Nipissing University throughout their years of service. She also welcomed, as of July 1, 2023, incoming Board members Janet Stockton, Jessica McMillan, Dr. Blaine Hatt and Laurel Muldoon.

The Board of Governors extends its gratitude to outgoing Chair, Marianne Berube, for her dedication and outstanding commitment to the Nipissing University Community. Dave Smits, Incoming Chair, will begin his term on July 1, 2023.

## **Academic Senate Report July 14th, 2023**

### **NSO**

NUSU would like to thank the hard work that was put into the planning, preparation, and execution of New Student Orientation by staff and volunteers. A special thank you to the NSO Orientation Assistants! NSO is essential for the growth and betterment of our incoming first year students to ensure they get all their questions asked, know where their academic resources are, learn about student life, and get the full experience out of their time at Nipissing University. The NSO team put in a lot of hours to execute an event for our new Lakers. NUSU enjoyed providing tours and participating in the resource fair. We look forward to seeing all the new Lakers again this fall at Orientation.

### **Summer PHD Institute**

NUSU was invited to the Summer Ph.D Institute headed by Dr. Blaine Hatt. We had the amazing opportunity to meet the first and second year cohorts and to hear their background and their study interests. The event had a delicious lunch, welcoming remarks, and motivational words of wisdom from staff and faculty. Great information and resources were also provided. NUSU is very grateful that we were given the opportunity to give remarks and provide information at the luncheon. NUSU is excited to host the Ph.D students on July 12th for a BBQ social.

### **Communities in Bloom**

This is just a reminder that the NUSU Student Centre will be one of the first stops for Communities in Bloom Judges on Tuesday, July 25 from 11:45am to 1pm. Please save the date and we look forward to seeing everyone there! We are grateful for the Nipissing community's consideration and support in this endeavour!

### **ACAD 1601**

At the last Academic Senate there was a motion on the agenda seeking to eliminate ACAD 1601 as a degree requirement for BA, BSc, and BFA students. NUSU was opposed to this motion for two main reasons: Firstly, we believed that ACAD 1601 as a degree requirement is highly beneficial to the vast majority of students who take it, such as guiding students in accessing library resources. This is especially true given the anticipated large intake of first-year students whose high school years were interrupted by Covid-19. Secondly, we believed that there had not been enough consultation with the ACAD professors as well as steps moving forward in lieu of ACAD 1601 being a degree requirement. While NUSU acknowledges that ACAD 1601 would still be available to students, and some majors could keep ACAD 1601 as a requirement, we believe the widespread requirement part was of the utmost importance.

Our hope moving forward is that the University will have a tripartite response to the failure of this motion, being that they will reassess ACAD 1601 in our current and unprecedented academic landscape; consult robustly with the ACAD 1601 professors (while recognizing the conflict of interest); and, consider a specialized ACAD course (still as a degree requirement) that caters specifically to certain programs.