

Senate Agenda

Friday, October 13, 2023

2:30 p.m. – Room F210

Zoom Conference:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88092461985?pwd=U0lreXJHWEk2NkphTzR6MFdmL1ZZUT09>

Meeting ID: 880 9246 1985

Passcode: 194317

1. **Acknowledgement of the Traditional Territory**

As we begin this Nipissing University Senate meeting, I would like to acknowledge that we are in the territory of the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850 and that the land on which we gather is the Nipissing First Nation Traditional Territory and the traditional territory of the Anishnabek. We respect and are grateful to hold this event on these lands with all our relations.

2. **Approval of the Agenda**

3. **Adoption of the Minutes of the Senate Meeting of:** September 8, 2023

4. **Business Arising From the Minutes**

The PVPA's response to the question from the COU Academic Colleague regarding the collection of data and its use to build accountability:

The SDS office provides an annual report to MCU which substantiates our claim for the AFSD grant (G143). Other grants for mental health and supports for students are similarly reported on to the funder. OII completes an annual report for the ISSF grant (G141).

At the provincial table, there have been no sector wide data tables that are provided with respect to SDS services. With respect to OSAP data, this information is available in MCU's OPENSIMS platform.

As a university who receives funding we have an obligation to complete the AFSD and ISSF reports in order to maintain funding for the individuals these funds are established to support. We are not "collecting" data, we are tracking usage.

With respect to the OSAP default rates or any other OSAP participatory metrics, these values are computed by MCU and shared across the sector in OPEN SIMS.

There was a time that all these items (First Gen/Indigenous/Disabilities/OSAP default) were tied to an “accountability framework” with SMA 1 however none of these data points are part of the performance-based funding components in our current SMA metrics.

5. **Reading and Disposing of Communications**

6. **Reports From Other Bodies**

- A.
- (1) President - oral report
 - (2) Provost and Vice-President Academic – report forthcoming
 - (3) Vice-President Finance and Administration – no report
 - (4) Board of Governors – report attached
 - (5) Alumni Advisory Board – no report
 - (6) Council of Ontario Universities (Academic Colleague) – no report
 - (7) Joint Board/Senate Committee on Governance – oral report (motion to follow under the Report of the Senate Executive Committee)
 - (8) NUSU – report attached
 - (9) Others
- B. Reports from Senate members

7. **Question Period**

8. **Reports of Standing Committees and Faculty Councils**

Senate Executive Committee

Motion 1: That the Report of the Senate Executive Committee dated October 5, 2023 be received.

Motion 2: That Senate recommends to the Board of Governors the creation of the following academic units:

- History, Ancient Studies, and Anthropology
- Sociology, Psychology, and Child and Family Studies
- Gender Equality and Social Justice, Indigenous Studies, and Religions and Cultures
- Philosophy, Political Science and Economics, and Social Welfare and Social Development
- Computer Science, Mathematics and Physics
- English and Fine Arts

And that the following academic units shall amalgamate with a preferred unit by no later than 1 January 2024:

- Biology and Chemistry
- Geography and Geology

Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee (AQAPC)

Motion 1: That the Report of the Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee dated September 22, 2023 be received.

Motion 2: That Senate approve the attached Biology and Chemistry IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

9. Other Business**10. Amendment of By-Laws****11. Elections**

- Elect four (4) tenured or tenure-track faculty members with at least one (1) from each faculty to sit on the Chancellor's Selection Committee.

12. New Business

Motion 1: That Senate consider receipt of the Report on Graduation Applicants dated October 9, 2023.

Motion 2: That Senate receive the Report on Graduation Applicants dated October 9, 2023.

Motion 3: That Senate grant approval to graduate the students listed in the Report on Graduation Applicants dated October 9, 2023.

13. Announcements**14. Adjournment**

Nipissing University
Minutes of the Academic Senate Meeting
September 8, 2023
2:30 p.m.
Room F210 & Zoom Videoconference

Members Present:

K. Wamsley (Chair), C. Sutton, B. Law, D. Walters, D. lafrate, N. Black

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

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

C. Irwin, O. Pokorny, L. Sinclair

F. Couchie, S. Fiddler

R. Hehn

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

Absent With Regrets:

A Graff, C. Mady, A. Hatef, G. McCann, C. Greco, T. McParland, P. English

The Senate Speaker offered a Traditional Territory acknowledgement.

Approval of the Agenda of the Senate Meeting of: September 8, 2023

Motion 1: Moved by N. Stevens, seconded by S. Winters that the agenda of the Senate meeting of September 8, 2023 be approved with amendments.
CARRIED

The Speaker reported that the results of the election for the Senate Budget Advisory Committee had been inadvertently left out of the July 14, 2023 Senate minutes. Following a two-thirds vote, Senators approved that the July 14, 2023 Senate minutes be modified to include that Dr. Robin Gendron was acclaimed as the faculty Senate representative to serve on the Senate Budget Advisory Committee for a three-year (3) term effective July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2026.

Adoption of the Minutes of the Senate Meeting of: August 11, 2023

The Senate Speaker reported that Dr. Hilary Earl was nominated as one of the faculty Senate representatives to serve on the Joint Committee of the Board and Senate on Governance, not Dr. Robin Gendron as recorded in the August 11, 2023 Senate minutes. The minutes will be revised to indicate that Dr. Hilary Earl was acclaimed as the faculty Senate representative to serve on the Joint Committee of the Board and Senate on Governance for a three-year (3) term effective July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2026.

Motion 2: Moved by D. Hay, seconded by L. Chen that the minutes of the Senate meeting of August 11, 2023 be adopted with the above noted revisions.
CARRIED

Reports From Other Bodies

The President provided a report. The report is attached to the minutes. He also thanked Dr. Callie Mady for her service as Interim Dean of the Faculty of Education and Professional Studies and advised that Dr. Graydon Raymer, Director of the School of Physical and Health Education, has agreed to take on the role of Interim Dean of EPS for one year.

A written report was provided by the Provost and Vice-President Academic. The report is attached to the minutes.

A written report was provided by the Alumni Advisory Board. The report is attached to the minutes.

The Council of Ontario Universities Academic Colleague provided an update advising that international student enrollment had been discussed and that Trent University is working with their city council to address international student housing issues. The following links from the meeting were shared:

- [Canadian Study Permit Trends – Apply Board – May 5 2023 s](#)
- [Alex Usher on X: "Without comment. https://t.co/lpqt1fiTrq" / X \(twitter.com\)](#)
- ["Getting it done" Ontario's agenda for college education | The Monitor \(monitormag.ca\)](#)

The Academic Colleague also advised that she recently participated in an MCU consultation with respect to data collection on accessibility in terms of services to students with disabilities and Indigenous students. She learned that Ontario universities have been collecting data on demographics, OSAP use, as well as access to student development services. She asked if Nipissing University is collecting data and if so, how might it be used to build accountability. A response will be provided at the next Senate meeting.

The President advised that the Joint Committee of the Board and Senate on Governance is now fully populated, and a meeting date is expected to be confirmed soon.

NUSU provided a written and oral report. The reports are attached to the minutes.

Question Period

A question regarding the impact of appointing interim administrators was raised. The President advised that it has been increasingly difficult to recruit for Senior Administration positions. He has confidence in our administration and with our new Provost we have stability. He reiterated that we must look at the organization of faculties, and that the schools and Senate must work together to support our interim Deans and Associate Deans.

Reports of Standing Committees and Faculty or University Councils

Senate Executive Committee

Motion 3: Moved by K. Wamsley, seconded by D. Hay that the Report of the Senate Executive Committee dated August 31, 2023 be received.
CARRIED

Research Committee

Motion 4: Moved by B. Law, seconded by N. Stevens that the Report of the Research Committee dated August 23, 2023 be received.
CARRIED

Elections

The election for one (1) faculty Senate representative to serve on the Senate Budget Advisory Committee for a three-year term was not required as Dr. Robin Gendron was acclaimed to this position at the July 14, 2023 Senate meeting.

New Business

It was advised that an EPS Senator will be required to replace Senator Raymer. A call for an election will be sent out from the Faculty of Education and Professional Studies.

Announcements

On behalf of NUSU, Senator McEntee expressed gratitude to the NU community for fostering such phenomenal energy and enthusiasm during the first week of classes. He advised that there are many exciting events planned and to check Instagram for further details.

Adjournment

Senate was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

.....
K. Wamsley (Chair)

.....
S. Landriault (Senate Secretary)

University Senate
08 September 2023
President's Report

Good afternoon Senators. Welcome to the Fall 2023 Term. In my report to Senate today, I wish to congratulate and thank some people for their work; I wish to draw some attention to upcoming events; and I wish to comment on some of the challenges we face in the coming year. We have been welcoming new students to campus this past week and our returning students as well. It takes a lot of planning and organizing to prepare our residences and our campus, and our programming to make sure that the transition is as smooth as possible for our on-campus students. As I stated in my email to campus, we are very grateful to our staff who prepare everything for incoming students. I was pleased to join the move-in once again and it is clearly evident that our staff have made things very well organized with a minimum of lines and it appears that the students and their families really appreciated the warm welcome they received. I want to congratulate residence life, and all of the folks who work in academic and non-academic services for their preparations and their outstanding orientation programs that they developed and delivered. And I wish to thank NUSU for its extensive orientation programming and events for new and returning students. Orientation week was a big success – thanks to everyone.

The Blue Ribbon Panel has submitted its report to the Ontario Government. For those of you not familiar, the Province established the Blue Ribbon Panel of experts (former university and college administrators and others with post secondary knowledge) to assess the current sector and to provide recommendations on the sustainability of colleges and universities. We have not seen the Report, we don't know what the recommendations will be, and can only assume that the Government will respond when it responds. I will keep you up to date on whatever material is shared with me.

We have a number of upcoming events including our welcome Pow Wow on September 15, the launch of our Strategic Plan on September 19, and a series of events related to Reconciliation called Polishing the Chain, featuring a keynote address or conversation with filmmaker Alanis O'Bomsawin who has generously agreed to come back to our campus and speak to us. Check your email and social media for the times and locations for each of these – and Homecoming Weekend is early this year, happening September 21-24.

And, finally I would like to comment on that has been consuming all of our energies for a long time and that is student housing. Within this context, university presidents from across Canada have met to discuss this issue as have university presidents across Ontario. I must say that there is a great deal of information out there, there is a lot of commentary, some inaccuracies, some negative press. Cities with a million people, 200,000, 50,000 like North Bay, and the towns of 4,000 all have housing shortages. A lot of the narratives have been focused on immigration, migrant workers, and students. Canada's international students have been unfairly blamed for housing shortages in Canada.

We need to speak the truth about the housing situation – and I have done so on local tv. When I read the first story that stated Nipissing and Canadore students were sleeping in cars – I knew it wasn't true, I knew that we were picking up every student at the airport; our staff for the past few weeks including me have been picking up international students at the airport, at the bus station, making sure they had food, dropping them off at their apartments, making sure they had good quality housing – I thought the story wasn't true until I spoke to a student at the President's coffee welcome Tuesday morning. I asked him how things were going; he said fine but he was having trouble with housing; just like our staff members who walked our first-year students to their classrooms, I walked this student to the Nipissing International office; he said I've been here and I spoken to someone and they directed me to off campus housing. I said that's good – but then I said where are you currently staying? He said in a car – and shortly thereafter I heard about two other students did not know about emergency housing. Part of the issue is that some students in spite of the dozens of attempted contacts by us did not tell us that they were coming or when they

were coming or if they are here they are not telling us that they don't have housing. It is also a fact that it is much easier to arrange housing when you arrive and to use the existing networks to help. With all of this provided as context, it is a fact that some of our students do not yet have permanent housing. They are in temporary housing that we have arranged or they have arranged and it is a fact that some of it is too expensive.

People are posting on social media that the university has been irresponsible in this situation. They are saying that we should not be developing new programs to attract students, that we have been careless in our budgeting, that students are only dollars to us. I would like to back that up a little bit. When I arrived here in 2021, I came to understand that the university had not balanced its budget in 8 years, that it was running deficits, that it was rapidly spending down its reserves, that it had not strategically recruited international students to balance a declining enrolment. As we all know, at the same time, we had and have severe limitations in revenues – tuition was cut 10% and then frozen for five years; government grants were frozen at 2019 rates and not redistributed with changes in program enrolment; Nipissing U received less than a third of the Northern Grants received by Algoma, Laurentian, and Lakehead. What could I surmise? That our enrolment was well below the levels of 2013 and 2014. We absolutely needed to increase our enrolment to match our faculty and staff complements and our infrastructure – universities in Ontario were relying on international students to make up for decreasing government and tuition revenues. We needed to do the same – not all at once – but at a moderate rate over time. I have used 15% as a reasonable percentage in my years as a senior administrator. The pandemic was a challenge for recruiting and for filling our classes. Last year we thought we were in a good position but by September of 2022, we were short 200 students and the resultant impact was an in-year deficit of some \$3.7 million dollars – all of this compounded by 3 years of significant rates of inflation – our utilities increased, the costs of maintenance, supplies, and renovations increased, we have to pay our employees according to collective agreements. If that wasn't enough, TD Bank withdrew our \$5m safeguard line of credit because we failed to demonstrate sustainability as an institution, over time.

We were 200 students short last year – we did not contribute to the housing issue in North Bay. We didn't leave our students to fend for themselves. Sarah Tedesco helped people find housing. This year we had what I would consider a more normal recruiting year. We are close to where we should have been last year. The number of domestic students enrolling in Ontario universities continues to decline – we need students to pay our faculty and staff – to keep our doors open. We have not over recruited – if we are lucky, we will balance our budget this year and we will keep the bank and the province on our side and we will not provoke any outside interventions that will force us to make impossible cuts.

What are we doing about housing? We have a staff member, Logan Rye, who, among others, is working tirelessly to find housing for students – he's a full-time staff member hired to do nothing other than find housing for students. We are looking for houses that were once rental properties and now are Air B&B properties to convert back for 8 months; we are looking for hotel conversions at cheaper rates; we are looking at winterized cottages; we have launched campaigns for months asking people to rent rooms to our students. It is working but it is not fast enough.

Why aren't we building a new residence immediately? Currently there is no federal or provincial funding for new residences. If we were granted funding, we do not have the matching funds in our reserves to make the investment. An addition of 64 beds to an existing building will cost \$10m right now. Why aren't we partnering with 3rd parties? We are considering it. But think of this – do we need another residence? Currently we are the most residential university in Ontario – we provide a residence bed for 1 of every 3.4 students or 29% of our North Bay residing full time students. We are looking at other options for some beds.

We are not drastically increasing our student intake – we are not adding to the housing problem in North Bay but we have a major challenge. We will keep working until all of our students are housed adequately. We must have a stable enrolment now and in the future and we must secure our share of beds in North Bay.

**Senate Report
Provost and Vice-President, Academic
September 8, 2023**

Academic Plan – Email Message 1 of 3 – Sent August 28, 2023

Following the broad consultation that informed Nipissing University's Strategic Plan: *Pathways: Our Commitments to Water, Land, and People*, we enter the next phase of planning. The purpose of the new Academic Plan is to respond to the direction set out in the Strategic Plan and define and guide the university's academic priorities and decision-making.

In my role as Provost, I have been charged to lead the development of the University's next Academic Plan. The Academic Plan will serve as the roadmap for continuous improvement in the university. Aligned with Nipissing University's Strategic Plan, as well as federal, provincial and municipal priorities, including the [94 Calls to Action](#) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the [Dimensions Charter](#) on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#), SSHRC's [Future Challenge Areas](#), the [Scarborough Charter](#), and the Nipissing University Act, the Academic Plan is a critical strategic document.

Designed to support the university's statement of value and principles, the Academic Plan provides a concrete set of directions and metrics by which the community can evaluate our progress as we advance common goals and priorities. Key to this Academic Plan will be defining the unique academic value proposition for the university. Nipissing must define its impact in community (local, regional, national and global) and celebrate it at each opportunity. Moreover, Nipissing must be prepared to adapt, as we listen to community. We are entering a period of urgent sectoral reform and reinvention; we must embrace humility as an integral part of co-creative, reciprocal relations if we are to advance with our partners and communities.

The plan's constitutive elements will be defined by the university's priorities, values, principles, and objectives, not by administrative function or structure. This choice distributes ownership, agency and responsibility for Nipissing success across the university community, internal and external. This recognizes that Nipissing's brightest future is not dependent on any individual or office, but on our collaborative efforts to ensure that the shared vision is delivered.

I will call together a Working Group from all stakeholder groups to assist me in convening the voices of the University. Over the course of the year, we will meet with students, faculty and staff, with Senate, community stakeholders, alumni, and University governors to identify what needs to happen over the short-, medium- and long-term, to determine what we need to do and in what order so that we achieve our ambitions. I have defined 6 areas of focus (to be shared in message #3); some overlap, some must inform all priority areas, but they all must function in harmony, if we are to succeed with the larger objectives.

Having said this, there are four "must-haves" that exist as the bedrock upon which the plan rests. They are areas of engagement and action that are urgent to get right and upon which we must maintain vigilant focus:

- (1) Recruitment, Enrollment, Retention and Persistence;
- (2) Indigenous Knowledge and Reconciliation;
- (3) Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and,
- (4) Structural and Procedural Clarity (*integritas*).

I will be sending a follow up email on the “must-haves” (to be shared in message #2). For purposes of this email today, I want to apprise you of the ongoing preparation work for the academic plan and invite you to participate.

The next decade must be Nipissing’s. It is clear to those contributing to discussions of both “the future of work” and “the future of the university” that resilience, adaptability, collaboration, humility, and compassion are necessary. Nipissing must be ready to take a leadership role in articulating the values and principles of the emerging reality (first among these values is sustainability—environmental, fiscal, creative, and social).

The goal of this Academic Plan is to set a course for sustainable leadership in post-secondary education. This plan will see Nipissing transform its practices of teaching and learning, research, and community engagement mindful of the demands of the future. The goal of this work is to be a demonstrably inclusive community with robust enrolment and measurable impact: everyone will understand what is possible and relevant as a function of being in community.



**Nipissing University Alumni Advisory Board report to Academic Senate
September 2023**

Homecoming Weekend – September 22nd – 24th

Dust off your blue and green and join us for Homecoming 2023! Homecoming is a time for alumni to relive their campus experience and for students, staff, faculty and friends to celebrate their Nipissing pride. We've got an action-packed weekend full of free events in store, so you won't want to miss it. For a full schedule of events, please visit:

<https://events.nipissingu.ca/homecoming2023>

We hope to see you there!

Toronto Blue Jays – University & College Night

In collaboration with NUSU, Nipissing University will be sending 200 Alumni and Students to the Toronto Blue Jays University & College Night on September 14th. NUAAB is looking forward to reengaging with GTA based alumni during our visit, and we look forward to cheering on the Jays as they take on the Texas Rangers!

NUAAB Membership for 23/24

As we head into the new academic year, we wanted to provide the University community with a NUAAB Membership update. The members representing the interest of the Laker Alumni this year are: Laurel Muldoon (President) BA Hons '15, MEd '19; Melissa MacNabb (Vice-President) BA '99; Dawn Lamothe BA Hons '13; Robyn Jones MEd '20; Eric Yung BBA '07, BEd '09; Jason Bramburger BA Hons '11; Ryan Hehn BA '12; Joe Burt BEd '14; Guy Degagné MEd '15; and Riley McEntee from the Nipissing University Student Union

Start to the academic year!

On behalf of the entire NUAAB membership, we want to wish everyone a fantastic start to the 2023/2024 Academic Year! We look forward to celebrating everyone's accomplishments throughout the year, and continuing to engage with Nipissing Alumni on the fantastic work that is happening at the University.

Academic Senate Report

September 8th, 2023

OWLS Week (Orientation Welcome Learning & Social)

Although we are writing this report before OWLS Week has taken place, we are excited to see a return to pre-COVID numbers of students with almost 500 students being part of the week. The week includes community engagement, team building, reflective activities, and academic programming. We look forward to giving a report in October regarding the success of this week.

We will be looking to work with the university to streamline communication regarding orientation in the future, especially with international students as many were not aware of it until they arrived. We hope to lessen their stress in the future and continue working closely with Student Learning & Transitions and the Orientation Committee.

Shine Day

Shine Day is happening on Saturday, September 2nd with students going out into the community to raise money and awareness for cystic fibrosis. Everyone is welcome to come out and support this event. Information can be found at nusu.com/shine.

NUSU Building

- *Booking space at the Student Centre*
All bookings must go through this [form](#) for internal events. If you have any questions about bookings, please email bookings@nusu.com.
- *Building Hours*
The NUSU Student Centre will be open from 8:30am to 8:30pm, Monday through Friday. At this time the building will be closed on weekends, other than for the nightclub events or booked events.
- *NUSU Office Hours*
The NUSU Office will be open from 8:30am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday.

- *Reflection Gallery*

Students will again showcase their work at the art gallery this year. There will be a reception for Sarah Ederer on September 8th from 6pm to 8pm. Thank you to Andrew Ackerman who will be supporting this throughout the year.

- *Bay Bistro restaurant*

Starting September 5th, the Bay Bistro will be open from 11:30am to 8:30pm, Monday to Friday. The restaurant is also currently on SkipTheDishes.

- *On The Rocks nightclub*

It was announced that the nightclub will open the weekend of September 15th (19+ Nipissing University students only) and September 16th (open to all 19+).

Housing

An oral report shall be delivered to Academic Senate.

REES/Haven

For the 2023/2024 Academic Year, NUSU is introducing Haven to Nipissing students. This started during Orientation Week for first-year students, and will be advertised to all students during the first week of the fall semester. Haven is a comprehensive safety platform app that you can download on your mobile device. It is a singular and user-centric tool that integrates safety, education, and community. Some of their safety features include: Emergency SOS, location sharing (both on and off campus), geo-tagging, and customized push notifications. It also houses an Education Centre filled with on-campus, local, provincial, and Canada-wide supports.

Nipissing University and NUSU have also partnered together and introduced REES to Nipissing students for a three-year term. REES will be launched the first week of fall semester. As taken from their website, *“REES is a simple, secure online platform for reporting sexual violence, tailored to the unique setting of post-secondary institutions. Trauma-informed and centred on the needs of survivors, REES gather critical data for institutions while bridging anonymous incident reporting with access to information about reporting options, resources, and supports.”*

Please note, both Haven and REES will be accessible for only Nipissing University students.

**CFS**

From Thursday, August 17 to Sunday, August 20, VPAA Harikesh Panchal and I attended the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) Ontario General Meeting (OGM) in Toronto, ON. Our days were filled with workshops, caucus and constituency meetings, plenary sessions, and socials. We connected with several other student unions and associations, primarily on advocacy, campaigns, and initiatives on our respective campuses.

CFS and their provincial subgroups are organizing their national Day of Action for Wednesday, November 8, 2023! The last one was held on November 2, 2016, with the one before that being November 5 - 6, 2008. There will be more information coming soon!

Academic Amnesty

With OPSEU bargaining still ongoing, and a resolution having not been reached as of when this report is being submitted, NUSU encourages Academic Senate to consider accepting a motion (should it arise) giving academic amnesty to students who may wish to freely participate in strike-related activities. Academic amnesty could include re-scheduling examinations and deadlines for submission of assignments and providing reasonable access to materials covered during lectures for students who are absent from classes. We want to ensure that our students are not penalized academically or otherwise.

Oral Report: September 8th Senate Report

Housing

NUSU would like to open our oral report by saying that we are grateful for the work that Nipissing University has done thus far; however, it was not started early enough, and our students are still falling through the cracks.

The housing crisis has been at the forefront of conversation both on campus and within the community.

In the summer of 2022, the NUSU executive team met with university administration regarding the housing crisis. In September 2022, Academic Senate approved a Post-baccalaureate Environmental program for January 2023.

At that same Academic Senate, NUSU read out a statement that said, “With the housing crisis looming over not just North Bay, but Ontario, we are concerned that there is a lack of foresight, support and care.”

Fast forward to now, in comparing last Academic Year to this one, the number of students without housing is higher, and the crisis has worsened. For the second year in a row the Nipissing University Residence complexes have been full with waitlists above 100. As of August 8th, the Residence waitlist was at 190 students; at its peak in June/July it was at 250. Our international student enrolment has also increased noticeably, largely due to the increase in Post-Baccalaureate programs offered by Nipissing in the last Academic Year as well as their increased international recruitment efforts. On August 22nd, 128 international students were still trying to find accommodations, 49 had secured housing, and 40 were still waiting on their approval for their study permit but had paid tuition. On August 10th, there were 101 international students without accommodations, which shows an upward trend for unhoused students at the beginning of the Academic Year. I will note, we have not received updated numbers since late-August.

In early August, we reached out to MP Anthony Rota, MPP Vic Fedeli, and Mayor Peter Chirico calling for assistance in the localized student housing crisis. Unfortunately, only after following up did we receive replies from two of them. We will continue our conversations with them to see what can be done on their end.

Additionally, it's important to highlight that the housing issue isn't exclusive to international students. Last year, we observed a concerning trend where a significant number of Bachelor of Education students faced challenges in securing accommodation. This situation was exacerbated by the reinstatement of the in-person attendance requirement for their first three semesters, compounded by the fact that the landlords were selling student housing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's unfortunate to hear that the concerns about housing are affecting Bachelor of Education students and that international students are particularly affected. Housing issues have been creating significant stress and challenges for students, impacting their overall well-being and academic performance.

On July 18th, an email was sent from the university that stated, "Nipissing University has been actively working with Canadore College, the Nipissing University Student Union (NUSU), and the Near North Landlords' Association to encourage members of the community to consider the benefits of renting a space in their home to a student." The student union had not been in discussions with these groups and had not received a reply from the university to the open letter regarding housing that was read out at the Board of Governors and subsequently posted to NUSU's social media on April 27th. The only involvement NUSU had during the summer was sharing and reposting graphics that Off Campus Living had created.

After NUSU received information regarding the number of students without housing and alerted administration with these concerns, the student union was contacted on August 10th via email requesting to include NUSU representation on their task force on student housing, a group that had been meeting for several months.

Our Director of Services attended the first meeting on Tuesday, August 15th, and has since attended several others. The August 15th meeting was the first time NUSU had been included in Nipissing-led discussions on the student housing crisis concerning the 23/24 Academic Year. It should be noted, a new employee was hired in the position of Off Campus Living Coordinator and started on Monday, August 21st to work solely on the housing crisis. We commend the efforts of this new employee and have heard from the community positive feedback about email responses; however, this is an institutional issue and should not be on the shoulders of one individual.



When it comes to addressing the immediate housing crisis and short term planning, Nipissing University has connected with various motels and hotels in the community to secure discounted rates. When it comes to the long term planning, there have been conversations, however, nothing is firm or set in stone yet.

As the student union, we are looking for a plan regarding housing and the construction of residences. Not only will this help mitigate housing concerns for international students and Bachelor of Education students, but it will also allow the university to use residence buildings as a source of income should the rooms not be filled that year. With a booming film industry, conferences being booked on campus etc. there should be no shortage of use for the space. Furthermore, this would be a great opportunity to expand the Graduate Studies program.

In the last Academic Senate, an Upper Administrator said that if students do not have secured housing then they may have to defer their education for at least one year; NUSU recognizes that this is an unreasonable request. In other avenues, it has been stated that Nipissing employees are working with students on a case by case basis; however, there are no guarantees that this will result in these students finding housing. On NUSU's end, we have been working diligently to connect students who reach out to us with community members that may be able to accommodate them.

It should be noted that a document was attached to the Senate materials on Friday, September 1st named "Canadian Provincial Study Permit Trends - International Student Approvals In Ontario Reach Unprecedented High in 2022". This article was published on May 5th, 2023, days after our open letter to the university and college. It appears that this information has been out for some time which begs the question of why it has taken so long for communication to take place to the community in asking them for housing support.

Collegiality

NUSU has received some comments about its conduct in both the reports and conversations within Academic Senate. We would like to address these concerns.

We thank the Speaker for rightly correcting us on process and not referring to a person's name within our reports, but rather their position or department.

We echo the President's comments that were made at Academic Senate in the Summer in which he spoke about respectful language and decorum being reflected by all Senators.

We have reflected upon these comments and have amended our conduct accordingly. As the conversation around collegiality has been brought up recently, we would like to address our concerns about conduct and decorum.

As a separate organization to the university, we would like to remind Academic Senate that the mandate of the student union is to serve the students. We are to bring concerns forward and highlight the needs of students. We run elections and by-elections every year for the Student Senator positions. It is extremely important to us that the student voice is heard as students are the biggest stakeholder at this institution.

To quote Stephanie Curry, the North Representative for the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges:

"Today's common definition of collegiality

- Implies a collegium where everyone is equitable and represented
- Refers to collegiality as ideal "professional" behaviour

Challenging "collegiality"

- Used in shared governance and collegial benefits: Are we using power to advance equity?
- Consider power dynamics: Are we wielding power to oppress or shut another colleague down?
- Remember equity: Are we truly equal or are there systemic barriers for some?"

Shannon Dea spoke in an article in University Affairs regarding "Two Misconceptions about Collegial Governance".

She is quotes as saying, "Some people misunderstand collegial governance likewise to connote governance characterized by "good manners" and cooperativeness" and "To impose norms of collegiality in the sense of politeness on academic governance bodies and processes risks discouraging those tough questions and difficult debate."



We as NUSU welcome constructive criticism as long as everyone is held to the same standard. NUSU representatives have been on the receiving end of non-collegial comments during Academic Senate that have been so bold it has led other Senators to reach out to NUSU stating their concern and apologizing for the conduct they have seen.

It has always been a priority for NUSU to be transparent with the university and bring concerns directly to them; however, in our attempts to do so, we have not always been met with the same respect we have given to other Senators. As Students, it is already difficult enough to speak up and address these concerns in a public university setting.

Telling the student Senate Representatives that their concerns are “isolated” or to bring examples and then when examples are given being told they are “too personal” undermines the nature of our role and our voice.

In the spirit of collegiality, we think it is appropriate for all Senators to provide written reports before Senate takes place. Not only will this help support the Senate Secretary but it will help streamline efficiency and give the opportunity for Senators to review the reports and provide substantive questions in advance, allowing an opportunity to provide fulsome answers during Question Period.

We do feel that the institution needs to work on addressing concerns and building a better relationship within the community. NUSU looks forward to supporting the university in these ventures.

**Senate Report
Provost and Vice-President, Academic
October 13, 2023**

Thank you to all faculty, staff and students to a great start to the 2023-24 Academic Year. Congratulations to the victorious Women's Lakers hockey team who played that Chinese National team in an exhibition match at Memorial Gardens, to NUSU for on the successful launch of the On The Rocks social space, and to those faculty who have successfully submitted their SSHRC Insight Grants with the help of the Research Office team.

I would be remiss if I didn't share my support for students, staff and faculty who may be affected by the violence that has recently escalated. I am sure I speak for all of us when I express the wish that a peaceful resolution of conflict can be achieved.

Academic Planning

I am taking the opportunity of this report to ensure that all Senators are up to date on the academic and operational planning processes that we are undertaking in concert with the recently delivered Strategic Plan, **Pathways: Our Commitments to Water, Land, and People**.

First, I want to announce that that Vice-President, Finance and Administration and I have committed to harmonizing our planning processes, so that the hope is that we will be able to deliver one plan that addresses academic and operational ambitions. This means that we are convening an Academic and Operational Planning Convening Group of 40+ people who will be responsible for listening to and attending the conversations that are curated in support of the developing plan. Both Faculties have been asked to select 6 members to participate on the convening group. Staff, Students, Faculty, Alumni and Community Members will be invited to participate in the conversations in order that we can collectively learn from each other about our experiences, and define KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) that will allow us to measure our success against the plan.

I encourage everyone to attend to the schedule of conversations and attend (or submit feedback on the posted questions) as the process unfolds.

Senate's Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee will be regularly updated on the progress of the Academic and Operational Plan with the expectation that the final draft will be presented to Senate at its June meeting.

Strategic Research Plan

The University's Strategic Research Plan is up for renewal as of July 1, 2024. The AVP, Research, Innovation and Graduate Studies will be working with students, staff and faculty on a renewed plan. The process will start in January, as we hope to have convened a few conversations about research under the Academic and Operational Planning process to increase the likelihood of alignment between all plans, processes, and consultation. Senate's Research Committee will be kept up to date on the Strategic Research Plan, with the intention of presenting the finalized draft to Senate at its June meeting.

Decision Making Processes

In my role as Provost, I have spent the last 3 months listening closely to the concerns of staff, faculty and students. At Senate, I have heard members express concerns about the transparency of decision making processes, especially in light of the possibility of the most serious declarations an Institution can make concerning program redundancy.

In order to address legitimate concerns about transparency and decision making, I am introducing a Program Review Process which is designed to be holistic, the results of which will be annually presented at Senate's Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee. The intention of the PRP is to help the University to identify satisfactory, satisfactory with conditions, and unsatisfactory programs with plans to ensure continuous improvement in every program and to measure the impact of investment.

While at Nipissing University, Suspension of Enrolment remains the purview of the Provost, and it is an instrument that may be necessary to support the retooling of a program, the goal of the Program Review Process is to find generative alternatives to even more dire realities.

Program Redundancy requires that Senate move that recommendation to the Board. My commitment is that, were we to come to a question of program redundancy, the rationale for such a recommendation would be objectively clear.

In summary, I am very much looking forward to working with everyone on the generative process of academic planning and to finding pathways forward to support and sustain dynamic academic programs and compelling research agenda.



Board of Governors Report to Senate - October 2023

Board of Governors Meeting September 15, 2023

The Board of Governors met on Friday, September 15, 2023, in the President's Boardroom (F303) and via Zoom remote conferencing.

The Board accepted the recommendation of the Audit & Finance Committee to approve the Consolidated Audited Financial Statements for the year ended April 30, 2023, as presented. The approved statements are posted on the website here:

[Finance | Nipissing University](#)

The President presented his Goals and Priorities for the 2023/24 academic year, which included a continued focus on the development of a long-term financial strategy, the development of the operational and academic plans, and the creation of a foundation for a Major Fundraising Campaign for the University. The Board of Governors moved to accept the Goals and Priorities as recommended by the Executive Committee.

As per the Appointment/Reappointment of Chancellor Policy, the Chancellor's selection process requires four (4) non-constituent members of the Board to be elected to the Selection Committee. Following a call for interest, Marianne Berube, Kathy Wilcox, Judy Smith and Judy Koziol were appointed to the Committee.



NUSU Food Bank

The NUSU Student Food Bank has seen a tremendous increase in student usage with the start of the Academic Year. Due to this, we've had to make changes to the Food Bank. To focus on the sustainability of the food bank, students are now only able to take up to 1 bag of food from the food bank per week. The Food Bank continues to be available for emergency use for students. Food insecurity is at an all-time high for our community and we must come together to be there for those who need the support. NUSU is grateful for any and all monetary or physical donations. We need all the help we can get right now so we can support our student body.

Academic Trips

NUSU is facilitating academic trips this fall to both Ottawa and Toronto. On November 11th, students have the opportunity to travel to Ottawa to attend the Remembrance Day ceremony and also visit the Canadian War Museum. On November 12th, students have the opportunity to travel to Toronto to visit the Toronto Holocaust Museum. These academic trips are a great opportunity for students to step out of the classroom setting to experience learning in a different way! Stay tuned for more information.

Academic Week

Academic Week took place from September 25th-28th. We had a full slate of academic programming for all students. We appreciate the great work of the Nipissing University departments and services coming together to put on great events for the students. The entire week comprised of the following programming:

- Information Booths on NU services
- We Got Game! (E-sports event)
- The Amazing Academic Race (Students got to do a scavenger hunt of different NU services and learn where they are located)
- Are you smarter than a NUSU Exec?
- Plant n' Picasso (Paint your own plant pot, plant your own seed, and take it home to add to your home!)
- Paint & Sip Night (Thank you to Marriane for putting on a great event for our students)
- Anxie-Teas and Act Like A Kid (Drop by the student centre, enjoy a relaxing tea while you study, and take a break with some fun passive activities)
- Academic Societies Information Booths
- Wheel of Random Trivia



Feel free to reach out to NUSU if you have event ideas for Winter Semester Academic Week. We look forward to seeing all the students again for the Winter Semester Academic Week!

B.Ed Student Practicums

Nipissing University Bachelor of Education Students will be going on their practicums starting next week. Students are placed around the province at different levels of schools to fulfill their degree requirements and to gain hands-on experience with teaching others. We wish the students all the best and hope they have a great experience. Good Luck Lakers!

Trivia

OnTheRocks hosts Trivia nights every Thursday night at 6:30 pm and it is open to the community! Feel free to extend the invitation to all your friends, family, and peers. Come attend and showcase your competitive spirits! It's a great opportunity for staff, admin, and faculty to connect with the students!

Volunteer Week

NUSU's Volunteer Week starts on October 16th! We have a full slate of volunteer opportunities set up for students. We look forward to connecting students with campus volunteering and community volunteer opportunities. Stay tuned for more information on Instagram @nusutalks.

NIPISSING UNIVERSITY

REPORT OF THE SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

October 5, 2023

A meeting of the Senate Executive Committee took place in person and by Zoom conference on October 5, 2023.

The following members participated:

K. Wamsley (Chair), A. Graff, B. Law, G. Raymer, D. Walters, D. Iafrate, T. Sibbald (Speaker), D. Hay, S. Renshaw, H. Panchal, A. Blaszczyk (Recording Secretary, n-v)

Regrets: A. Adler

The purpose of the meeting was to set the agenda for the October 13, 2023 Senate meeting. The Chair began the meeting by offering a traditional land acknowledgement.

Under Business Arising from the Minutes, a discussion was held regarding the PVPA's response to the COU Academic Colleague's question about the collection of data and its use. It was noted that Student Services and the Office of Indigenous Initiatives collects information with respect to direct grant funding received for students and that reports are completed by those offices and not the office of Institutional Planning and Analysis. Sector wide data (OSAP) information is available using the MCU's OPENSIMS platform.

The President will provide an oral report from the Joint Committee of the Board and Senate on Governance. Further communication regarding the proposed program mergers will be forwarded to the Senate Secretary to be included in the Senate agenda.

A discussion took place regarding the announcement of the Interim Associate Dean of the School of Nursing and the process by which an administrative role was filled without an election. The PVPA advised that the search for a Director of Nursing was a failed search, so an Interim Associate Dean was appointed. That person had to step away from the position, so an expedited limited-term Interim Associate Dean was appointed to fill the position until the original Interim Associate Dean on leave returns.

The Report of the Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee dated September 22, 2023 was provided to the Senate Executive for inclusion in the Senate agenda.

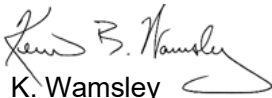
An election for four (4) tenured or tenure-track faculty members with at least one (1) from each faculty to sit on the Chancellor's Selection Committee was provided to the Senate Executive for inclusion in the Senate agenda.

The Report on Graduation Applicants will be presented under New Business.

Moved by K. Wamsley, seconded by T. Sibbald that the Senate Executive Committee approves the October 13, 2023 Senate agenda.

CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,



K. Wamsley
Chair, Senate Executive Committee

Motion 1: That Senate receive the Report of the Senate Executive Committee dated October 5, 2023.

Nipissing University
Joint Committee of the Board and Senate on Governance

The Joint Committee convened a meeting on 27 September 2023, chaired by Riley McEntee, to address the following issues/motions forwarded by Senate and jointly approved by the Board:

1. That the Senate refer the question of the departmental mergers in the Arts & Science Faculty to the Joint Committee of the Board and Senate on Governance; and
2. That, pending the recommendation of the Joint Committee of the Board and Senate on Governance, Senate moves that the entire merger process be paused and the status quo as of June 30, 2023, remain in effect.

The Joint Committee recommends to the University Senate and the Board of Governors that the following academic units shall remain in their current configurations (as effective July 1, 2023), with a motion to confirm this configuration to be presented at the Senate scheduled for October 13, 2023:

- History, Ancient Studies, and Anthropology
- Sociology, Psychology, and Child and Family Studies
- Gender Equality and Social Justice, Indigenous Studies, and Religions and Cultures
- Philosophy, Political Science and Economics, and Social Welfare and Social Development
- Computer Science, Mathematics and Physics
- English and Fine Arts

And that the following academic units shall amalgamate with a preferred unit by no later than 1 January 2024, with a motion to Senate confirming the proposed academic unit:

- Biology and Chemistry
- Geography and Geology

The Joint Committee appreciates the commitment of Arts and Science faculty to reduce the number of academic units and support strong academic affinities in the creation of amalgamated units. The structure may continue to be refined through the Academic Planning process and processes defined by Senate and the Act.

Report of the
ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE (AQAPC)
Academic Year 2023-2024

September 22, 2023

The first meeting of the Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee of 2023-2024 was held on Friday, September 22, 2023 in person and via Teams conference.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Dan Walters (Acting Chair)	Nancy Black	Nathan Kozuskanich
Dan Jarvis	Judy Smith	Veronica Williams
Barbie Law	Jamie Murton	Alireza Khorakian
Debra lafrate	Susan Srigley	Prasad Ravi
Stephen Tedesco	Andrew Ackerman	Harikesh Panchal

Regrets: Ann-Barbara Graff, Sam Greco

Recording Secretary: S. Landriault

The Biology and Chemistry IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was provided and discussed.

Moved by A. Ackerman, seconded by N. Black that the Biology and Chemistry IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan be accepted, approved, and recommended to Senate.
CARRIED

The Biology and Chemistry IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan will be included in the October 13, 2023 Senate Agenda.

The following AQAPC members volunteered to review the IQAP Self-Studies listed below:

- Mathematics – V. Williams and N. Black
- Economics – N. Kozuskanich and A. Ackerman

The Self-Studies as well as the Self-Study Quality Assurance Framework Compliance Checklist will be forwarded to the reviewers.

The Acting Chair requested nominations for one faculty Senator to serve as Vice-Chair of the AQAPC:
ACCLAIMED: J. Murton

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Walters, PhD
Acting Chair, Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee

Motion 1: That Senate receive the Report of the Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee dated September 22, 2023.

Motion 2: That Senate approve the attached Biology and Chemistry IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PROGRAM UNDER REVIEW

PROGRAM	SENATE APPROVAL DATE	PREPARED BY
Biology and Chemistry	[Select Date]	Provost and Vice-President

A. SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCESS & LISTING OF PROGRAMS UNDER REVIEW

SELF-STUDY REVIEW TIMELINE	DATE
1. Self-Study Presented to AQAPC	April 22, 2022
2. Site Visit Conducted	April 17-19, 2023 (Virtually)
3. Reviewer's Report Received	April 27, 2023
4. Internal Reviewers Response Received	July 6, 2023
5. Dean's Response Received	July 6, 2023

The members of the review committee were:

- Dr. Joanna Freeland, Trent University
- Dr. Greg Thorn, University of Western Ontario

The academic programs offered by the Department which were examined as part of the review included:

- BSc Biology
- BSc Environmental Biology and Technology

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on November 27, 2018 and re-ratified by Quality Council on April 26, 2019.

B. PROGRAM STRENGTHS

The Department of Biology and Chemistry at Nipissing University will provide students with a formative undergraduate experience that prepares graduates to make significant contributions to society. Our approach to student success will focus on the mastering of fundamental biological and chemical knowledge, as well as developing practical skills through significant hands-on laboratory and field experiences. We will encourage our students to pursue active roles in the community through their vocation, and will provide opportunities for engagement at the local, national and international levels.

C. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

External Reviewers Recommendation #1: Work with the Dean and Provost offices to develop a plan for faculty renewal, including tenure-track and full-time instructors lost in recent years. Develop a three-year faculty and technologist renewal plan which complements the curriculum review and proposals for new degrees (see [2,3,4,5])

Unit's Response: We completely agree that such a plan is needed. We are committed to working on such a plan, with the department having an opportunity to express its goals for growth in specific areas. New degree proposals should be considered dependent on appropriate faculty resources.

Dean's Response: I agree with the External Reviewers and Internal Reviewers recommendation to develop a plan for faculty renewal that compliments the curriculum review. However, I note that requests for positions are subject to budgetary processes and approvals within the Faculty and the University as a whole. The current number of full-time instructors is sufficient to cover the number of labs being offered.

Provost's Response: The University is committed to working with the unit and Dean on developing a plan that meets with needs of the students and supports academic program renewal.

External Reviewers Recommendation #2: Work with the Dean and Provost offices to agree on budget support, both personnel and operational, that acknowledges the significant service teaching by Biology & Chemistry over and above the respectable number of students enrolled in Biology and Environmental Science and Technology programs. This could include a new faculty member hired primarily to support the Nursing program, but who would be housed in the Biology and Chemistry Department where they could contribute to additional programs, collaborate with other biologists, and supervise undergraduate thesis students.

Unit's Response: We agree that the service Biology provides to other programs is undervalued and not reflected adequately in budgetary allotments or faculty hiring. We would welcome the opportunity to resolve this problem.

Dean's Response: I acknowledge that the Department of Biology & Chemistry provides valuable service teaching, particularly in the Nursing programs. Much of this service teaching is provided by the full-time lab instructors in the Department. The Dean's office has been working with the Department for the last 3-years to develop a budget that accurately captures the cost of delivering services courses to the other programs. There is a transfer funds from the Faculty of Education and Professional Studies to the Faculty of Arts and Science to deliver service courses. The Deans of both Faculties have had preliminary conversations about hiring personnel to support the Nursing program. However, I note that requests for positions are subject to budgetary processes and approvals within the Faculty and the University as a whole.

Provost's Response: The University appreciates the external reviewers' recommendation to review how service teaching is budgeted and more globally understood at Nipissing. And we will undertake a review of the dependencies between faculties as part of our ongoing review of program delivery and student support.

External Reviewers Recommendation #3: Conduct a thorough departmental curriculum review that considers pathways, prerequisites, and the feasibility of offering courses to students (i.e., teaching capacity). Courses that have not been offered for three or more years, and which are unlikely to be offered in the foreseeable future, should be removed from the calendar. Each year, update a three-year course plan on the department website so that students can better plan their progression through their degree. Identify upper-year courses that would benefit from labs, and build these into the renewal plan (see [1]). If new labs are added to existing courses or new stand-alone lab courses are created, these should be developed by faculty working together with the full-time lab instructors who would put these on.

Unit's Response: We acknowledge that the department is in critical need of a curriculum review. Our goal is to conduct such a review within one calendar year of the acceptance of this report.

Dean's Response: I agree with the External Reviewers and Internal Reviewers recommendation to conduct a thorough curriculum review. I agree that the faculty members should work in collaboration with the full-time lab instructors to help develop labs that complement the lecture material. I agree that a 3-year course cycling plan should be posted on the Department website so that students can plan their progression through their degree program.

Provost's Response: On a go-forward, the University expects that curriculum review will be an integral formal part of our quality assurances processes. Moreover, the University recognizes the importance of defining 3-year course cycles and being able to share this information with students.

External Reviewers Recommendation #4: Build on departmental strengths, including excellent student experience in first- and second-year teaching, a breadth of organismal biology including plant sciences (some strength lost recently due to leaves) and zoology (lost due to recent retirement), and general, organic, and analytical chemistry (lab instructors lost to recent departures). The proposed biomedical sciences program threatens to dilute these strengths and will require significant additional hires to build a credible and successful program; we argue that this proposal should be reconsidered. Students in a biomedical science program will not be satisfied (neither in terms of their wants nor their career requirements) with the existing courses offered in Biology & Chemistry, and developing the new courses required will necessitate new hires in areas of expertise beyond those currently available in the department. In contrast, we argue that a One Health program would require fewer new hires and would build on existing strengths in the departments of Biology & Chemistry and Geography. One Health should attract students who are more interested in 'health' streams than 'ecology' streams without unduly stretching the resources of the department and its collaborative departments.

Unit's Response: We appreciate the suggestion. The department will review the current biomedical science proposal (stage one approval) and consider the alternative option of a one-health program. We will consult with our partners (Psychology and Neuroscience) on this point. Our goal is to resolve this question within one year of the acceptance of this report.

Dean's Response: I agree with the External Reviewers recommendation that the curriculum review should consider the current breadth of course offerings, including plant sciences, zoology, and chemistry. I agree that the Department does not have complement of faculty expertise to offer a Biomedical science program. A Health Science program, with support from faculty members in Psychology and other programs, is a more realistic alternative.

Provost's Response: The University looks forward to the sober reflection of the unit, as their Stage One plan for a biomedical science program does not have the support of the external reviewers. Helpfully, the reviewers have proposed an alternative direction in Health Science that will align with the expertise and aspirations of the unit.

External Reviewers Recommendation #5: Build greater course diversity for students in the program through cross-listing relevant courses already offered by other departments at Nipissing University and by joining the Ontario Universities Program in Field Biology (OUPFB) to allow students to access field courses in topic areas that Nipissing University cannot offer. The registrar's office needs to work on a version of the calendar that more clearly identifies cross-listed courses regardless of the home department.

Unit's Response: We appreciate the suggestion. We will appoint a faculty member to examine this possibility and pursue membership in the OUPFB. Our goal will be to obtain such membership within two years of the date of the acceptance of this report.

Dean's Response: I agree with the External Reviewers recommendation to cross-list appropriate courses from other programs to increase the breadth of courses available to Biology majors. There are science courses within Psychology

and Geography that would be appropriate to cross-list. Participation in the Ontario Universities Program in Field Biology would give Nipissing students access to areas outside the expertise of the current faculty members.

Provost's Response: The University agrees that degree programs should search for affinities across Arts and Science to bolster their degree offerings and to support students' navigation of the academic journey. I caution the need for cross-listing; let's not rush to an administrative solution to what is, at first, an academic question of affinity.

External Reviewers Recommendation #6: Meet with the Dean and Provost offices to reconsider whether the proposed merger of the Biology & Chemistry and Geography departments will yield substantial savings that would offset the costs in reduced attractiveness to potential students and their parents. Mergers of small departments in cognate disciplines with few faculty and few students in their programs make sense, but a merger of two moderately large (for Nipissing University) departments with substantial numbers of students in their undergraduate programs does not.

Unit's Response: We continue in our opposition to the merger of Biology and Chemistry with Geography. We agree with the reviewers that this merger does not make sense and have argued in many previous fora that it will not generate sufficient savings to justify it.

Dean's Response: I respectfully disagree with the External Reviewers and Internal Reviewers opinion on the merger. While the Departments of Biology and Chemistry, and Geography are large by Nipissing's standard, even combined they are relatively small compared to Departments at other universities in the province. Students apply to programs not Departments, so we do not anticipate the merger will impact the attractiveness of the individual programs. There are teaching and research synergies among these units, specifically around the environment (land, water, people and place), which is a central focus of our institutional strategic plan. Biology, Chemistry and Geography has developed an Environmental Science program that is currently under review by the province. This is not simply a cost saving initiative.

Provost's Response: The University is committed to coherent academic units that provide an administrative home to multiple degree programs and that ensure that students can feel a sense of belonging in their areas of study and the academic community writ large.

External Reviewers Recommendation #7: The issue of student retention is complex but needs addressing. Introduce annual student surveys to quantify some of the roots of student dissatisfaction or failure, e.g. course options. Work with the Registrar's Office to test the hypothesis that students with lower incoming high school grades are less likely to complete their degrees. Regularly liaise with student advisors for insight into why students are not completing their degree and to better understand where students who leave the program are likely to go (e.g. college, other university, workforce). Consider adding a student representative to regularly scheduled faculty meetings.

Unit's Response: We are aware of the retention problem. The suggestions here for identifying and dealing with the causes of that problem are welcome, and we would fully participate in any efforts (e.g. surveys). We would like to point out that the lack of diversity in course offerings (a direct result of lack of faculty renewal) has already been identified in the report as a problem by the students.

Dean's Response: I agree with the External Reviewers and Internal Reviewers recommendation to investigate the reason(s) for poor retention in the program. A survey of students and feedback from Academic Advising on an annual basis is a good idea. Moving forward, the Dean's office will receive the Academic Probation list by program to help identify student retention issues.

Provost's Response: The University must understand with granularity the retention and persistence profile of each degree program. Retention is the responsibility of all members of the community and we must work in concert to ensure that all students have the best experience possible throughout their studies. It is certainly not enough to recruit an incoming class only to see students opt-out or lose their passion for post-secondary education. The

University must adopt a life cycle model of recruitment -> admission -> retention -> graduation and ongoing alumni involvement.

The external reviewers suggest that a student should be a regular member of faculty meetings; it is vital that real-time student voice inform ongoing conversations. To be clear, this is not NUSU representation, but instead a student interested in a role in helping to shape the departmental conversations.

External Reviewers Recommendation #8: Work with the Research Office to identify sources of research funding that are not limited to Tri-council funding, and work with the Dean's office to negotiate a broader incorporation of research funding into workload considerations. Use faculty renewal (see [1, 2]) and reasonable teaching release in recognition of research funding success as opportunities to build a greater research culture in the department.

Unit's Response: The department welcomes any and all support from the research office or other groups designed to increase our success in attracting research funding, training undergraduate and graduate students, and building partnerships with external agencies and community groups. We do have some examples of this already occurring within our department from which to build. There are likely additional supports required (outside this department) to build the research culture at Nipissing in general.

It is puzzling that only tri-council grants are treated as research funding deserving of support (course release), when in fact there are larger grants with more administrative requirements held by faculty that are not recognized by the university. We will gladly work with the Dean to resolve this.

Our lack of any greenhouse technical support causes that faculty to underachieve in terms of research productivity.

Dean's Response: The Office of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovation and the A&S Dean's office will continue to work with faculty to expand research activity within this unit. We do value all research activity regardless of the source of funding. However, I respectfully disagree with the External Reviewers and Internal Reviewers recommendation that additional support and course release be given to develop a research culture within the Department. The Office of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovation has led efforts to develop fee-for-service contracts with external partners to support the greenhouse facility, nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, and the central analytical facility. The Office funds the operating and maintenance costs associated these and other laboratory equipment. The Office provides workshops on grant writing and circulates notices about external research funding opportunities. The faculty members need to take the lead on writing and submitting grant applications. Also, the FASBU Collective Agreement Article 28.2(f) provides the opportunity for faculty members to apply for a research intensive workload for research activity that is not supported by tri-council funding.

Provost's Response: Research is an essential part of every faculty member's contribution to Nipissing. Ensuring that all faculty contribute to a research culture that privileges original scholarship and knowledge mobilization which advances the discipline and animates teaching is a priority. All faculty need to be creative as they approach sources of funding and prospective partnerships. And, as an institution, we are committed to facilitating funding and partnerships that conform to our ethical obligations in community.

To clarify the reason why tri-agency funding is given paramountcy: All Canadian universities (in good standing) receive Research Support Fund funding which is based on a three-year rolling average of success in tri-agency research competitions. This funding is earmarked for research support, e.g., the research office staff, research software, etc. Course releases are an ineligible expense. However, the value of tri-agency funding to the university and to the researcher who receives funding through a rigorous peer-reviewed process is uncontested.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE PROVOST	RESPONSIBLE MEMBER/UNIT	PROJECTED COMPLETION
Recommendation #3: Urgent curriculum review will have implications for other recommendations especially #2, 4 and 5.	Chair and Dean	December 1, 2023
Recommendation #7: Review of retention concerns; this information should inform curriculum review and any other recommendations about program design and budget model.	Chair and Dean	November 1, 2023

E. CONFIDENTIAL COMMENTS

(This is an optional area that can be used to discuss confidential matters that need to be addressed. This section will be removed when posting the Final Assessment Report on the Quality Assurance Website)