

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, 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, 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, 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 quoted 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.