

Nipissing University
Minutes of the Academic Senate Meeting
September 12, 2025
2:30 p.m.
Room F210 & Zoom Videoconference

Members Present:

K. Wamsley (Chair), A. Graff, R. Hacquard, B. Law, N. Colborne, G. Raymer, D. Iafrate, N. Black

R. Davis, R. Gendron, A. Hatef, S. Kariuki, K. Lucas, G. McCann, P. Nosko, M. Owens, T. Smith, K. Srigley (Interim Speaker), T. Stewart, L. Thielen-Wilson, H. Zhu

A. Adler, J. Allison, C. Anyinam, S. Cairns, C. Greco, T. Horton, D. Jarvis, A. Kocoilek, A. Leblond, P. Maher, A. Nkurunziza, C. Ricci, A. Schinkel-Ivy, M. Sullivan, I. Taveres, J. Thornborrow, V. Williams

C. Irwin, R. Kasperavicius

R. Hehn

J. Martin, N. Botham

Absent With Regrets:

H. Earl, G. Phillips, S. Srigley, H. Texiera, R. Vernescu, O. Pokorny, P. Millar, F. Couchie, M. Suszter, O. Remillard

The Senate Speaker offered a Traditional Territory acknowledgement.

Adoption of the Agenda of the Senate Meeting of: September 12, 2025

Motion 1: Moved by J. Allison, seconded by R. Gendron that the agenda of the Senate meeting of September 12, 2025 be adopted.
CARRIED

Adoption of the Minutes of the Senate Meeting of: June 6, 2025

Motion 2: Moved by N. Black, seconded by V. Williams that the minutes of the Senate meeting of June 6, 2025 be adopted.
CARRIED

Reports From Other Bodies

The President provided a report. The report is appended to the minutes.

The Provost and Vice-President Academic (PVPA) provided a report. The report is appended to the minutes.

The Vice-President, Finance and Administration (VPFA) provided an oral report and began by expressing appreciation to all departments for contributing to a successful fall startup. She highlighted recent infrastructure developments, including the renovations to the front entrance and updates to classrooms across campus.

The VPFA advised that she will be providing a budget update to the Audit and Finance Committee on Monday, noting that the fiscal year ended very close to projections, with the current budget tracking on target, aside from a few minor variances. She also mentioned that the institution is hopeful to receive additional grant funding, particularly in support of Nursing and Teacher Education.

The Nipissing University Alumni Advisory Board (NUAAB) provided a report. The report is appended to the minutes.

The Nipissing University Student Union (NUSU) provided a report. The report is appended to the minutes.

Question Period

A question was raised regarding the University's current relationship with the government, asking whether there has been any pushback and how the relationship is being maintained.

The President emphasized the need to maintain a constructive relationship with the government, noting that while some pushback exists, universities are deliberative institutions that make thoughtful decisions. He reaffirmed strong support for the bicameral governance model, underscoring the roles of Senates in academic matters and Boards in fiduciary oversight. The University has made its best efforts in this area, but no specific feedback or direction has been received from the government to date.

In response to a request for further details on academic misconduct incidences, including those involving artificial intelligence (AI), the Registrar advised that the Registrar's Office is currently finalizing a new workflow process. Further information and a detailed report on academic misconduct cases from the previous year will be included in the October Senate agenda. Concerns were raised regarding low student response rates to course evaluations and the effectiveness of the current online tool. The TLC Chair acknowledged the low participation (around 5%) and emphasized the committee's intent to prioritize improved communication with students and faculty. Integration with Blackboard remains a focus, though concerns about privacy and server control were noted.

The University Secretary clarified that all data must remain on Canadian servers in accordance with privacy laws.

Reverting to paper evaluations was discussed. The committee reviewed data from the pilot project and found the results consistent with sector norms. The TLC is confident in the five evaluation questions currently used, which were selected after consulting external sources and approved by Senate in 2023.

Questions were raised about the usefulness of the data collected and the lack of feedback to students about how their input is used. The TLC Chair confirmed that ongoing evaluation of the tool is in the committee's workplan and invited further input, including a possible motion at the October Senate meeting.

In follow-up to the request for an update on the Director of Teaching and Learning search, the Provost confirmed that an offer has been extended, and a response is pending.

A concern was raised that the \$133,000 allocation to the Faculty of Arts & Science, less than half a percent of the overall budget and a third of its previous level, is insufficient to support academic programming and student experience. It was noted that only 3 of 7 tenure-track Biology positions are currently filled, raising sustainability concerns.

In response, the VPFA emphasized that the Integrated Budget and Planning Committee operates through consultation. The Provost clarified that the \$133,000 figure does not reflect the full operating budget for A&S, as it excludes staffing costs. She, as well as the Dean of A&S, would be happy to meet to discuss further.

A request was made for an update on concerns raised at the January Senate meeting regarding the absence of a formal policy for program closures. The Provost advised that the AQAPC faculty working group has met, with another meeting scheduled, and will provide an update at the October Senate meeting.

In follow up to a request for further details from the Provost's Report regarding review of the EAF Implementation - Governance Recommendations, the Provost advised that the Senate Executive and By-laws & Elections Committees have been identified as best positioned to carry out the review, aiming to align Senate practices with the recommendations and, where necessary, with the Board. There is no set timeline; the process will unfold over the year. It was also noted that the Board is conducting a similar review. In response to a question about the Joint Committee's involvement, the Provost clarified that its role is better suited to resolving disputes as the scope of the two bodies is different.

The Interim Speaker welcomed feedback and confirmed the first meeting will focus on planning the approach.

In response to a question about Bill 33 and increased provincial oversight of education, the President confirmed ongoing discussions and expressed strong opposition to government involvement in admissions, student fees, and scholarships.

A question was raised regarding the academic home of the new Bachelor of Community Planning program. The Provost confirmed that the program will be housed in the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Further clarification was requested about the absence of an academic writing requirement or reference to the ACAD program in the curriculum. The Provost advised that, upon mapping the prescribed courses to the university's degree-level expectations, it was determined that the learning outcomes, including writing skills, are addressed through other courses within the program.

A concern was expressed about whether this approach circumvents a previous Senate motion to remove ACAD courses from the Faculty of Arts and Science without identifying a replacement, potentially undermining the intent of that decision. The Dean of Arts and Science responded that the learning expectations are still being met through alternative courses and pathways, as reflected in the program's curriculum mapping.

Reports of Standing Committees and Faculty or University Councils**Senate Executive Committee**

- Motion 3: Moved by K. Wamsley, seconded by N. Colborne that the Report of the Senate Executive Committee dated June 26, 2025 be received.
CARRIED
- Motion 4: Moved by K. Wamsley, seconded N. Colborne that Senate receive the Report of the Senate Executive Committee dated September 4, 2025, which includes for information:
- a) the 2025-26 Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee (AQAPC) Work Plan
 - b) the 2025-26 Honorary Degrees Committee Work Plan
- CARRIED

Academic Curriculum Committee

- Motion 5: Moved by A. Graff, seconded by N. Black that the Report of the Academic Curriculum Committee dated June 4, 2025 be received.
CARRIED
- Motion 6: Moved by A. Graff, seconded by D. Iafrate that Senate approve, for the purposes of publishing the University's Academic Calendar, the Academic Curriculum Committee (ACC) may accept motions for the upcoming academic year up until December 1. Any submissions to the ACC after this date will not take effect until the subsequent academic year.
CARRIED

Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee (AQAPC)

- Motion 7: Moved by A. Graff, seconded by N. Black that the Report of the Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee dated June 20, 2025 be received.
CARRIED
- Motion 8: Moved by A. Graff, seconded by N. Colborne that Senate receive the Report of the Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee dated August 22, 2025, which includes for information:
- a) the Biology and Chemistry (BSc Biology, BSc Environmental Biology and Technology) IQAP Two (2) Year Post Cyclical Program Review Monitoring Report
 - b) the Bachelor of Social Work IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan (FAR/IP)
 - c) the Bachelor of Community Planning New Undergraduate Program Proposal for information
- CARRIED
- Motion 9: Moved by A. Graff, seconded by M. Owens that Senate receive the attached Annual Report of the Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee dated August 29, 2025.
CARRIED

Teaching and Learning Committee

- Motion 10: Moved by G. Raymer, seconded by V. Williams that the Report of the Teaching and Learning Committee dated April 28, 2025 be received.
CARRIED
- Motion 11: Moved by G. Raymer, seconded by M. Sullivan that Senate receive the Report of the Teaching and Learning Committee dated July 2, 2025.
CARRIED
- Motion 12: Moved by G. Raymer, seconded by M. Sullivan that Senate remove the survey item ("I would recommend this course to other students") from the list of optional questions which instructors may choose from in the Student Course Experience Survey.
CARRIED
- Motion 13: Moved by G. Raymer, seconded by M. Sullivan that Senate approve the Student Course Experience Survey to move out of 'pilot' mode for the start of the Fall 2025 semester.
CARRIED

In response to a question regarding the use of data collected during the Student Course Experience Survey (SCES) pilot, Senator Raymer advised that the use of such data is governed by the provisions outlined in the Collective Agreement. He also noted that in May 2024, the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) reviewed a report on the SCES. Based on this review, the TLC was satisfied that the survey tool was functioning effectively, and that relevant data had been successfully collected. As a result, the SCES continued in pilot mode for the 2024–25 academic year. It was also noted that information related to the survey had been communicated to faculty by Faculty and Administrative Support Services (FASS). The PVPA added that the Provost's Office will inform FASS of any changes to the survey process going forward.

- Motion 14: Moved by G. Raymer, seconded by M. Owens that Senate receive the Annual Report of the Teaching and Learning Committee dated August 29, 2025.
CARRIED

Elections

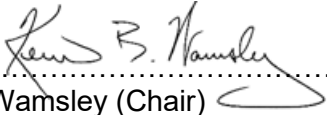
The following positions required elections for terms commencing July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2028:

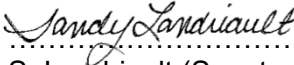
- One (1) faculty Senate representative to serve on the Joint Committee of the Board and Senate on Governance
- Two (2) faculty Senate representatives to serve on the Senate Budget Advisory Committee
- One (1) faculty Senate representative to serve as Deputy Speaker of Senate

No nominations were received for any of the above positions. The Interim Speaker emphasized the importance of faculty representation on Senate and on Senate Standing Committees and encouraged Senators to consider putting their names forward for these roles. The elections will be included in the October 24, 2025 Senate meeting agenda.

Adjournment

Senate was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.


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K. Wamsley (Chair)


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

12 September 2025

President's Senate Report

Good afternoon Senators, welcome to the 2025-26 academic year, which we started off in a good way with our 20th annual pow wow. I am very pleased to be entering my 5th year as President. I want to thank you all for your work and ongoing contributions which made 2024-25 a very successful year for Nipissing University. In today's report, I will discuss our ongoing relationship with the provincial government, provide updates on some of our ongoing reviews and processes, and highlight some of the important upcoming events and activities.

With respect to long term sustainability, the government is examining the funding model directly. They have said at this point that they are not looking at tuition. I did have a few meetings with them over the summer, but we do not have an inclination on what directions they are leaning. We also had meetings with them over the summer on the issue of governance. They see how nimble the college system is in its decision-making and its response to market, and they perceive the university as operating at a much slower pace and they are looking for ways to influence change at universities. We have been unequivocal in our support for the bicameral model of governance – it can always be improved, and we will be improving it, but we are not in need of government assistance in university governance. We unanimously supported the role of University Senates and their capacities for quality assurance and the governance of academic issues, and we supported the work of our Boards in making good decisions within their fiduciary responsibilities. Again, we have no indication of the directions they will be taking or considering at this point.

On the issue of our Board and Senate governance and the recent report on governance, we will be considering the recommendations and consulting on these issues. Our Senate governance work will be co-led by our Interim Senate Speaker, Dr. Katrina Srigley, and our Provost, Dr. Ann-Barbara Graff. Our Board governance work will be co-led by me and by our Board Secretary, Abby Blaszczyk. On the issues of our efficiencies review, we will be working through the NOUS recommendations as our budgets permit in order to improve university operations. These exercises will be situated within a full campus policy review over the next year. We will be conducting a full policy review with a mind towards ensuring consistency of language, due process, and clarity. All to be approved in due course by the appropriate authorities.

Our outdoor classroom contractor has been selected and has been ready to proceed but we are waiting on timber delivery. More updates to come as construction proceeds.

Homecoming is happening next weekend – please come out to support our student athletes.

Many of us will be attending the universities fair in Toronto in two weeks' time, and our Fall Open House will be happening on Saturday, October 25.

Provost's Report to Senate

September 12, 2025

Welcome and welcome back to new and returning staff, students and faculty. The upcoming academic year promises to be exciting and full of opportunities. Please join me in recognizing new staff and faculty. At this time, I am able to announce the following new appointments:

Academic Leadership and Administration

Sarah Batley - Director, Athletics

Patty Chabbert, Director, Office of Indigenous Initiatives

Robb Fenton - Manager, Intercollegiate Sports

Dr. Kirsten Ferguson, Interim Associate Dean, Education,

Scott Fitzgerald, Program Manager, School of Nursing

Dr. Ann Fox, Interim Associate Dean, Business

Lindsay Sullivan, Manager, Access and Belonging

Emma Summilas, Manager, Projects and Planning, Provost's Office

Director of Teaching and Learning, in progress

Faculty

Dr. Kristen Beck, Tenure-Track, Biology, Chemistry, Geography and Geology

Dr. Hannah Chestnutt, Tenure-Track, Schulich School of Education (Curriculum and Assessment)

Dr. Christine Lalonde, Tenure-Track, CHFS/PSYC

Dr. Alyssa Leblond, Tenure-Track, School of Criminal Justice

Dr. Abhijeet Singh, Tenure-Track, School of Business (Administration/Management)

Emily Sprowls, Tenure-Track, Schulich School of Education (Environmental Science)

Ines Ferreira Dias Tavares, Tenure-Track, School of Criminal Justice

Limited Term Appointments

Dr. Rosa Azami - Faculty of Arts and Science, Computer Science

Dr. Elizabeth Patrick – Faculty of Education & Professional Studies, School of Social Work

Dr. Jonathan Pitt - Faculty of Arts and Science, Indigenous Studies

Dr. Marc Plamondon – Faculty of Arts and Science, English Studies

Chris Stevens – Faculty of Education & Professional Studies, School of Nursing

Postdoctoral Researchers

Dr. Fatemeh Ameli until December 31, 2025 (Dr. David Zarifa)

Dr. Carmen Culotta until March 31, 2027 (Dr. Brenda Bruner)

Dr. Erwin Racasa until August 31, 2026 (Dr. Colin McCarter)

Dr. Meredith Schertzinger until December 31, 2025 (Dr. Mark Bruner)

Over this academic year, we will have the opportunity to work together to respond to the audits commissioned by the Province on efficiency and governance. What was heartening about the efficiency audit was that it directed our collective attention to much of the work detailed in APOP. For the governance audit, we have been asked to reflect on how to make our bicameral system more demonstrably effective. The deputy speaker, Dr. Katrina Srigley, will co-chair the governance audit response with me. The executive committee of Senate along with the by-laws committee will be charged with the review of 7 recommendations (attached).

As well, the Academic Program Reviews have been completed. I thank every program for taking the process seriously and for providing us with an entrée into a conversation about program health. The Academic Program Reviews and decanal responses will go to AQAPC and to Senate this Fall.

We await the final report from the Quality Council on Nipissing University's regular cycle quality assurance audit completed in March 2025.

Enrollment Projections 2025-26 at September 5, 2025

As you know, enrollment is dynamic over this part of the term. We will report firm numbers on November 1; however, early enrollment data suggests we are maintaining domestic enrollment and have not yet recovered our international enrollment from its peak.

Head Count:

Domestic - 6170 vs. 6107 (total for 24/25)

International - 167 vs. 458 (total for 24/25)

FFTE:

Domestic - 4607.65 vs. 4523.34 (total for 24/25)

International - 107.53 vs. 396.37 (total for 24/25)

The BEd, Nursing and CHFS were the only programs that met SEM recruitment targets this year. There has been a lot of activity over the summer in support of recruitment activities: a new CRM has been implemented which will allow for better lead collection and support through admission; a new future students website is in development; and, the university's website is being migrated to Drupal 11 from Drupal 8 which along with WordPress will allow for better content management.

20th Annual Welcome Powwow

Thank you to all members of the Nipissing University community who attended the powwow today. Participation is a meaningful way to welcome students back to campus, honour Indigenous culture, traditions, and community, and demonstrate your commitment to Reconciliation in action.

EAF Implementation – Governance Recommendations

1. Develop Governance Training & Onboarding Programs

- **Develop Training Programs:** Create comprehensive training modules covering the shared governance system, roles, duties, and expectations of Board and Senate members. Prepare workplan for the development of training modules (from orientation, onboarding, through active service, and exit) with expectation that it is delivered and maintained by Secretariat.
- **Training Opportunities:** Design a schedule for mandatory and optional training sessions, including robust financial training for all Board Members and Senate Budget Advisory Committee members. Open to all senators. Aligned to TOR of Senate governance committee.
- **Assess & Maintain Skills Matrix:** Regularly define, evaluate and refine the Skills Matrix to ensure appropriate representation on governing bodies and committees. Update the Matrix. Aligned to TOR of Senate governance committee.

2. Establish Clear Committee Frameworks and Conduct Governance Evaluation

- **Governance Template Development:** Create a standardized committee template for both the Board of Governors and Senate that includes purpose, authority areas, membership and required skills, and specific responsibilities within authority areas.
- **Annual Work Plan Implementation:** Develop an annual work plan for each committee that aligns with the Terms of Reference. Establish a reporting mechanism for committees to report on progress to the Board and Senate at the end of each governing year.
- **Committee Restructuring and Governance Alignment:** Initiate a formal review of the Board and Senate committee structure and adjust committee names and responsibilities in accordance with the *External Review of University Governance for Nipissing University*.
- **Reduce the number of Senate meetings to no more than 9**

3. Adopt a University-wide policy framework

- **Develop a Policy of Policies:** Direct the Secretariat to develop a University-wide policy framework including template, timelines, proliferation protocol, and a central repository of policies.

4. Develop a Senate Evaluation System

- **Reframe Senate's Role and Responsibilities:** Facilitate a strategic planning session to redefine the Senate's role as a governing body responsible for educational policy oversight. Incorporate this governance perspective into Senate orientation materials and ongoing professional development.
- **Senate Evaluation System:** Design and implement a Senate self-evaluation tool, including individual senator contributions, committee effectiveness, and overall Senate performance. Evaluations should be conducted annually, with results used to inform improvements in governance and meeting effectiveness. The Evaluation should be reviewed and refined often based on feedback and evolving governance needs.

5. Clarify Labour Relations & Senate Governance

- **Clarify Senate's Governance Role:** Consider a by-law amendment to explicitly state that Senate's focus is on governance, not labour relations. The distinction between governance and labour relations should be communicated broadly through training and orientation materials.
- **Address Conflicts of Interest in Membership:** Explore a mechanism to preclude officers or leaders of university labour associations (e.g. NUFA Executives) from serving on the Senate or the Board of Governors.
- **Reform Pre-Senate Caucus Practices:** Discontinue or reconceive current Pre-Senate Caucus practices that exclude non-faculty Senators. Develop an inclusive, educational forum open to all Senators for pre-meeting briefings or Q&A sessions. Assign a facilitator or governance officer to support Senators in understanding complex materials in advance.
- **Encourage Advance Submissions:** Establish a formal process for submitting questions or motions in advance of Senate meetings. Promote this practice through reminders in meeting notices and orientation materials.

- **Training and Evaluation:** As noted above, incorporate governance training into Senate onboarding, including roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest, and the difference between governance and labour relations.

6. Seek clarity on the Role of Senate Officers

- **Legal and Governance Clarification:** Seek a legal opinion on the Senate By-Law provision that limits the President's role as Chair of Senate and determine if the provision is valid under The Act. If invalid, revise the by-law to reflect the President's role as Chair and redefine the Speaker's role accordingly.
- **Define the Role of the Secretary of Senate:** Differentiate the elected Secretary of Senate which exists in the Act/bylaws from the Secretariat staff. Assign the Secretary of Senate as Chair of a Committee responsible for Senate By-Laws and governance or replace with governance professional.
- **Model Exploration and Common Practices:** Examine structures like Dalhousie University and consider adapting elements such as academic quality committee reporting through vice-chairs. Incorporate best practices into Nipissing's Senate governance framework.

7. Review and Design the Secretariat Model

- **Design a Secretariat Model:** The model should be independent and serve both the Board and Senate and should be functionally aligned with best practice in university governance.
- **Governance Officer Recruitment:** Develop a job description and hiring plan for a Governance Officer to support the Secretariat Office.
- **Clarify Reporting Relationships:** Establish a dual reporting structure for the University Secretary with an administrative reporting relationship to the President and a dotted-line reporting relationship to the Board Chair and the Sr. Senate leader.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Allocate a dedicated training budget for Secretariat staff.
- **Standardize Governance Documentation:** Create standardized templates for meeting minutes, approvals and signing processes. A consistent minuting practice should be implemented across all governance bodies with an accessible digital repository for documents and records. Senate agendas should also be reordered to prioritize substantive work and motions at the beginning of meetings and procedural

items later in the agenda. An omnibus consent agenda should also be introduced for routine matters.

- **Establish a Short-term Secretariat Resource:** Contract a governance expert to support policy and by-law drafting. Use this resource to initiate structural reforms and build internal capacity.
- **Focus on Governance Health:** Define the Secretariat's core mission as supporting the health and effectiveness of the University's governance system.



Nipissing University Alumni Advisory Board report to Academic Senate September 2025

Welcome Back, Lakers!

The Nipissing University Alumni Advisory Board is thrilled to welcome students and faculty back for the fall semester! We hope this year brings exciting opportunities for learning, discovery, and connection. As you engage in your studies, teaching, and campus life, know that the Alumni community is here to support you and to celebrate your accomplishments now and in the future.

Homecoming 2025

Homecoming Weekend is right around the corner! Join us September 19-20 as we welcome students, alumni, staff, faculty, and community members for a vibrant weekend of events. From gallery hops to sports games to opportunities to connect, there's something for everyone. Visit events.nipissingu.ca/homecoming for details and to register today!

NU Perks Platform

Attention Nipissing Alumni – over 650 Lakers are already enjoying the benefits of the NU Perks App! This platform is your one-stop shop for exclusive perks, the latest University news, event updates, and contests.

Join the community today at nuperks.ca!

NUSU Academic Senate Report: September 2025

Welcome to the 2025–2026 Academic Year

On behalf of NUSU, we'd like to extend a warm welcome to all students, staff, and faculty as we begin a new academic year. September is always an exciting time on campus, filled with fresh energy, new opportunities, and the return of our vibrant student community. We're looking forward to a year of connection, growth, and celebration. We're excited to continue working alongside you to make this a memorable and engaging year for Lakers.

Transition to Campus Trust – Effective September 1, 2025

As of September 1st, NUSU has officially transitioned from WeSpeak to Campus Trust as the new provider for the student health and dental plan. Students may opt out or add dependents (spouse/children) between September 1st and September 22nd. We are happy for this change, as it both saves students money and enhances access to essential services.

Bay Bistro Closure

As of September 1st, the Bay Bistro has officially closed. While the restaurant will no longer operate, NUSU will continue to provide catering and food production for events and programming. Additionally, we will be continuing bar nights, projected at one per month, to maintain community and social opportunities for students.

Conferences & Development

Over the summer, NUSU Executives and staff attended several professional development conferences, including:

- COCA (Canadian Organization of Campus Activities) Conference
- Ontario Skills Development Symposium
- AMICCUS-C Conference
- PBAS (Prudent Benefits Administration Services) for the new health plan

These opportunities allowed us to learn from student unions across the country, gain insights into student engagement, governance, and services, and return with fresh ideas to implement here.

OWLS Week 2025

Planning is in its final stages for OWLS Week, and we are excited to welcome our new students to campus. This week will be filled with events, programming, and opportunities for students to build connections and feel at home in the Nipissing community.

Homecoming 2025

We are also looking forward to celebrating Homecoming this fall. NUSU will be hosting some activities at the Student Centre and participating in campus-wide HOCO events. This is always a great opportunity to celebrate school spirit, reconnect with alumni, and show our Lakers pride.