

SENATE
Approved Minutes of the Meeting held on
Monday, April 14 2025 at 3:00 p.m.
Remote Link via Microsoft Teams

The Senate met in regular session on April 14, 2025

- Present** L. Spiteri (Chair), R. Affoo, T. Akay, D. Anderson, J. Andrews, S. Asah, S. Berge, E. Black, J. Blustein, K. Brooks, C. Brown, H. Bruce, M. Cada, V. Chappe, W. Costen, B. Davis, P. Doyle-Bedwell, L. DuBois, D. Dutton, R. Ezekiel, M. Fournier, M. Goudreault, D. Grantham, D. Groulx, S. Harding, J. Haslam, B. Heung, G. Ilie, A. Iulianella, D. Jakeman, M. Kienast, N. Kiepek, Y. Kotlyarova, S. Kou-Giesbrecht, W. Lahey, M. Leonard, C. Macdonald, A. Maleki, P. Marignani, L. McHugh-Russell, C. McLarney, R. Meagher, B. Merritt, P.L. Michaud, T. Michelot, F. Naghibi, J. Newhook, M. Pacurar, Y.J. Pan, A. Parasram, T. Perrot, L. Phillmore, T. Richard, A. Saif, R. Sampangi, S. Seth, M. Sharaput, D. Silvio, M. Smit, M. Vandenburg, D. Westwood, E. Yiridoe, R. Zaiotti.
- Regrets** M. Bailey, G. Gagnon, M. Knakriah, A. Rau-Chaplin, K. Rosen, M. Sutherland-Allan, M.A. Ulku, H. Weigand.
- Absent** O. Akinkugbe, E. Arora, A. Bernard, D. Black, S. Chitnis, N. Cromwell-Tesfazoin, N. d’Entremont, Y. El Hiani, N. Ezzeddine, C. Goldberg, J. Goyal, J. Hann, A. Kermanshahi-pour, O. Olatunde.
- Guests** Quenta Adams (Co-Chair, Dalhousie Accessibility Advisory Committee), Jennifer Bain (Chair of the SAPRC Research Sub-Committee and Associate Vice-President Research), John Hope (General Counsel & University Secretary), Laura Hynes Jenkins (Associate Vice President, Government Relations), Orla McDevitt (Co-Chair, Dalhousie Accessibility Advisory Committee), Shelly McKibbon (Senate Nominating Committee Chair & University Libraries), Eva Mroczek (Simon and Riva Spatz Chair in Jewish Studies and Associate Professor, Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences), Judith Ng’ethe (Associate Secretary of Senate), Nakita Strowbridge (Senate Coordinator)

The Dalhousie University Senate acknowledges that we are in Mi’kma’ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq People and pays respect to the Indigenous knowledges held by the Mi’kmaq People, and to the wisdom of their Elders past and present. The Mi’kmaq People signed Peace and Friendship Treaties with the Crown, and section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights. We are all Treaty people.

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi’kma’ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was **approved subject** to the removal of item 2.1 – Approval of Draft Minutes of March 24, 2025 Senate Meeting – from the agenda.

2. Consent Agenda

There were no items on the consent agenda.

3. Matters Arising from March 24, 2025 Meeting

There were no matters arising.

4. Steps to Make Diversity and Inclusion a Reality

Senator Spiteri invited Quenta Adams and Orla McDevitt to give a progress report on the Dalhousie Accessibility Plan 2025-28, by which Dalhousie was committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment.

Highlights of the Accessibility Plan update included:

- An updated plan was due to the Province by April 1, 2025 that should include progress made, priority areas and actions, and monitoring and evaluation.
- Priority areas and actions under the Accessibility Plan were in the six areas of the built environment; teaching, learning and research; goods and services; information and communication; transportation; and employment.
- Progress had been made in the areas of awareness, capacity building, policy, programming, service, and employment.
- Short and long-term priorities included the conclusion of the ongoing review of the Student Accommodation Policy and the development of the Accessible Course Design policy, and commencing on a fuller assessment plan.

In response to a query about the use of microphones in classrooms, it was recommended that the audiovisual unit of the specific Faculty be approached for assistance.

FOR APPROVAL

5. Senate Academic Programs and Research Committee (SAPRC) Proposal for a new Dalhousie Research Centre – Centre for Jewish Studies

Senator Seth presented this item on behalf of the Senate Academic Programs and Research Committee (SAPRC).

The meeting was informed that the proposed centre would be housed within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and was part of a broader strategy for Jewish studies at Dalhousie.

It was reported that the SAPRC Research Sub-Committee (RSC) reviewed the proposal at its meeting held on February 11, 2025 and recommended it to SAPRC for consideration. SAPRC considered the proposal at its March 31, 2025 meeting and recommended it to Senate for approval.

E. Mroczek and J. Bain responded to questions of clarification.

Moved by Senator Seth on behalf of the Senate Academic Programs and Research Committee:

THAT Senate approve the creation of the Centre for Jewish Studies, as a Dalhousie research centre, as presented, and recommend it to the Board of Governors for further approval.

The motion **CARRIED**.

6. Appointment of Interim Vice-Chair of Senate (Academic Programs) (Term: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027)

S. McKibbon presented this item on behalf of the Senate Nominating Committee (SNC).

The meeting was informed that there would be a vacancy in the position of Vice-Chair of Senate (Academic Programs) with effect from July 1, 2025 and that per the Senate Constitution, when a Senate officer position became vacant before the term was completed, SNC recommended a temporary replacement for the remainder of the current term from among the Senate Officers or Academic Unit Senators.

It was reported that SNC had recommended that Jamie Blustein, Academic Unit Senator from the Faculty of Computer Science, be appointed as the Interim Vice-chair of Senate (Academic Programs) for the term July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027.

Senator Blustein left the meeting.

Moved by S. McKibbon on behalf of the Senate Nominating Committee:

THAT Senate appoint Jamie Blustein as the Interim Vice Chair of Senate (Academic Programs) for the term July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027.

The motion **CARRIED**.

Senator Spiteri thanked Senator Blustein for stepping into the position.

A recommendation was made that consideration be given to limiting the length of interim appointments when the Senate Constitution was next reviewed.

FOR DISCUSSION

7. Presentation on Student Retention Approach/Efforts

Senator Ezekiel, in his capacity as Vice-Provost Student Affairs, gave a presentation entitled *Student Success and Retention at Dalhousie*.

The meeting was informed that work has been done to engage in advanced data analytics to look at the factors that affected student retention at Dalhousie and identify priority areas at the Institutional and local level. Positive and negative factors on retention had been identified.

It was reported that a retention study conducted in 2015 on the retention rates at Dalhousie found that the undergraduate retention rate from 2005-2013 was 82.5%, with academic preparation, sociodemographic, and academic post-entry factors being the leading predictors associated with a student leaving Dalhousie. This was a low rate compared to U15 peers. A variety of initiatives and practices were put in place thereafter, and Dalhousie had seen an increase in retention, with the 2023 retention rate being 87.5%.

It was also reported that work needed to be done to support retention at every level. This would include academic support and skill development, a sense of belonging and student wellbeing, and academic engagement.

Senator Ezekiel responded to questions of clarification, noting that while high school GPA had an effect on retention levels, fall term GPA had a more significant effect when looking at the 1-2 year retention rate.

It was also clarified that the retention rates data related to the students staying at Dalhousie at large, so if a student changed programs within Dalhousie, it would count as retention and not loss. The data also did not differentiate for students leaving programs early for professional school or going from Co-op straight to the workforce before completing a four-year undergraduate degree.

It was confirmed that when looking at student sociodemographic differences as a factor for retention, whether a student was of African Nova Scotia descent or Indigenous descent had been taken into account.

While responding to a query regarding the sense of belonging, it was clarified that the data did not currently look at the ratio of students who learned online versus in person.

8. Reports

8.1. Chair of Senate's Report

It was noted that the Chair of Senate's report was circulated in writing with the meeting package and included updates on recent work undertaken by the Senate Planning and Governance Committee (SPGC) and SAPRC.

Senators were informed that information was also provided in the meeting package, including a report on the review of the Beatrice Hunter Cancer Research Institute (BCHRI), a suspension of admission to the MSc Occupational Science program, and a concept paper for a proposed new program (Master of Social Work - Mi'kmaw Program).

8.2. President's Report

It was noted that the President's report was circulated in writing with the meeting package and included a memo on the conclusion of the *Third Century Promise* strategic plan.

Senator Brooks highlighted the new Nova Scotia Engagement Days initiative. Senators were informed of the intention to visit high schools, prospective students, and the mayors in twenty-four Nova Scotia cities and towns over the next three years, to strengthen relationships, spark new partnerships, and better align Dalhousie's academic mission with regional priorities and opportunities for engagement. Senators were encouraged to reach out with prospective engagement sites.

Senators were also reminded of the upcoming Dalhousie Engagement Day on May 2, 2025 and encouraged to register for the series of consultation sessions that would be held.

8.3. Questions for Reports

There were no questions for the reports.

9. Question Period

There were no questions.

10. In-Camera Session

The meeting moved to a brief in-camera session.

11. Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.