

MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY
MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

June 29, 2020, 10:30 a.m.
via Microsoft Teams

Present via Remote Connection: F. Antonelli, K. Bell, P. Berry, L. Bidder, JP. Boudreau (Chair) A. Beverley, F. Black, C. Brett (Secretary), C. Burke, A. Cannon, A. Cockshutt, M. Cormier, J. Devine, E. Edson, B. Evans, A. Fancy, N. Farooqi, J. Ferguson, C. Forstall, A. Grant, L-D, Hamilton, M. Hamilton, K. Hele, D. Hornidge, R. Inglis, C. Ionescu, G. Jollymore, D. Keeping, L. Kern, D. Lieske, M. Litvak, K. Meade, R. Moser, J. Mullen, A. Nurse, J. Ollerhead (Vice-Chair), G. Ouellette, C. Roberts, N. Robinson, S. Runge, V. St. Pierre, E. Stregger, S. Tobin, J. Tomes, C. VanBeselaere, N. Vogan, A. Whiteway

Regrets: J. Dryden, J. Holton, J. Rogers

Observers: A. Comfort, D. Fleming, J. Hennessy, C. Milner, K. Morse V. Narayana, C. O'Neal, L. Pearse, R. Polegato, F. Turner

01.06.29 Land Acknowledgement

JP. Boudreau read the land acknowledgement and challenged Senators to be ever respectful of indigenous ways of seeing, doing, relating, and knowing.

02.06.29 Approval of the Agenda

Motion (A. Cockshutt/A. Nurse): that Senate adopt the Agenda as circulated.

Motion Carried

03.06.29 Approval of the Senate Minutes of May 21, 2020

Motion (N. Farooqi/A. Nurse): that Senate adopt the Minutes of the meeting of May 21, 2020.

Motion Carried

04.06.29 Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising.

05.06.29 Report from the Chair

JP. Boudreau wished everyone well and welcomed the encouraging news about COVID-19 in the region.

The President informed Senate that the University Budget, which is usually passed in May, will be developed in the Fall. In the meantime, a six-month expenditure budget will be in effect. He noted that there are some encouraging trends in enrollment, but that it seems likely that enrollment will be lower than in previous years. Most projections show a significant budget

deficit. To mitigate this deficit, there have been layoffs. JP. Boudreau assured Senate that these layoffs were not done lightly and that collective agreements were respected.

JP. Boudreau welcomed the incoming Provost, Dr. Jeff Hennessy, to the meeting and introduced him to Senate. The President informed Senate that Dr. Andrew Nurse has stepped down as Dean of Arts, but will continue as the Purdy Crawford Professor of Teaching and Learning. He thanked Dr. Nurse for his work as the Dean. A search for an interim Dean of Arts is underway.

The President thanked J. Ollerhead for his four years of service as Provost, a period that ushered in new programs, and required navigating a pandemic. Senate echoed that thanks with applause.

JP. Boudreau announced a Presidential Task Force on Cultural Identity and Inclusion. He asked for suggestions for members of the task force.

R. Inglis provided information on the six-month expenditure budget. He noted that it includes a 4.5% increase in tuition fees for Canadian students, a 2% increase in tuition fees for international students, and a modest decreasing in dining fees. Six-month departmental expenditures have been approved. A full budget will be worked out in the Fall. At that time, more information will be known about tuition revenues and COVID-related costs. R. Inglis noted that he expects deficits in both the operating and ancillary budgets.

M. Litvak asked about the recent history of the ancillary budget. R. Inglis noted that residence operations have operated at break-even, while the bookstore has had small losses in recent years. He noted that the residences pay a share of the university's expenses for procurement, facilities, and other things.

M. Litvak wondered whether the recent layoffs have sent a signal that the University is in trouble. He worried that this would have negative impacts on donations, recruitment, or government good will. R. Inglis said he would not speculate about this. JP. Boudreau added that he would follow up with University Advancement on the matter.

R. Moser asked when departments would be informed of their spending allocations under the six-month spending budget. R. Inglis answered that the Budget Manager, Chris Milner, is working on it, but that a release date is not yet known.

F. Black asked whether there will be further layoffs. JP. Boudreau answered that no further layoffs are planned.

K. Bell asked how the university reconciles the layoff of the Black Student Advisor and Diversity Educator with the Task Force on Cultural Identity and Inclusion. K. Meade responded that the Black Student Advisor and Diversity Educator was not laid off, but was on a sessional contract. That position will be re-filled. F. Black asked whether a sessional contract is sufficient, given student needs in the summer. K. Meade added that there are other supports available at the moment.

06.06.29 Changes to the Academic Calendar for Fall 2020

Motion (Ollerhead/Burke): that the Fall 2020 Study Break (9-13 November) be eliminated for the Fall 2020 term and that all dates related specifically to the academic term (not dates related to meetings or holidays) after the break be moved earlier by one week. Thus the See attached revised Calendar of Events 2020-2021 will read as in the Recommended version in supporting document.

Motion Carried (8 nays)

The supporting document is appended to these minutes.

J. Ollerhead noted that concerns over student mental health were taken into consideration when revising the Calendar of Events, but that concerns over COVID-19 weighed heavily in the recommendation. Senators were sent a document outlining mental health supports (appended to these minutes). He noted that the proposed schedule strikes a balance between these concerns.

C. Burke and M. Cormier reported that students, in general, do not support the elimination of the Fall Break. Approximately 60% of 200 respondents in a student survey opposed the motion. M. Cormier read several written responses by students citing the Fall Break as necessary catch-up time. S. Tobin remarked that informal polling of students gave similar results.

V. St. Pierre asked about the date for students to move into residences. K. Meade answered that students will be sent information about moving, including how and when to do so while respecting isolation requirements. Students will also be given information about physical distancing, dining, and other safety measures.

D. Lieske agreed with student concerns about needing a break. He added that it is very difficult to control student movement, with or without a Fall break. He argued that it is important to have some familiar items in these changing times, including the structure of the term.

M. Hamilton noted that some MWF classes will meet on three consecutive days at the end of term, which affects how material is sequenced.

G. Ouellette remarked that other Atlantic Canadian universities have cancelled their Fall breaks. JP. Boudreau said that Bishop's University has also done so.

A. Cockshutt noted that a second wave of COVID-19 may close border again.

K. Meade and A. Comfort emphasized that the Meighen Centre is preparing for student needs. A. Comfort asked faculty recognize that students may need to be absent from classes more often or may need down time throughout the term. JP. Boudreau and F. Black called for flexibility in course delivery. F. Black recommended making course material available early so that students can devise flexible work schedules.

V. Naryana noted that some departments are still waiting on decisions about instructors and so do not yet have a full slate of courses.

07.06.29 Other Business

M. Litvak asked whether Section 10.9.1(b) of the Academic Calendar, regarding returning student work worth at least 20% of a final grade before the end of the eighth week of classes, could be suspended for Fall 2020. J. Ollerhead and M. Hamilton argued against drafting a motion on the matter on the fly. R. Moser noted that the current regulation includes the word “normally,” which can be used to provide flexibility. A. Cockshutt and N. Farooqi argued that students need to have sufficient work returned in order to make informed decisions about withdrawal from courses. A. Cockshutt also asked whether students would support the idea. C. Burke and M. Vincent replied that they would like time to gather student opinion on the matter. P. Berry noted that the issue could be revisited in September, but K. Morse thought that September would be too late, given that faculty would have already constructed their syllabi. In the end, no motion was made on the matter.

C. Brett reminded senators that terms of office set to expire in 2020 do so on June 30. Any newly elected senators take office on July 1.

Senators then discussed the recent layoff, and the following motions were made.

Motion (M. Litvak/F. Black): that Senate allow the introduction of a motion concerning the recent layoffs of support staff at Mount Allison.

Motion Carried (2 nays)

Motion (M. Litvak/F. Black): that Senate recommend that the Board of Regents/Administration does not lay off any employees and reverses prior decisions to lay off or reduce staff in response to the pandemic.

Motion Carried (2 nays)

P. Berry noted that the motion is advisory.

R. Inglis noted that some layoffs have occurred in Facilities Management.

F. Black noted that a letter, signed by 90 members of faculty, was sent to the Board of Regents and the President asking for more transparency and consultation in financial matters. She noted that faculty expertise could be brought to bear on financial matters. She also remarked that it seemed odd to decide on layoffs before the university’s budget is finalized.

JP. Boudreau acknowledged the letter and said that he viewed it as an invitation to have discussions. He noted that layoff procedures require confidentiality. He also said that he is aware of the human costs of layoffs.

M. Litvak argued that layoffs are a move in the wrong direction. He noted that they are damaging to community, and can have long-term impacts to reputation and to the ability to sustain excellence. He wondered whether a short-term financial fix justified these potential costs.

JP. Boudreau answered that these considerations were raised with the Board of Regents. He said that the decision making process was about more than just numbers. He noted that recent decisions were taken to control the current deficit and not to eliminate it.

F. Black wondered whether the university has an undue aversion to debt, caused by the financial difficulties of the early 1990s. It seems possible, in her view, to carry a 7-9 million dollar deficit for a short time. She also doubted that the recent layoffs would have an appreciable impact on the deficit.

JP. Boudreau answered that the decision were made with a view of future sustainability.

F. Black thanked JP. Boudreau for his willingness to have this discussion in Senate.

08.06.29 Adjournment

There being no further business or announcements, the meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig Brett
Secretary

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Appendices to the Minutes

- Supporting Material for the Motion on the Academic Calendar
- Mental Health Resources for Students

Elimination of Fall 2020 Study Break

Motion (Ollerhead/Burke): Fall 2020 Study Break (9-13 November) be eliminated for the Fall 2020 term and that all dates related specifically to the academic term (not dates related to meetings or holidays) after the break be moved earlier by one week.

See attached revised *Calendar of Events 2020-2021*. Note that this motion does not affect the *Calendar of Events* for future academic terms or years.

Rationale:

- Students will not likely be able to travel during the Fall 2020 Study Break due to COVID-19.
- Students may have to self-isolate during the 2020 Christmas Break and thus it should be as long as possible.
- If there is a 2nd wave of COVID-19 in late fall, this lessens the impact of losing on-campus term time.
- Full elimination of the break week is more manageable for courses with scheduled activities such as labs, studios and tutorials than preserving a short break such as Wednesday through Friday.
- The date to receive final work from students not involving on-campus elements could remain the same, to allow additional time to complete online work.



Mental Health and Wellness Services for Students

Fall 2020 Proposed Plan

Counselling — free to all Mount Allison students. Offered by two certified counsellors **both in person and virtual options**. Either by appointment as well as walk-in hours offered three times a week.

<https://www.mta.ca/counselling/>

Navigate MtA – Wellness Support Program is the student source for mental health and wellness resource information and initiatives at Mount Allison University. Student mentors' goal is to take a proactive, collaborative approach to enhance the knowledge of mental health and wellness support available to students. Promoting help-seeking behavior amongst students by reducing obstacles to using resources and awareness of Wellness Centre services. In collaboration with the Mental Health/Harm Reduction Educator, Mindful Mentors are students who navigate, educate, and promote student wellness on campus.

Navigate MtA – Wellness Support Program Services – Helping students create and maintain a foundation of wellness during their post-secondary years. Weekly outreach booths across campus keeping current with resource material to meet the needs of students as well as an opportunity to hear from students. Promoting wellness through Soothe Your Soul sessions.

Student of concern: A Student of Concern Case Team supports students who may be struggling with their mental health. The team convenes to suggest strategies and supports for students when they need it most. Staff can email studentofconcern@mta.ca

Harm Reduction – Be kind to your mind, manage your risks. A tip a day can help in a harm reduction way. Keeping you informed with substance use harm reduction information. harmreduction@mta.ca
<https://www.mta.ca/studentwellness/cannabis/>

Mental Health First Aid Training – Mental Health First Aid training is made available to all residence staff, faculty, and support staff.
https://www.mta.ca/Community/Student_services/Health_and_wellness/Mental_health_and_wellness/Mental_health_initiatives/Mental_health_initiatives/

Suicide Awareness Training – SafeTALK is a three-hour, interactive program designed to create suicide-aware helpers. It is provided annually to all residence dons and residence assistants and is offered throughout the academic year to interested faculty, staff, and students.

https://www.mta.ca/Community/Student_services/Health_and_wellness/Mental_health_and_wellness/Mental_health_initiatives/Mental_health_initiatives/

Wellness Planning — S.M.A.R.T. Thinking! is a healthy mind and body plan to optimize student wellness. This service is free to all Mount Allison students. Offered weekly by appointment **both in person and virtually** with the Mental Health/Harm Reduction Educator.

Wellness Centre Workshops — During these sessions we will provide an opportunity to check-in with one another, discuss relaxation strategies, mindfulness, and self-care, and start to build a community of care. These workshops are free and open to all Mount Allison students. Offered on a regularly throughout the school year as well as upon request.

Outreach booths — Weekly outreach booths across campus keeping current with resource material to meet the needs of students as well as an opportunity to hear from students.

Zen Den Session — Offers you an opportunity to unplug and de-stress in a relaxing environment with mindfulness activities. This service is free to all Mount Allison students. Offered weekly by appointment.

Massage Therapy – Provides a number of benefits: reduction in stress and an excellent stress management tool, creates a feeling of well-being, reduction in levels of anxiety.
https://www.mta.ca/Community/Student_services/Health_and_wellness/Health_Services/Massage_therapy/Massage_therapy/

Acupressure – Encourages natural healing, improves mood and energy, reduces or relieves pain and improves function to affected areas of the body.

Happy Light — Provides bright light therapy that can be helpful for persons suffering from sadness, depression, winter blues, seasonal affective disorder (SAD), fatigue, and sleep disorders. Students can borrow them free of charge from the wellness centre.

Psychiatrist – Mount Allison University offers a psychiatry clinic twice a month. For information on how to get a referral, please contact Anne Comfort acomfort@mta.ca
https://www.mta.ca/Community/Student_services/Health_and_wellness/Mental_health_and_wellness/On_campus_services/Psychiatrist/

Psychologist – There are several psychologists in private practice offering services to Mount Allison students on a **fee-for-service basis**. They offer psychological assessments, mental health diagnoses, and psychotherapy.
https://www.mta.ca/Community/Student_services/Health_and_wellness/Mental_health_and_wellness/Staff/Staff/

Jack.org student group – Jack.org is the only national network of young leaders transforming the way people think about mental health. With initiatives and programs designed for young people, by young people, their goal is to end stigma in our generation. Jack.org's programs are designed to reach all young people. With monthly events and campaigns, the Mount Allison chapter encourages and enables students to better care for themselves and support their peers.
<https://www.facebook.com/jackdotorgmta/> Instagram: jack.orgmta

Change Your Mind student group – This student group's goal is to promote mental health and decrease the stigma attached to mental illness at Mount Allison. Its mission is “to transform our campus into an extremely open and welcoming space to talk about mental health, its benefits, its importance, and what

you can do to nurture it.” <https://www.facebook.com/CYMountallison/> Instagram: mtachangeyourmind

For immediate assistance and/or after-hours support, use one of these available crisis line services that are available 24/7:

Chimo Helpline — 1-800-667-5005 <http://www.chimohelpline.ca/>

Chimo Helpline is still open as per usual; however, is experiencing much higher than normal call volumes. Please be patient and try again in a bit if you are unable to get through.

The Hope for Wellness Help Line — 1-855-242-3310 <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>

The Hope for Wellness Help Line offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention to all Indigenous peoples across Canada. Or use the chat box to connect with a counsellor online.

Kids Help Phone counsellor — 1-800-668-6868 <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>

Whether by phone, text, mobile app or through our website, you can connect with us whenever you want; however you want. Text 686868.

***Mobile Mental Health Crisis Team (1-866-771-7760). If you are experiencing a crisis and need emergency help, please visit/contact your local emergency department (911). ***

EXTERNAL ONLINE RESOURCES

- [Campus WELL by Student Health 101 is an online health and wellness magazine designed for University students](#)
- [Transitions by Teen Mental Health.org is an online resource for students transitioning to post-secondary](#)
- [Jack.org is a group of young leaders focusing on mental health and wellness](#)
- [A guide to living with worry and anxiety amidst global uncertainty](#)
- [Wellness Together Canada: Mental Health and Substance Use Support](#)
- [MindWell U – Mindfulness in New Brunswick](#)