

**Minutes of a Special Meeting of Senate held on the above date at 1:30 p.m. Remotely via Zoom Audio Conference**

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**Members Present**

Dr. M. Benarroch,  
Chair  
Dr. A. Abra  
Dr. C. Adams  
Mr. A.K.M. Monsurul  
Prof. A. Alessi-Severini  
Prof. J. Anderson  
Ms. N. Andrew  
Prof. R. Biscontri  
Prof. T. Bone  
Prof. N. Boorberg  
Very Rev. R. Bozyk  
Ms. K. Cebula  
Prof. R. Chernomas  
Prof. G. Clark  
Prof. S. Clark  
Dr. C. Cook  
Mr. Wm. Dowie  
Prof. E. Eftekharpour  
Prof. M. Faubert  
Prof. S. Ferris  
Prof. J. Frank  
Prof. Y. Gajpal  
Prof. J.-E. Ghia  
Prof. J. Ghomeshi  
Dr. D. Hiebert-Murphy  
Dr. D. Jayas  
Dean R. Jochelson  
Mr. M. Kalkat  
Dean A. Kelekis-  
Cholakis  
Ms. A. Kilgour  
Mr. M. Koldon  
Dean M. Locher  
Prof. L. MacDonald  
Prof. K. MacKendrick  
Ms. A. McGregor  
Prof. M. McKenzie  
Prof. K. McManus  
Prof. S. Mallory-Hill  
Acting Dean D.  
Mandzuk  
Dean B. Mark  
Ms. C. Neilson

Mr. D. Ness

Prof. G. Nickel  
Ms. K. Nicolasora  
Ms. Z. Odribets  
Prof. D. Oliver  
Prof. J. Paliwal  
Prof. S. Passmore  
Prof. J. Peeler  
Ms. S. Phillips  
Prof. G. Prehna  
Dean K. Ragoonaden  
Ms. G. Romund  
Dean. M. Scanlon  
Ms. L. Schnarr  
Mr. B. Scott  
Prof. K. Scott  
Ms. P. Segal  
Mr. M. Shaw  
Mr. G. Sobie  
Prof. J. Sorensen  
Prof. M. Tamtik  
Dean J. Taylor  
Prof. G. Thompson  
Prof. G. Tranmer  
Prof. J. van Lierop  
Ms. M. Villegas  
Prof. D. Watt  
Mr. J. Leclerc,  
University Secretary  
Dr. S. Coyston,  
Recording Secretary

**Assessors Present**

Mr. J. Adams  
Ms. E. Kalo  
Prof. S. Kirkland  
Prof. R. Lastra  
Dr. T. Mondor  
Ms. D. Radi  
Prof. G. Smith  
Dr. D. Stewart  
Dr. M. Torchia  
Ms. B. Usick

**Regrets**

Ms. M. Babb  
Rectrice S. Bouffard  
Prof. A. Bunt  
Mr. J. Cariou  
Prof. N. Cicek  
Ms. C. Cyr  
Ms. C. Dika  
Dr. J. Doering  
Prof. A. Farenhorst  
Prof. R. Field  
Ms. S. George  
Prof. M. Hudson  
Dean G. Jacoby  
Prof. I. Jeffrey  
Dean E. Jurkowski  
Mr. J. Kearsey  
Chancellor A. Mahon  
Acting Dean K. Main  
Ms. L. O'Hara  
Prof. T. Peter  
Mr. G. Prairie  
Dean L. Raman-Wilms  
Prof. T. Reeve  
Prof. J. Sinclair  
Prof. R. Souleymanov  
Prof. V. Sparks  
Prof. S. Webber

**Absent**

Prof. M. Ballard  
Dr. J. Blatz  
Prof. P. Blunden  
Ms. M. Bremfowaa-  
Mensah  
Dean D. Brown  
Prof. M. Chung  
Prof. R. Currie  
Ms. O. Dingwall  
Dean N. Dyck  
Prof. A. Farrell  
Prof. C. Figley  
Dean M. Friesen

Prof. M. Garcia-  
Holguera  
Prof. N. Greidanus  
Prof. A. Halayko  
Prof. G. Hicks  
Prof. D. Ireland  
Ms. H. Jenkins  
Prof. J. Lavoie  
Prof. H. Luo  
Prof. D. Mackey  
Prof. Q. Mujawar  
Mx. K. O'Brien  
Ms. S. Palani  
Dean S. Pflugmacher  
Lima  
Dean B. Postl  
Prof. S. Prentice  
Prof. A. Raouf  
Ms. S. Sekander  
Ms. H. Smeltzer  
Mr. R. Talukder  
Dean R. Urbanowski  
Mr. A. Vij  
Prof. D. Walker  
Dean M. Yellow Bird  
Prof. F. Zeiler

**Also Present**

Mr. R. Daudet  
Prof. L. Strachan  
Ms. L. Orsak-Williams  
Ms. R. Sarmatiuk  
Ms. M. Watson

I **ACADEMIC SCHEDULE CHANGE – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30<sup>th</sup>)** Page 2

- Correspondence from the President Page 2
- Correspondence from the University Registrar and Executive Director, Enrolment Services Page 3

President Benarroch thanked Senators for participating in a Special Meeting of Senate to consider a change to the 2021 – 2022 Academic Schedule, to accommodate the University’s closure on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, on September 30<sup>th</sup>. He acknowledged that the proposed adjustment to the Academic Schedule would require that some Faculties identify ways to make up the teaching day that would be lost, in order to meet accreditation requirements for a minimum number of instructional days. The federal government had established the day as a statutory holiday and many provincial institutions had recognized the day, which would provide an opportunity to commemorate survivors of residential schools, to reflect on the legacy of the schools, to learn and to act. President Benarroch said a message would be sent to members of the University community to encourage people to take part in events that would be organized on that day, including by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) and the Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous).

Mr. Adams said the changes to the 2021-2022 Academic Schedule involved a reduction in the number of instructional days from 62 to 61 days and an adjustment to the deadline for Voluntary Withdrawals, from November 22<sup>nd</sup> to November 23<sup>rd</sup> for compliance with the *Voluntary Withdrawal* policy. There would be no changes to either the start or end of the 2021 Fall Term or to the final examination schedule.

Mr. Adams said the Office of the Registrar and Enrolment Services would work to identify a solution for future years, ideally before it brought forward the 2022-2023 Academic Schedule to Senate this fall.

In response to a question, Mr. Adams confirmed that one complicating factor for the 2021 Fall Term was that classes ended on a Friday and final examinations started on the Saturday, which meant there was no flexibility to adjust the day on which classes end.

**Professor Ferris MOVED, seconded by Professor Faubert, THAT Senate approve revisions to the 2021 – 2022 Academic Schedule, to accommodate the closure of the University on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, on September 30, 2021.**

Professor Oliver recalled that, in November 2017, Senate had considered a review of the Academic Schedule that included a recommendation to establish a Fall Term break. Part of the discussion had focused on the importance of considering students’ mental health given the various pressures students can experience. Adjusting the Academic Schedule, to include a University closure on September 30<sup>th</sup> each year would highlight a pedagogical challenge, particularly with respect to scheduling laboratories, either at the start of term, with few or no lectures having yet occurred, or at the end of term, when it is difficult to assign laboratory submissions prior to the start of final examinations. Also,

September 30<sup>th</sup> occurs on the same day of the week as Remembrance Day, so it would not be possible to simply adjust the timing of the Fall Break.

President Benarroch said these things could be taken into account when developing the Academic Schedule for future years.

Dean Kelekis-Cholakis indicated her support for the proposal to close the University on September 30<sup>th</sup>. She asked whether it would contravene the spirit of the proposal if some ongoing operations continued in a limited way, given the limited notice would make it difficult to change to some things. The Dr. Gerald Niznick College of Dentistry ran clinics that were fully booked that day, including bookings for some patients who had requested time off work or who would be travelling significant distances for their appointments. President Benarroch offered to discuss the specific matter outside of the meeting.

Mr. Dowie indicated support for the motion. He raised the possibility that students who participated in certain events organized on September 30<sup>th</sup> might receive recognition on their co-curricular record, as a way to encourage student participation.

Dean Mark said, based on email correspondence he had received from faculty, there was broad support within the Faculty of Science for recognizing what was an important day. Faculty members had also expressed concerns, however, about how to address the closure for this September, particularly for in-person laboratories scheduled on that day. Dean Mark raised the possibility that lectures might be cancelled but not laboratories, as it would be necessary to cancel all laboratories scheduled that week and not only those scheduled on September 30<sup>th</sup>, so laboratory sections were in sync.

Professor Sorensen supported the suggestion to allow in-person laboratories to be held, rather than to disrupt the entire week of laboratories, which had been particularly challenging to schedule given certain COVID-19 restrictions, and given the Fall Term would start in just eight days.

Dr. Cook suggested there could be some leniency for this year, for things that could not be adjusted easily given the short notice. She said all staff in the Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous) would need to work on September 30<sup>th</sup> every year and would take a different day in lieu of that day.

In response to a question, Mr. Leclerc said September 30<sup>th</sup> would be a University closure, rather than a day without classes.

Ms. Kilgour suggested that, if a decision was taken to allow some classes to be held given the complications of implementing the recommendation this year, a communication might be sent to students to advise that attendance was not mandatory and there would be no penalties for students who elected not to attend. Also, where classes would continue, instructors might be encouraged to begin with a moment of reflection on the importance of the day.

President Benarroch said those involved in bringing forward the recommendation had weighed the complexities of allowing some classes to continue and not others or to have the University remain open and allow instructors decide how to proceed. In either case, it

would potentially be confusing for students, if it was not clear whether they were to attend some classes and not others. He acknowledged that it might be necessary to make a very small number of exceptions and indicated those could be discussed outside of the meeting. Ultimately, it was decided that, given the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation is located on the campus and the University's commitment to reconciliation, it was important for the entire community to be focused on the matter, including this year. So, the recommendation was to close the University.

Professor Paliwal asked how, in a unionized environment, the University could ensure that faculty and staff would attend or participate in activities organized that day, to reflect on reconciliation. He suggested that, if this was the objective, it might be better if the University were to remain open, with no classes scheduled, so individuals could be encouraged to participate in activities that would be taking place that day.

President Benarroch said the University could not require faculty and staff to attend events to be held on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Collective agreements with some employment groups at the University specified that the University must honour federal holidays. Members of the University community would be encouraged to attend or to participate in virtual events that were being organized by the University, within the city, and nationally.

Professor Scott and Fr. Bozyk suggested, for this year and moving forward, there would be increased recognition of, and participation in, events on that day, if the University were to remain open. Instructors might allot time in classes to reflect on the day. Fr. Bozyk suggested that, if the University were to close, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation would simply come to be viewed as a day off. He observed based on his experience of having lived in Ontario, where universities, businesses, and other organizations remain open on Remembrance Day, there is greater where things remain open and people are allowed time to attend ceremonies, compared to Manitoba where everything is closed and Remembrance Day has come to be viewed as a day off.

Professor Watt said he would support the motion. He suggested the majority of faculty would be willing and happy to adjust their courses, given the importance of the day. He asked whether instructors should seek advice at the faculty or department level if they had questions about how to make adjustments to their courses, to accommodate the University closure on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Hiebert-Murphy said accommodations would vary depending on the unit and the particular issue, for example, whether it was the number of contact hours in a laboratory. So, it would make sense to have discussions at the faculty or department level, as appropriate. There had been considerable discussion of the issue at Deans Council. Notwithstanding the challenges, there had been widespread support to implement the recommendation this year.

Dean Kelekis-Cholakakis encouraged Senators to support the motion because it was important to do so and would further the University's commitment to make progress toward reconciliation. She remarked that, while there might be challenges this Fall, in terms of making adjustments to courses already scheduled on the day, the institution had adapted to changing circumstances many times over the previous eighteen months.

Professor MacDonald expressed her support for the recommendation. She suggested it would be appropriate to refer to September 30<sup>th</sup> as a closure or a day of remembrance or reflection, rather than a holiday. President Benarroch agreed and indicated he would share the suggestion with staff in the Marketing Communications Office.

Ms. Kalo indicated she was in favour of the motion. She observed that, if the motion was not supported, and a decision was taken that the University remain open or allow some activities to continue on September 30<sup>th</sup>, Indigenous staff and students might be among those who would be required to attend class or be on campus that day. She suggested that, in that case, it would be important to think about how to support and accommodate those individuals, and Indigenous students, in particular.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

President Benarroch thanked Senators for taking the time to participate in the meeting and in a fulsome discussion of the proposal. He acknowledged that changes would need to be made on short notice. He asked that Senators encourage the community to participate in positive ways in events organized for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

## **II ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

These minutes pages 1 to 5, together with the agenda, pages 1 to 5, comprise the minutes of the Special Meeting of Senate held on August 31, 2021.