



Minutes

A meeting of the Ad-hoc Committee to consider the inclusion of the Ode to Newfoundland at Memorial's convocation ceremonies was held on **Thursday September 26, 2024 at 12:30 pm NLT via Teams**

Committee members:

Arif Abu (Internationalization Office); Edwin Bezzina (senator); Kelly Butler (Indigenous Affairs); Cyr Couturier (senator); Delores Mullings (Vice-Provost EDI-AR); Valeri Pilgrim (Indigenous Student Resource Centre); Michael Woods (senator); Saravana Ganesan (GSU student).

Convener: Lee Ann McKivior [non-voting]

Recording secretary: Brian Hammond [non-voting]

Present: Kelly Butler, Lee Ann McKivior, Valeri Pilgrim, Michael Woods

Apologies received from Dr. Edwin Bezzina

1.0		<u>Land Acknowledgement</u> We acknowledge that the lands on which Memorial University's campuses are situated are in the traditional territories of diverse Indigenous groups, and we acknowledge with respect the diverse histories and cultures of the Beothuk, Mi'kmaq, Innu and Inuit of this province.	
2.0		<u>Approval of Agenda</u> Motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Move: K. Butler; Second: M. Woods No objections or abstentions; motion approved.	Approved
3.0		<u>Consideration of Committee Response to MUNSU Notice of Motion to Senate</u>	

The Senate received a notice of Motion from Devon Budden (Director of Advocacy, MUNSU) which called for the disbandment of this Committee on the grounds that the Committee's work was taking too long, the efforts of the committee members could be better spent resolving other, more important, matters within the University, and given Convocation Ceremonies are celebrations of student achievement decisions about the format of those celebrations should be left to the student body.

K. Butler wrote a letter in response to the notice of motion, which was reviewed and accepted by the Executive Committee of Senate to be included as received correspondence at the October meeting of Senate. During that Senate meeting, we will again ask for Senate's approval to allow speaking rights to observers during the discussion of this item.

It was noted, also, that MUNSU had accepted the ad hoc Committee’s invitation to attend a consultation session regarding the inclusion of the Ode at Convocation. MUNSU chose to meet with the Committee on October 3rd, before the October 8th meeting of Senate in which the motion to disband the ad hoc Committee would be considered.

- It was agreed the Consultation would be handled in the same way the former had been: through Webex, with audio recording (no video), and facilitated by K. Butler. The consultation questions would be sent to the MUNSU Executive in advance, and the consultation session would be scheduled for 1 hour.

4.0	<u>September 12, 2024, Interview with Penny Blackwood and Lynn Squires of the Office of Alumni Affairs</u>	
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The meeting with Alumni Affairs was informative and helpful. A spreadsheet of documented communications from alumni and donors would be redacted and shared with the Committee at a future date.

Members agreed that they appreciate the work the Office of Alumni Affairs is doing. They are at the front line when it comes to communications (complaints) from alumni or donors regarding the lack of the Ode to Newfoundland at Convocation ceremonies or about the way in which it was removed. The Alumni Office has received more feedback on this issue than on any other issue the University has had to deal with in the past.

The Committee wants to receive enough feedback, but given the size of the alumni and donor groups, and their apparent interest in the topic, it’s important to limit consultations and survey opportunities so the amount of feedback and the analysis of that material is not onerous on Committee members.

5.0	<u>Wording for Email to Alumni and Donors</u>	
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Members agreed they should send the alumni and donor groups a version of the letter requesting consultation that was sent to the student unions. The Senate Office agreed to manipulate the student invitation, adding a little more background information, and once this Committee approves the letter it would be presented to Alumni Affairs for suggestions and approval.

The Committee should offer two separate times (to be divided among the Committee’s regular meeting times and alternate times). Members discussed holding two meetings simultaneously in each of the time slots, facilitated by different members of the Committee. There should, if possible, be hybrid options for attending in person and online.

We should choose two dates in November, draft the message, engage with the Alumni Affairs office (who will need time to prepare for a mass-email call), and allow time for response from interested potential consultees. The four sessions that the Committee plans to conduct should be limited in space, as other consultation session have been. Ten consultees per session is reasonable.

6.0	<u>Discussion of Committee Workplan</u>	
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The Committee considered the timing of the release of the survey, especially in light of comments made at the Senate regarding blackout periods for surveys, eg. over the December holiday season. It was noted that the survey should not be open for too long. A period of 2 – 4 weeks is long enough. An email in early December should be sent to the University community to state when the survey will be released. It's possible to use Newsline to advertise the survey as well.

Members noted that they felt it would be a good idea to involve Rebecca Cohoe and/or Andrea Callanan from the Office of Public Engagement, who could be brought onboard towards the end of the Committee's work to verify the veracity of the process that the Committee followed.

7.0		<p>Other Business</p> <p>Members discussed the various Truth and Reconciliation events that were scheduled for Memorial's campuses in the coming days.</p>	
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As there was no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.