

Purpose: DISCUSSION

Subject: Report of the Working Group on the Composition of Senate

Prepared by: Pascal Robichaud, University Secretary

Prepared for: Senate

Date: February 18, 2026

ACTION

Receive and consider recommendations from the Working Group on the Composition of Senate

BACKGROUND

On December 19, 2026, Senate approved a motion establishing a working group on the composition of Senate to:

to review the rules for the composition of Senate including items such as allocation of at-large seats, how to achieve diversity, and addressing backfill for leaves as examples. The group will be co-chaired by the University Secretary and the Vice-Chair of Senate, who will identify necessary expertise needed for the Committee. Additionally, we will ask Senate to elect two members to serve on the working group.

The Working Groups complement is:

- Kim Mears and Pascal Robichaud, co-chairs
- James Sentence
- Barry Linkletter
- Amy Hsiao
- Suzanne Kresta
- Rose Avoine-Dalton

The Working Group met on January 16 and agreed to:

- A timeline for its work (See Appendix A)
 - Recommend to Senate the reconsideration of the addition of four seats to its membership.
 - Recommend to Senate the postponement of the annual election of Senate to allow the WG to present recommendation on the allocation of additional seats before proceeding to elections.
 - Recommend to Senate that, whichever decision is taken regarding the number of additional seats, all additional seats be codified in the Processes and Procedures of Senate.
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- Discuss issues germane to the composition of the Senate: status during leave and the sequencing of terms.

On January 30, Senate sustained the four additional seats and approved the postponement of the annual election of Senators to the first week of March 2026, so that it could receive and resolve modifications to its composition at its February meeting and agreed that the additional seats should be codified under section 3.2 of the *Processes and Procedures of Senate*.

The Working Group met a second time on February 11, 2026, and agreed that:

- Each Faculty should have at least one faculty seat at Senate,
- The seats added to the Senate on December 19 as at-large seats should remain so to:
 - Provide flexibility in the complement of the Senate,
 - Improve the probability that the Senate will be composed of no less than 50% of faculty members,
 - Allow those voices less heard or that we not captured in the election of Senators to designated seats to be present at the Senate, and
 - Facilitate more efficient management of the election of Senators.
- For those additional seats that are not filled after a first election call, there would be a second call. If a seat remains unfilled after a second call, there will be an open call with the seat filled by the first eligible candidate to step forward being acclaimed. This would apply differently to seats attributed under the Act, as those have to align with departments within Faculties.
- A statement should be added to the *Processes and Procedures of Senate* inviting Senators to consider their capacity to continue to serve on Senate while on sabbatical leave and stating that Senators cannot serve while on medical leave.
- Recommend to Senate the staggering of terms of Senators to better distribute the terms and avoid a cohort effect where many Senators leave at the same time.

At a forthcoming meeting of Senate, a proposal will be made to stagger the terms of Senators to avoid a cohort effect that could deprive Senate of much institutional memory and hinder the progress of multi-year initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Working Group recommends that the *Processes and Procedures of Senate* be amended as follows:

Current	New
<p>5.1 Eligibility</p> <p>Eligibility to be nominated and to vote for vacant positions on Senate shall be restricted to faculty and shall exclude faculty who serve on Senate ex-officio. All eligible faculty vote for all vacant Senate seats according to the process described in Section 5.2 of this Policy. Elected members of Senate for vacated seats, with the exception of special circumstances (see Section 5.2 a) of this Policy) shall serve a three-year term in office and are eligible for re-election</p>	<p>5.1 Eligibility</p> <p>Eligibility to be nominated and to vote for vacant positions on Senate shall be restricted to faculty and shall exclude faculty who serve on Senate ex-officio. All eligible faculty vote for all vacant Senate seats according to the process described in Section 5.2 of this Policy. Elected members of Senate for vacated seats, with the exception of special circumstances (see Section 5.2 a) of this Policy) shall serve a three-year term in office and are eligible for re-election.</p> <p>Members to be elected under section 3. k) must be from the department for which a seat is to be filled at Senate. None of those members can be from the same department.</p> <p>Members to be elected to a designated seat under section 3.2 must be from the designated Faculty. All full-time faculty of the University are eligible for at-large seats under section 3.2.</p>
<p>5.2 d)</p> <p>When the deadline for nominations has been reached, the Secretary of Senate shall compare the slate of candidates nominated to the vacancies existing. Where the number of nominated candidates is equal to the number of corresponding vacancies, the Secretary of Senate shall declare the nominees elected by acclamation. If more than the required number of faculty are nominated</p>	<p>5.2 d)</p> <p>At the deadline for nominations, the Secretary of Senate will compare the slate of candidates nominated to the vacancies existing.</p> <p>Acclamation</p> <p>Where the number of nominated candidates is equal or inferior to the number of corresponding vacancies, the</p>

<p>for corresponding vacancies, an electronic vote will be undertaken (refer to section 5.3 of this policy). If the number of nominations for a vacancy are fewer than the number of corresponding vacancies, the Secretary of Senate shall seek further nominations until the following March 31. For this subsequent round of nominations, the process for acclamation or election shall be as followed in the initial round of nominations.</p>	<p>Secretary of Senate will declare those candidates elected by acclamation.</p> <p>Election</p> <p>If more than the required number of candidates are nominated for corresponding vacancies, an electronic vote will be undertaken (refer to section 5.3 of this policy) to elect a faculty member.</p> <p>Second call</p> <p>For all seats left unfilled after the first round of elections, the Secretary of Senate will proceed to a second call for nominations.</p> <p>For this second round of nominations, the process for acclamation or election shall be as followed in the first round.</p> <p>Third call</p> <p>For all seats left unfilled after the second round of nominations, the Secretary of Senate will proceed to a third and final open call for nominations.</p> <p>For this third call, the Secretary of Senate will immediately declare nominated candidates elected by acclamation.</p>
<p>None</p>	<p>5 f) leave</p> <p>i) Medical leave</p> <p>Senators cannot serve on Senate during medical leave. Upon being notified that a Senator has gone on medical leave, the Secretary of Senate will proceed to an election to replace that member for the duration of their leave up to and no further than the end of their term at Senate.</p> <p>ii) Sabbaticals</p>

	<p>As the purpose of sabbatical leave is to provide members with the means to extend their knowledge, further their research, increase their teaching skills, and strengthen their contacts with the international community of scholars, thereby enhancing their contribution to the University and its mission on their return and knowing that faculty members on sabbatical are encouraged to leave Prince Edward Island, Senators going on sabbatical should consider whether service on Senate is compatible with such leave and, if not, notify the Secretary of Senate that they will be stepping away from Senate during their leave. Upon receiving such notice, the Secretary of Senate will proceed to the election of a faculty member to replace the member on sabbatical leave for the duration of that leave.</p>
<p>3.2 Members at Large</p> <p>Faculty Members at Large enumerated below are elected from among and by faculty to ensure members of the faculty shall constitute not less than one-half of the total membership of the Senate:</p> <p>Member at Large Designated to the Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies</p> <p>Member at Large Designated to the Faculty of Sustainable Design Engineering</p> <p>Member at Large Designated to the Library</p>	<p>3.2 Additional members</p> <p>Pursuant to paragraph 22 (2) of the University Act, to ensure members of the faculty shall constitute not less than one-half of the total of its membership, the Senate shall elect from among, and by, all full-time faculty, the following members in addition to those under section 3.1:</p> <p>3.2.1 One faculty member from the <i>Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research and Applied Studies</i>.</p> <p>3.2.2 One faculty member from the <i>Faculty of Sustainable Design Engineering</i>.</p> <p>3.2.3 One librarian.</p>

	<p>3.2.4 One faculty member from the <i>Faculty of Medicine</i>.</p> <p>3.2.4.1 As a transitional measure, the seat designated for the Faculty of Medicine will be filled by a member of faculty elected at large until the Faculty of Medicine has faculty members that can stand for election to Senate. When that happens, this transitional measure will automatically be deleted.</p> <p>3.2.5 Six faculty members at-large.</p>
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APPENDIX A***Timeline of the Working Group on the Composition of Senate***

The Co-chairs of the Working Group met to plan the work and set a schedule of meetings.

The schedule is based on two meetings, which would allow the WG recommend the distribution of additional seats to Senate in February.

- January 16 - First Meeting of the WG - 10:30am-12pm, KMB205A
- January 22 - Discussion at SSNC with report to be added to Senate agenda
- January 30 - Report to Senate with recommendation on elections
- February 9 - Second Meeting to resolve recommendations
- February 19 - Discussion at SSNC with recommendations to be added to the agenda of Senate
- February 27 - Presentation of recommendation to Senate.