



MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY SENATE

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, April 14, 2026

3:00-4:00 pm – WebEx

Meeting Link:

<https://mun.webex.com/mun/j.php?MTID=m9186e2e8b354da9161c479335421fbe1>

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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.

1.0 Special Meeting of Senate on Collegial Governance – April 14, 2026

1.1 Welcome and introduction

1.2 Memorial University Collegial Structure ([Appendix A](#))

- i. Memorial's Existing Governance model
- ii. The Roles of Senate, Board, and Administration
- iii. Bicameral system

1.3 Facilitated discussion on collegial governance within the parameters of the university's existing collegial structure

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY SENATE

Uniqueness of universities

“The institution has prevailed for so long because it is the one place in our society that fosters the search for truth through open dialogue, thoughtful deliberation and informed dissent. If this academic culture is lost the university is no longer a distinct and essential institution in our society and its future will be in jeopardy.”

(Winners and Losers in the Future of Canada’s Universities

Ross Paul, former President of the University of Windsor and President Laurentian University
Academica Group’s “Rethinking Higher Ed Forum, November 2014)

Memorial University Collegial Structure

i. Memorial’s Existing Governance model

- Governance done well serves to achieve the organization’s objectives, in that it:
 - Sets authority for decision making;
 - Ensures controls are in place; and
 - Establishes accountability
- Governance refers to the *processes*, *instruments* and *structures* used to oversee and direct an organization’s operations and activities.

Deloitte Centre for Corporate Governance. (n.d.). *Definitions of governance*. Reproduced in SaskCulture. <https://www.saskculture.ca/programs/organizational-support/organizational-resources/good-governance/definitions-of-governance>

- Governance is the exercise of due diligence by an oversight body to ensure that the organization functions in a sound and sustainable manner, in accordance with its mandate and strategic goals and objectives. It ensures that the organization demonstrates accountability to stakeholders both within and beyond its boundaries. Governance encompasses the organization’s policies, practices, and processes, as well as the conduct of its activities and the manner in which decisions are made.

Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation. (n.d.). What is oversight and how does it relate to governance? <https://www.caaf-fcar.ca/en/oversight-concepts-and-context/what-is-oversight-and-how-does-it-relate-to-governance>

ii. Legislative Framework for Memorial University

- When Newfoundland and Labrador joined Confederation I 1949, the first piece of legislation passed in the house of Assembly was, *An Act Respecting the Memorial University of Newfoundland*, which outlines the following:
 - Authority for the business affairs – fees, property, acquisition, investments, borrowing powers, etc.
 - Authority of the Chancellor
 - Constitution of the Board of Regent
 - Constitution of Senate
 - Definition of convocation
 - Powers of the board
 - Powers of Senate
 - Provision for academic instruction
 - Relationship of the university to the LGC

- Memorial is also subject to other legislation including federal, provincial and municipal

Level	Core Purpose
Provincial (NL)	Governance, employment, privacy, accountability, property
Federal (Canada)	Charter rights, research funding, privacy, immigration
Multi-level	Human rights, data protection, Indigenous rights

- Two governance instruments within existing governance model:
 1. *Policy (and Procedures)* – Memorial Policy Framework Process for the development, consultation and approval of policies
 2. *Regulations* – Academic (undergraduate and graduate), General and Financial

iii. The Roles of Senate, Board, and Administration

- Senate, Board and Administration form our university governance system – what happens in one part affects the others.
- Unique form of accountability derived from the tenets of: *autonomy, independence, academic freedom* and *governing in the public trust*.

The Senate:

- *56. The senate shall have general charge of all matters of an academic character and it shall have power*
 - (a) to provide for the regulation and conduct of its meetings and proceedings, including the fixing of the quorum necessary for transaction of business*
 - (b) to determine the degrees, including honorary degrees, diplomas and certificates of proficiency to be granted by the university and the person to whom they shall be granted*
 - (c) to determine the conditions of matriculation and entrance, the standing to be allowed students entering the university and all related matters*
 - (f) to regulate instruction and to determine the methods and limits of instruction*
 - (i) to prepare the calendar of the university for publication*
 - (j) to recommend to the Board the establishment of, or abolition of, or changes to faculties, departments...*
 - (r) to make rules and regulations for the management and conduct of the library*

Memorial University Act (1990). Duties and Powers of Senate, s. 56. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
[RSNL1990 CHAPTER M-7 - MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY ACT](#)

Board of Regents:

- 34. (1) *The Board shall have the following powers:*
 - (a) *to make rules and regulations concerning the meetings of the board and its transactions*
 - (c) *to maintain and keep in proper order and condition real property....*
 - (d) *To lay out and spend sums that may be considered necessary for the support and maintenance of the university....*
 - (f) *To appoint the deans of all faculties, the librarians, the registrar, the bursar, the professors, associate professors....and all employees that the board considers necessary for the purposes of the university and to fix their salaries....*
 - (g) *to establish faculty councils and other bodies within the universities....*
 - (m) *to determine the number of students that may in the opinion of the board, having regard to the resources available, be accommodated with safety and efficiency in the university or in the faculties of the university;*
 - (q) *to provide for the establishment of faculties, departments, chairs, lectureships, exhibitions, bursaries, scholarships, fellowships and prizes and to change or abolish them;*
 - (s) *to do and perform all other matters and things which may seem appropriate and useful for the well ordering and advancement of the university...*

Memorial University Act (1990). Specific Powers of Board, s. 34. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
[RSNL1990 CHAPTER M-7 - MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY ACT](#)

Administration in a Bicameral University

- In a bicameral university, administration plays a crucial role in managing the overall operations and resources of the institution.
The administration is responsible for the following:
 - Ensuring accountability for the management of human, physical, financial, and information resources.
 - Providing administrative services and overall support to both the Board and the Senate, enabling them to govern the institution in a timely and effective manner.
 - Facilitating decision-making for administrative matters, making decisions to further at the university's goals and objectives. The administration's role is to support the academic governance bodies by providing the necessary resources and expertise to ensure that the university's mission, values, and strategic direction are upheld. This includes maintaining the university's infrastructure, managing finances, and ensuring compliance with regulations and standards.

Herbert, B. (2012). *Governance and administration in Canadian universities* (Master's project, University of Northern British Columbia).

[unbc_16428.pdf](#)

Barry, D., & Goedegebuure, L. (2018). Good governance and higher education. In *Encyclopedia of international higher education systems and institutions*. Springer.

[Good Governance and Higher Education | Springer Nature Link](#)

iv. **Bicameral System**

How Academic and Financial/Management Authority Interact:

The bicameral model requires coordination, between Senate and the Board:

Academic Matter	Senate Role	Board Role
New degree program	Academic approval	Financial approval
Academic regulations	Full authority	No role
Tuition levels	Advisory only	Final decision
Strategic planning	Academic input	Final approval
Hiring within budget	None	Approval of positions & funding

While Senate safeguards academic quality and integrity, the Board ensures financial sustainability and legal responsibility.

Academic vs Financial and Management Authority:

Senate

Academic Authority

- Collegial – rooted in faculty expertise and peer governance
- Representative – Senate includes elected faculty, students, academic administrators, and ex-officio members
- Autonomous within scope – Senate makes academic decisions independently, but cannot commit the university to expenditures
 - This separation protects academic freedom by ensuring that educational decisions are not dictated solely by financial or political considerations

Board of Regents

Corporate (Management) and Financial Authority

- Fiduciary – Regents must act in the best long-term interests of the university
- Externally accountable – Majority of members are appointed from outside the institution. This external accountability is an important component of protecting and promoting institutional autonomy.
- Strategic and holistic rather than academic – the Board does not decide curriculum or academic standards
- Board remains vested with making the financial and overall corporate and management decisions, in the best interests of the university.
 - Even when Senate approves an academic program, it cannot proceed without Board approval if it requires new funding, staffing, or infrastructure.