

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

SENATE

The special meeting of Senate was held on March 12, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. NDT via Webex.

186. PRESENT

Dr. N. Bose – Chair	Dr. E. Haven	Dr. A. Pike
Dr. J. Lokash – Deputy Chair	Dr. K. Hodgkinson	Dr. J. Pridham
Mr. M. Alam	Dr. N. Hurley	Dr. C. Purchase
Dr. T. Allen	Dr. P. Issahaku	Mr. S. Shah
Dr. K. Anderson	Dr. K. Jacobsen	Dr. K. Shannahan
Dr. E. Bezzina	Dr. D. Keeping	Dr. S. Shetranjiwalla
Ms. M. Broders	Dr. D. Kelly	Ms. B. Simmons
Dr. T. Brown	Dr. E. Kendall	Dr. K. Simonsen
Dr. S. Bugden	Ms. C. Korchoski	Dr. J. Sinclair
Dr. K. Bulmer	Dr. K. Laing	Ms. B. Smith
Dr. R. Burry	Dr. A. Loucks-Atkinson	Dr. M. Stordy
Dr. P. Button	Dr. D. McKeen	Dr. A.M. Sullivan
Mr. J. Chowdhury	Dr. L.A. McKivor	Mr. P. Sullivan
Mr. C. Couturier	Dr. S. Moore	Dr. I. Sutherland
Dr. J. Gerard Curtis	Dr. L. Moores	Dr. L. Twells
Dr. P. Dold	Dr. D. Mullings	Ms. C. Walsh
Dr. T. Fridgen	Dr. K. Myrick	Dr. A. Warren
Dr. E. Durnford	Ms. T. Noseworthy	Dr. J. Westcott
Dr. D. Hancock	Dr. P. Osmond-Johnson	Dr. M. Woods
Mr. J. Harris	Dr. D. Peters	Mr. S. Yadav

PRESENT BY INVITATION

Dr. S. Sullivan, Chair, SCUgS

187. OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. P. Banahene	Ms. M. Doyle	Ms. J. Porter
Ms. P. Beh	Ms. P. Dyke	Ms. J. Rosales
Ms. C. Best	Ms. M. MacLean	Mr. P. Stewart
Dr. A. Clarke	Mr. K. Matthews	Mr. R. Murphy
Ms. V. Collins	Mr. C. Pelley	Ms. V. Hutchings

188. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr. S. Abyaz	Mr. N Gillingham	Dr. L. Moore
Dr. J. Anderson	Dr. S. Giwa	Dr. P. Morrill
Dr. F. Bambico	Dr. M. Haghiri	Dr. S. Neilsen
Ms. H. Bello	Dr. D. Hardy-Cox	Ms. H. Pretty
Dr. A. Bittner	Dr. J. Hawboldt	Dr. P. Ride
Dr. P. Brett	Dr. R. Haynes	Dr. S. Rowe
Dr. T. Chapman	Dr. T. Hennessey	Mr. S. Sayeedi
Dr. A. Cunsolo	Mr. N. Keough	Dr. K. Szego
Dr. O. Dobre	Dr. C. Kozak	Mr. R. Waye
Dr. E. Fraser	Mr. E. Ludlow – Chancellor	Dr. B. White
Dr. G. George	Dr. M. Marshall	

189. WELCOME:

The Chair welcomed all senators and observers to the one-hour special Senate meeting and read the land acknowledgement statement.

He advised that Section IV.A.4 of the Senate By-Laws assign responsibility to the Senate Planning and Budget Committee (PBC) to make recommendations for special meetings of Senate. The last special Senate meeting was held on November 14, 2023. PBC received several suggestions from members of Senate on possible topics for this special meeting and recommended that this special Senate meeting topic be Impact of Artificial Intelligence “AI” on Academia.

He then asked Dr. M. Woods, Chair of the Senate Planning Budget Committee, to take the floor.

Dr. Woods introduced himself as the moderator for the special Senate meeting and introduced Dr. Kim Myrick and Ms. Bonnie Simmons, Co-Directors, Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL).

The Co-Directors noted that, for the most part, the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) has been known as the online and technology shop of the University. More than that, however, the Centre supports Memorial’s academic units and instructors with curriculum and course design, and has already done much work regarding the issue of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) and its impact on learning environments. The Centre has also offered professional development sessions for faculty and staff.

Dr. Myrick then introduced Melanie Doyle, Educational Developer and a per-course instructor in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences’ Department of English, and Ms. Carolyn Best, Manager of the Writing Centre. Dr. Myrick noted that they both have an interest in academic writing; Ms. Doyle from the instructive perspective and Ms. Best from the student perspective, and have been conducting research specifically around GAI.

Ms. Best and Ms. Doyle then delivered a presentation on GAI and its impact on academia (copy of the PowerPoint presentation is attached).

What is GAI?

- GAI is a broad label that describes technologies that generate text, images, video, audio, simulations, computer code or synthetic data (Michel-Villarreal et al. 2023).

Some examples of what GAI can do are as follows:

- Generate or create something new for the user
- Respond to questions and prompts
- Analyze or summarize text
- Translate text from one language to another

How GAI works:

- Text generators (like ChatGPT) are large language models (LLMs) that use large statistical models to generate natural-sounding text.

- They work by copying patterns and predicting the most likely next words based on statistical analysis of huge volumes of text.
- Essentially, they predict what a human would write next based on their training data.

1. Policies and Supports:

- Faculty, staff and students want to know more about permissible and appropriate uses of GAI
- They are looking for clear direction about how we should or should not use GAI.
- Many universities across Canada have decided to not create new policies but instead are opting to edit existing policies – whether that be around AI or disability or creating more flexible position statements, more dynamic.
- Without explicit language, students will not know what is expected of them. Students and Faculty require, and are requesting, clarity.
- We cannot presume students know what they can or cannot do with GAI.
- Expectations around use varies from departments and courses.
- It is a good practice to include statements on GAI use on all syllabi and assignment instructions.

2. Academic Integrity:

- Staff and instructors are concerned.
- How will we be able to detect if a student misused GAI?
- Students are quite fearful that they may falsely be accused of using GAI.
- There should be clear guidance on the proper academic and ethical use of GAI.
- Many GAI detection applications exist, but it does not appear that they are accurate enough to be the sole basis of an allegation of academic misconduct.

3. AI Literacy:

- Develop both general and discipline-specific critical AI literacy skills to use and evaluate GAI.
- Support development of AI literacy as it relates to academic and professional standards.
- Consider best practices in ethical AI use.
- Productive use should support thinking, processing and writing skills.

CITL resources regarding GAI have garnered much interest from the University Community, and include:

- AI Coffee breaks (fall 2023 – with 57 participants)
- AI Community of Practice (to date 25 participants – who will meet monthly to discuss topics of interest).
- Last Fall – Using AI to Enhance Student Writing – with a guest speaker from Engineering (74 participants attended).
- Generative AI and Teaching Assistance Training (with Melanie host) for the teaching Assistance training program (TATP) (89 teaching assistants registered for that session).
- Members of Senate were thanked for joining the special Senate meeting and the presentation concluded with the following considerations regarding Teaching and Learning in higher educational settings
 - Course and Assessment Design.
 - Accessibility.

- Technological Advancements.
- Ethics, Bias and Data Privacy.
- Second Language Learners.
- Employment Skills.
- Preserving Writing, Research and Creativity.
- Labour Practices.
- Environmental Impact.

Dr. Woods thanked the presenters from CITL and asked if there were questions from senators.

Comments from Senators:

- Legally, can an instructor require students to use AI for tests or assignments? It was noted that a Nova Scotian court ruled it is a contravention of privacy guarantees to require such use. This ruling is similar to the rationale for Memorial University's decision to not require the use of Turnitin.com, as it may be felt that turning in one's academic work is essentially giving up ownership and copyright of the academic work, or at a very minimum allowing it to become part of a searchable data base owned by an external entity.

Ms. Doyle noted that this question has been raised numerous times regarding usage of GAI production and detection tools. There are similar concerns when we ask students to use these tools; when we put student work into these detectors are we breaking these same sort of privacy regulations? However, as GAI is already a part of society, are we doing our students a disservice if we do not introduce them properly to GAI?

The following points were raised by members of Senate:

- There is an equity piece that cannot be ignored: most GAI applications have free and paid subscriptions, and those who can afford to pay will have an improved version that can produce better work.
- What about ethics and faculty in research?
- AI and impacts on government policies and ethics guidelines.
- Will there be an environmental scan of other institutions to see how they are supporting instructors and students in the new AI assisted learning environment?
- Privacy issues — it is also possible to run and use local LLMs that have none of the data-harvesting privacy concerns, but it requires some technical savvy. It is nonetheless pretty likely that we'll see easy-to-use local models that do not collect data in a few years, so the privacy concern will probably somewhat disappear.
- One professor noted that they do not encourage to the use of GAI because they want their students to learn the skills (to write and to research) – students will eventually be in a situation where they don't have access to these tools and will have to write clear sentences and do better research.
- A senator asked if there are statistics on the use of GAI from those committees that handle allegations of academic misconduct:

According to J. Porter, Deputy Registrar and Secretary to the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies, there have been 17 allegations of academic misconduct submitted to SCUgS in the current academic year: of those, 13 were related to GAI, and in 12 out of the 13 cases the outcome was to find the student guilty. At Grenfell Campus there were 3 cases (one of

which is still on-going). It is felt that these numbers do not reflect the actual amount of unauthorized GAI usage at the institution because the vast majority of cases are considered and dealt with at the academic unit level. It may be beneficial to conduct a survey to ascertain more reliable data from academic units.

Dr. Warren noted that there are 2 cases in the School of Graduate Studies and that most academic integrity cases are resolved at unit level.

Comments from Senators (cont'd):

- Do units still report cases resolved at the unit level to SCUgS?

Ms. Porter noted that there is a regulation that indicates academic units are to provide a brief description of the resolution to SCUgS; however, in practice, this happened infrequently and inconsistently.

- A senator noted that their unit had 3 cases: 2 cases involved graduate papers and the other involved a discussion forum.
- A senator advised that SGS is working to find a way to better report these unit-level resolutions.
- There is a joint sub-committee of SCUgS and Teaching and Learning which is looking at GAI. The sub-committee has developed two calendar change proposals which were approved by SCUgS and have gone for broad consultation. One proposal regulates clearer statements on the course syllabi to indicate acceptable usage of GAI, while the other specifies in the undergraduate section of the calendar that unauthorized use of GAI is an act of academic misconduct. A similar statement would exist in the graduate level, and the proposals have been sent to SGS for review and approval.

Dr. Woods asked if more information was available regarding the works and findings of the joint sub-committee of SCUgS and Teaching and Learning.

- It was noted that the joint sub-committee of SCUgS and Teaching and Learning are not just SCUgS members. The idea of having references in the calendar is the most tangible piece, and the sub-committee has also reviewed what was already existing on campus (CITL).
- It was noted that it is important, when considering the impact of AI, to look through the lens of equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism, and to consider academic bias against students with learning needs.
- The weaponization of AI and how racialized and Indigenous students become recipients of undue scrutiny.
- A senator noted that GAI can be an important tool to assist students with completing writing assignments to improve their own writing assignments. University instructors need to advise and teach students how to use these new tools as ethically as possible.
- Some instructors are seeing a lot of AI generated work, but the work has not been done very well. The AI tool has not been used very effectively. As such, if the instructor were to just assess the assignments according to their established grading rubric, the work would not score very well.
- Since instructors are seeing a lot of AI generative work it is prompting many of them to reflect more deeply on themselves and on why they do what they do in the classroom, how they do it, and how to really engage students in a very broad learning process that includes the use of AI tools.

- It was noted that some students assume it is okay to use AI tools because they are required to do so in their workplace, which reinforces the idea that we do need to be teaching how to use these tools as ethically and productively as possible.

Dr. Woods referred senators to the policy link provided by Dr. Myrick (which may be of interest). Here is a valuable resource about the implication of AI in higher ed, that address issues that relate to the Senate level of policy and decision making: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386670>

- Academic integrity – focus on modeling ethical behavior and supporting equitable practices.
- Understanding how students are using and expecting to use AI will allow us to support students and not just be an extension of a policing function. This is why it is important to track what's happening more effectively and to understand the broader range of uses of AI.
- Many students are stressed (having to work all the time just to feed themselves and to pay rent); students who are in a desperate situation may resort to GAI to complete an assignment because it is fast. They know there is a chance they might get caught, but students do not seem to fully understand the ramifications of this action. They believe penalties for academic misconduct like this will be a slap on the wrist. They do not understand the scale of the consequences.
- It has been noticed that current GAI technologies are heavily biased in favour of information pertaining to the US. Educating students about the type of information these tools provide can enlighten them about the internal bias of these machines. In other words, GAI machines have been trained on a certain type of information that may not account for the broader world population and include inherent bias and other problems.
- Beyond calendar language, what other "levers" do members of Senate have access to in order to respond to the proliferation of GAI? There are a number of resources out there that recommend what universities can do at a policy level.
- A senator noted that if we consider using these tools, we have to consider the ethical side of the tools themselves. Many people have pointed out that these tools are trained on copyright material or partial copyright materials.
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- Faculty should be aware of upcoming Retrieval-Augmented Generation tools, which may be trained on collections of personal data. It might be possible to generate text based on a specific subset of papers. With these tools it might be possible to train them on one's own personal notes and writing in order to match tone and style matches.
- There is a huge energy footprint involved with operating these AI. The servers required consume vast amounts of energy and have a significant environmental impact.
- More research and consultation is needed. We really need a clear policy on AI use. It may have implications for scholarly production going through peer reviewed journals.

Dr. Woods concluded the meeting by thanking those who assisted from CITL and for the discussions amongst senators. He noted that questions and notes shared in the webex chat would be compiled. Dr. Woods suggested a task force or some type of standing committee should be developed to continue the work surrounding GAI.

Dr. McKivior noted that she will need to investigate what other sub-committees exist, including the joint sub-committee of SCUgS and Teaching and Learning.

The Chair of Senate thanked everyone for joining and participating in the special Senate meeting. He reminded senators of the upcoming Regular meeting of Senate and that they would need to log out of this meeting and into the next Webex portal for the Regular meeting.

190. **Meeting Resolved:**

The special Senate meeting finished at 3:58 pm.

CHAIR

SECRETARY

Online Chat-log

Special Meeting of Senate, Re: Impact of AI on Academia (3:00 p.m., March 12, 2024)

from Patricia Dold to everyone: 3:21 PM

I have a question

from Amy Warren (she/her) to everyone: 3:27 PM

SGS has two cases

from Amy Warren (she/her) to everyone: 3:27 PM

most Academic INtegrity cases resolved at unit level

from Anne-Marie Sullivan to everyone: 3:29 PM

do units still report cases resolved at the unit level to SCUgS?

from April Pike to everyone: 3:30 PM

We have had three cases two with gradute papers and with discussion forum postings in online courses

from Ryan Murphy to everyone: 3:30 PM

Re: privacy issues — it is also possible to run and use local LLMs that have none of the data-harvesting privacy concerns, but it requires some technical savvy. It is nonetheless pretty likely that we'll see easy-to-use local models that do not collect data in a few years, so the privacy concern will probably somewhat disappear

from Jennifer Porter to everyone: 3:30 PM

I can

from Amy Warren (she/her) to everyone: 3:30 PM

Under the regs units should report grad student cases to SGS if resolved at the unit

from Amy Warren (she/her) to everyone: 3:31 PM

For SGS we are also trying to work on getting units to get back into reporting as we usually aren't getting the information either.

from Pam Osmond-Johnson she/her to everyone: 3:32 PM

For detection tools, my understanding is that insitutions can purchase agreements where the detection tool is internal to the unit and does not contribute to the repository. Turnitin, which I'm not sure if we use here or not, has a built in detector, for instance.

from Janna Rosales (she/her) to everyone: 3:32 PM

to Carolyn Best (privately): 3:32 PM

Here is a valuable resource about the implication of AI in higher ed, that address issues that relate to the Senate level of policy and decision making: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386670>

from Dr. Delores V. Mullings to everyone: 3:33 PM

comment

from Kim Myrick to everyone: 3:36 PM

Here is a valuable resource about the implication of AI in higher ed, that address issues that relate to the Senate level of policy and decision making: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000386670>

from Paul Issahaku to everyone: 3:37 PM

A question

from Pam Osmond-Johnson she/her to everyone: 3:39 PM

international students are heavily scrutinized as well.

from Paul Banahene to everyone: 3:43 PM

Thanks Delores, the weaponization of AI and how racialized and Indigenous students become recipient of undue scrutiny. Most importantly how anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism mask as academic integrity

from Natasha Hurley to everyone: 3:46 PM

Understanding how students are using and expecting to use AI will allow us to support students and not just be an extension of a policing function. But this is why it is important to track what's happening more effectively and to understand the broader range of uses of AI.

from Paul Banahene to everyone: 3:48 PM

comment

from cyr to everyone: 3:50 PM

Three hands are up for commentary :)

from Jawad chowdhury he/him to everyone: 3:51 PM

Additionally, I have noticed that current GAI technologies are heavily biased towards information pertaining to the US. Educating students about the type of information these tools provide can offer them an overview of content that instructors may not necessarily be seeking.

from Janna Rosales (she/her) to everyone: 3:51 PM

Beyond calendar language, what other "levers" do members of Senate have access to in order to respond to the proliferation of generative AI? There are a number of resources out there that recommend what universities can do at a policy level.

from Natasha Hurley to everyone: 3:54 PM

Great point, Dennis.

from MUNSU Advocacy to everyone: 3:56 PM

Students also often do not feel comfortable reaching out to their professors to express that they are struggling with a course, require an extension, etc., especially early program students.

from Janna Rosales (she/her) to everyone: 3:56 PM

As an instructor I'm glad the calendar language is coming, but I don't think the university can afford to stop there and consider it sufficient to leave decisions about the use of AI with individual instructors.

from Ryan Murphy to everyone: 3:56 PM

Faculty should also be aware of upcoming Retrieval-Augmented Generation tools, which may be able to be trained on collections of personal data.

It might be possible to e.g., generate text based on a specific subset of papers. It might also be possible to train them on e.g., your personal notes and writing, such that their tone and style matches your own.

from cyr to everyone: 3:56 PM

Not just water but energy footprints are quite big with AI algorithms ;)

from cyr to everyone: 3:56 PM

Not just water but energy footprints are quite big with AI algorithms ;)

from Dianne Keeping to everyone: 3:57 PM

Copyright and licensing are important issues to keep in mind.

More research and consultation on this is needed. We really need a clear policy on AI use. It may have implications for scholarly production going through peer reviewed journals

from Amy Warren (she/her) to everyone: 3:58 PM

Our regulations that allow for units to resolve these issues is our biggest advantage. Being able to resolve proactively for students without huge penalties allows for learning and also given the whole nature of the process has built in racism and biases we can simply commit to better more restorative solutions at the unit level if a student is accused.