



**Ad Hoc Committee of Senate to
Consider the Inclusion of
The Ode to Newfoundland (Ode)
at Memorial's
Convocation Ceremonies**

Submission to Senate: April 8, 2025

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Context and Background

In keeping with the recommendation of the Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees and Ceremonial, the ad hoc committee (AHC) investigated, consulted, discussed, and considered, the inclusion of the Provincial Anthem, 'Ode to Newfoundland' at Memorial University's convocation ceremonies.

The mandate of the AHC:

- Consultation with Indigenous people (students, staff, alumni, members elders) on their opinions regarding the Provincial Anthem, "Ode to Newfoundland" at Convocation be considered;
- Engagement with members of the university community from Labrador (e.g., faculty, students, staff, alumni) and leaders from Labrador from outside the university community, discussing how to meaningfully include Labrador in Convocation;
- The AHC engage in consultations which would include broad representation, with members from within and beyond the university (including Indigenous members of our community) as well as representation from Labrador; and
- The AHC engage with other stakeholders in the university community (students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, funders, etc.) on this matter.

The AHC determined that items outside of their mandate included, but were not limited to:

- altering the lyrics of the provincial anthem
- providing advice on the inclusion of the Ode in other events, ceremonies, or contexts at Memorial University
- altering the Convocation ceremony process
- determining and/or clarifying why the Ode was removed from Convocation

A timeline associated with the work of the AHC is available in [Appendix A](#).

Guiding Principles

Through documentation, the AHC was informed by its Terms of Reference ([Appendix B](#)) and the March 2023 report of the Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees and Ceremonial ([Appendix C](#)).

In action, the committee was guided by principles that looked to ensure that Indigenous, Black, racialized and historically marginalized groups' voices were heard. An acknowledgement to uphold commitments to reconciliation and equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-Black racism was also adopted. This agreement was paramount given that there is a known imbalance in the influence that some groups hold when consulting. Recognizing and accounting for these imbalances, when considering recommendations, was essential.

The AHC accepted that there would be underrepresentation of some groups and the overrepresentation of others; therefore, the committee worked to ensure that findings were not skewed as a result. As an example, Indigenous and other important group voices formed a numerical minority. The AHC worked hard to consider how to include these voices. The committee recognized that there are inherent barriers that may prevent people from participating in the consultation, for example, lack of trust, smaller population, life challenges that make participating in the consultation not a priority, and the format of the consultation process itself to name a few.

Selection for consultation and modes of engagement were structured to acknowledge smaller populations. As an example, to address barriers, the AHC conducted their consultation sessions by identifying dedicated facilitators with lived and living experiences that were seen to align the population within the identified session.

Finally, the AHC recognized that its membership represents individuals with various and complex lived and living experiences, the majority of which are settler and colonized. Although the committee received unconscious bias training, it acknowledged that their own bias is impossible to ignore.

Background Details

About Memorial University

Memorial University College opened in 1925 and offered preliminary university training in arts and sciences. After merging with the Normal School in 1933, it offered an education program (teacher-training).

The appetite for Newfoundland to have its own university grew after the end of the Second World War. When Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, the institution received university status as one of the first acts of the new provincial government. It has grown to include six campuses; many specialized centres and facilities; over 300 undergraduate and graduate program options; and is one of the top 20 research universities in Canada¹.

The name of the institution recognizes that it was created to be a living memorial to Newfoundlanders who lost their lives in the First World War and continues to be that living memorial for those who served in the Great Wars and subsequent conflicts.

In 2001, the name of the province was officially changed from *Newfoundland* to *Newfoundland and Labrador*. The institution is typically known as 'Memorial University' or just 'Memorial', but given the University's increasing activity in Labrador, in March of 2021 the Board of Regents reconsidered the matter of the institution's name and recommended that the official name of the institution be changed to 'Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador'. However, until the [Memorial University Act](#) is amended the official name remains *Memorial University of Newfoundland*.

¹ See <https://www.mun.ca/main/about/>

About Ode to Newfoundland

The "Ode to Newfoundland" was written as a poem, first entitled "Newfoundland," by Sir Cavendish Boyle, a British civil servant who served as colonial governor of Newfoundland from 1901-1904. Sir Cavendish Boyle arrived in Newfoundland in 1901 and left in 1903. The Ode was first performed in public at the Casino Theater of the Total Abstinence Hall in January 1902.² The music accompaniment was by E.R. Krippner, a German bandmaster who lived in Newfoundland from 1899 to 1904. In 1904, the Ode was set to different music that was written by British composer Sir Hubert Parry and then adopted as Newfoundland's unofficial anthem. At the time, Newfoundland was a British colony with responsible government, and became a self-governing Dominion in 1907. The Dominion experienced severe economic and financial problems during the Great Depression, and in 1934 the Newfoundland legislature agreed to a Commission of Government under Britain to govern the country; Newfoundland and Labrador became a province of Canada by joining Confederation in 1949.

In 1979, the provincial government adopted the Ode as Newfoundland and Labrador's provincial anthem, the first province to adopt a provincial anthem. The [Provincial Anthem Act](#) sets out the song's lyrics. The Ode is four verses long; typically, the first and last verses are sung.

² See <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/the-ode-to-newfoundland-as-you-ve-never-heard-it-before-1.5569690> for story about theatrical introduction of the Ode Jan. 21, 1902

Memorial University Convocation

In St. John's, convocation is held twice a year at the Arts and Culture Centre during May and October. There are typically nine sessions in May and three sessions in October. There is a separate convocation period in May at the Corner Brook Arts and Culture Centre for the Grenfell Campus, normally with three sessions. The information below provides a snapshot of the ceremonies at each campus for Spring 2024.

Graduands' Attendance at Convocation – Spring 2024					
	Attended St. John's Campus Convocation	Attended Grenfell Campus Convocation	Did Not Attend St. John's Campus Convocation	Did Not Attend Grenfell Campus Convocation	Totals
Undergraduate Degrees	1477	149	374	26	2026
Certificate	N/A	N/A	88	4	92
Diploma	N/A	N/A	26	0	26
Graduate Degrees	395	9	406	7	817
Graduate Diplomas	N/A	N/A	74	0	74
Total Attended Vs Not Attended	1872	158	968	37	

Please note that these are approximate numbers and do not include the following:

- Students who registered as deferred attendees
- Students who change their status for Convocation after their initial registration (ex. Did not show as they became sick or showed up at the venue wanting to walk across stage)
- Certification, diploma, and graduate diploma students were not invited to attend convocation which is why N/A is written for those fields

The Order of Ceremony has historically included:

Singing of O Canada

The Chancellor opening Convocation

Territory Acknowledgement

Remarks to Convocation from the President and oftentimes from a Vice-President

Conferring of Degrees – Undergraduate and Graduate

Musical Performance

Presentation of Professor Emeriti (if applicable)

Presentation of Honorary Graduand (if applicable)

Conferring of Honorary Degree

Declaration of the Close of convocation

[Singing of the Ode to Newfoundland] – prior to pause

Data Collection Methodology

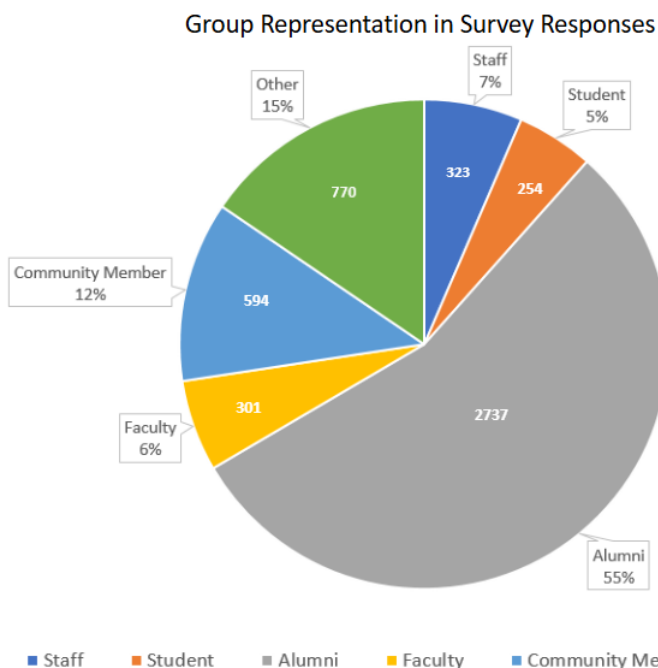
The AHC determined that it would be best served through a public and community-based consultation process. Summary information is below. One of the primary intents of the committee was to provide an opportunity for voices from underrepresented groups to have the opportunity to be heard. The AHC was conscious that traditional consultation format(s) and process(es) privilege certain bodies and voices, even when attempts are made to flatten power structures. Realistically, the AHC felt that some groups may not believe in consultation because they have been consulted to exhaustion and those consultation results often ignore and therefore silence their voices in reporting the results. Also, based on their lived and living experience sometimes people think their contribution will matter to help influence change and alter the course of things in predominantly white institutions.

The AHC determined that:

- Qualitative-style methods (providing three open-ended questions) permitted deeper understanding of the context and nuances for participants of the Ode's inclusion in convocation ceremonies.
- Utilizing the same three, open-ended questions permitted focus on the experiences and perspectives of individuals, providing a human-centered approach. This approach supported the need to provide a voice to the often voiceless.
- The use of three open-ended questions emphasized the importance of context, helping the AHC understand how and why certain recommendations may surface within specific groups. The AHC recognized that this could lead to more relevant and applicable insights.

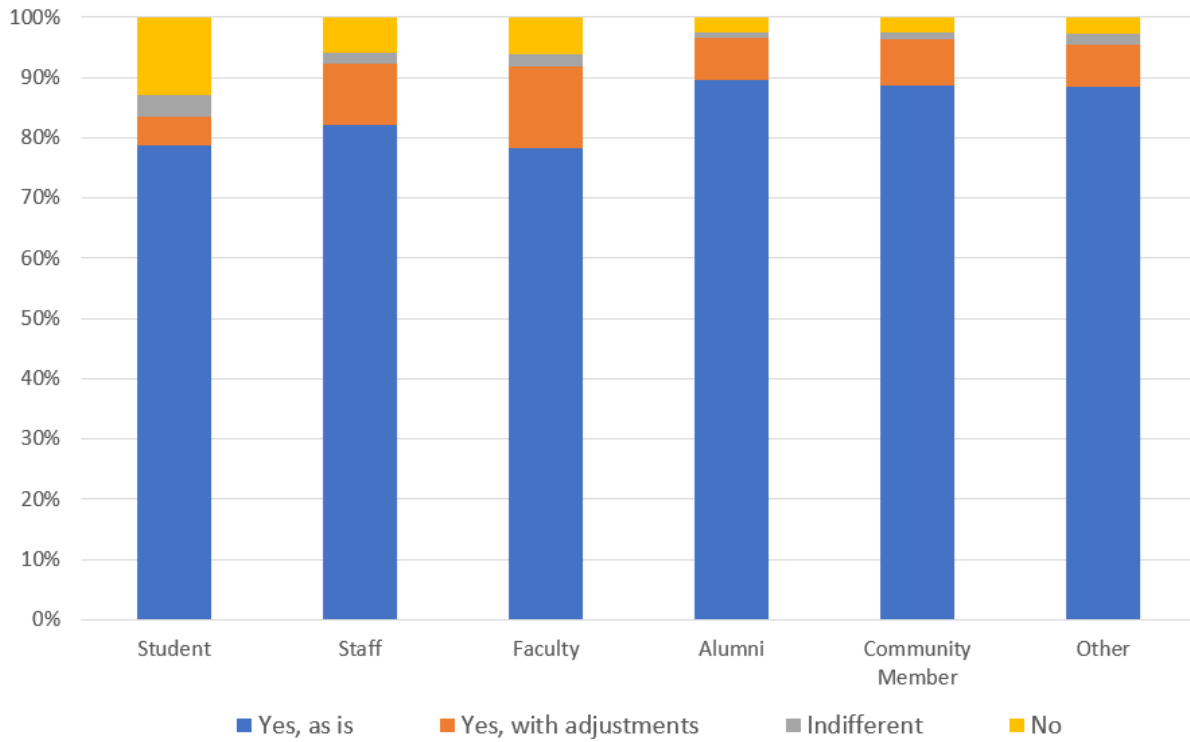
Consultation methods and considerations included, but were not limited to:

- Consultation sessions
- Interviews with key informants
- Presentations from committee members
- Survey or questionnaire
- Written submissions

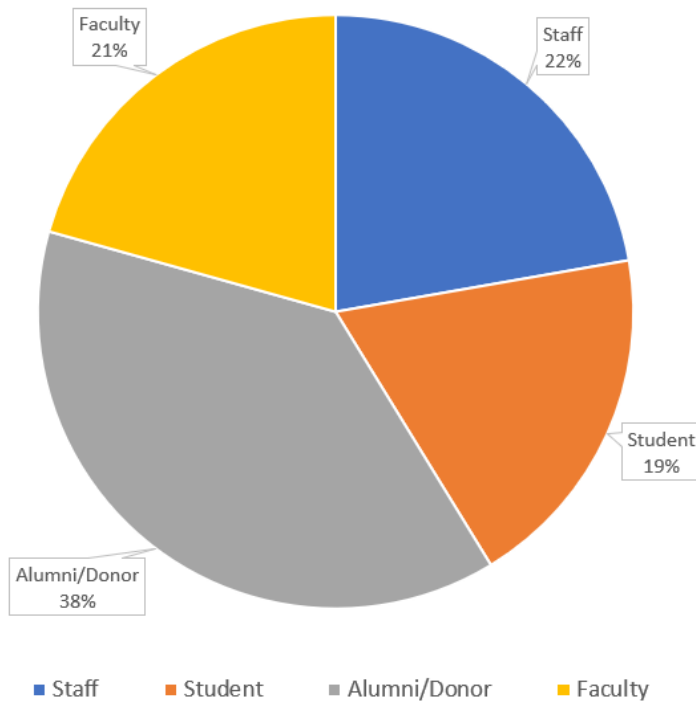


It's important to note that some survey respondents identified themselves as having multiple relations to the university. For instance, a staff member could also be an alumni and community member.

Survey Response Summary by Group



Live Consultation Session Attendance by Group



Attendees may have multiple relations to the university. Details are provided here based on their identities as it relates to the consultation session.

Approach to Consultations and Online Survey Results

Targeted Consultations

Consultation groups were discussed and agreed to by the AHC. One-hour sessions were all conducted online via WebEx, facilitated by a committee member, recorded and transcribed. Available committee members were in attendance when appropriate, but discussion was restricted to the selected facilitator. Over the course of six months (August 2024 – January 2025), the AHC held 16 live consultations sessions, with attendees representing all campuses, including students, staff, faculty, alumni and donors. Through targeted consultation, the AHC engaged with representative from areas such as alumni and donors, Indigenous faculty/staff and Indigenous/International students and student union representatives. In total the committee engaged with between 60 and 65 individuals.

These sessions provided an opportunity for the committee to hear diverse perspectives from various groups within the community. Many people expressed interest in attending the live consultation sessions, however in order ensure there was enough time for meaningful discussion, each session was limited to 10 attendees.

Where direct invitation resulted in more than the maximum number of participants per session, scrutineered selection was done – with participants being replaced up until the final moments before each consultation session. Even with this process in place, selected individuals may not have attended a session without providing prior notice to the AHC. Anyone who was not selected to attend a consultation session, was asked to complete the online survey.

Participants, anticipated maximum of 10 per session, were guided through the process based on the following:

CONSULTATION SESSION:

ODE TO NEWFOUNDLAND AND CONVOCATION

The feedback you share with us here will be used exclusively for the purpose of providing a recommendation to Senate regarding the inclusion of the provincial anthem, “Ode to Newfoundland,” at Memorial’s convocation ceremonies. This session is confidential, and your feedback is recorded as anonymous. Your feedback will not be linked to you in any way. Each of us has a responsibility to respect the confidentiality of this space after the session completes. The transcript of this session will be kept securely by the University’s Senate and only authorized personnel in the Senate Office and members of the Ad Hoc Committee to Consider the Inclusion of the Ode to Newfoundland at Memorial’s Convocation Ceremonies will have access. A report will be compiled in the future in summary form only and that report may be shared with others as part of this process.

Questions for consideration during consultations:

1. *What does the Ode to Newfoundland mean to you?*
2. *Do you believe that the Ode to Newfoundland should be included in Convocation Ceremonies at Memorial University of Newfoundland? If yes, why so? If not, why not?*
3. *Is there anything else you would like to add?*

Online Survey

On online survey, approved by The Institutional Survey Oversight Committee (ISOC) launched on January 10, 2025, and completed February 7, 2025. Individuals were informed of the survey through Newline, email, collaborative outreach through student unions, and word of mouth. The survey allowed one submission per IP address.

Number of Online Survey Responses
3799

Survey Questions
1. Briefly, please provide some background information about yourself which may be relevant to this discussion. Indicate your relationship to the university (Please select all that apply): <input type="radio"/> Memorial Staff <input type="radio"/> Current Memorial Student <input type="radio"/> Community Member <input type="radio"/> Memorial Faculty <input type="radio"/> Alumni <input type="radio"/> Other
2. What does the Ode to Newfoundland mean to you?
3. Do you believe that the Ode to Newfoundland should be included in Convocation Ceremonies at Memorial University of Newfoundland? If yes, why so? If not, why not?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Emails

Requests for Consultation (Live Consultation Sessions/Online Survey)

Email communication provided a method to reach out to potential participants. Targeted email invitations ranged in audience size but as an example, reached an audience number of ~58,000. The AHC recognized that identities are fluid, and individuals may receive multiple communications, for example an international student may also identify as Black, an alumni may identify as a donor.

Date	Recipient Group	Purpose	Notes
Nov. 2024	Alumni/Donors	To announce the live consultation process and invite attendees.	Email distributed by MUN Alumni Office.
	Newsline	To announce the live consultation process and invite attendees.	Newsline is distributed to all Faculty and Staff across all campuses.
	Labrador Campus	To announce the live consultation process and invite attendees.	Email distributed by the Vice-Provost & Dean's Office.
Nov. 2024 through Dec. 2024	Alumni/Donors, Faculty, Staff, and Student Unions	Direct invitations to consultation sessions.	Many people expressed interest in attending the live consultation sessions. As space was limited to ten people per session, names were drawn from a hat under the supervision of a scrutineer to ensure fairness.
Jan. 2025	Alumni/Donors	To raise awareness of the survey.	Email distributed by MUN Alumni Office.
	Retirees	To raise awareness of the survey.	Distributed by the MUN Pensioners' Association.
	Grenfell Campus	To raise awareness of the survey.	Multiple notifications were sent via Student Messenger, Grenfell Messenger, Department and Faculty Contacts.
	Memorial's Black Student's Association	Direct invitations to consultation sessions.	Distributed by the Internationalization Office.
	Grenfell Campus Black Student Caucus	Direct invitations to consultation sessions.	Distributed by the International Student Programming Coordinator at Grenfell Campus.
	International Students	Direct invitations to consultation sessions.	Distributed by the Internationalization Office.
	International Students (Grenfell Campus)	Direct invitations to consultation sessions.	Distributed by the International Student Programming Coordinator at Grenfell Campus.
	Indigenous Students	Direct invitations to consultation sessions.	Distributed by the Indigenous Student Resource Centre.
	Labrador Campus	To raise awareness of the survey.	Email distributed by the Vice-Provost & Dean's Office.
	Student Unions (MUNSU, MISU, GCSU, GSU)	To raise awareness of the survey.	We noticed that MUNSU shared the survey link on their Instagram Account (which has ~7,000 followers) and Facebook account (which has ~9,000 followers).
	Newsline	To raise awareness of the survey.	Newsline is distributed to all Faculty and Staff across all campuses.

*emails sent with the intention of further distribution were then outside of the control of the AHC.

Themes

The intended outcome of the consultation process was to identify key themes within all forms of consultation – consultation groups and online survey – that would guide the AHC’s recommendation. Each AHC member analyzed all the targeted consultation feedback.

Due to the volume of survey responses received, AHC members were assigned an equal portion of survey responses for theme analysis. Details were available to all members and multiple discussions took place to ensure alignment across the entirety of the data.

Resulting from the work and discussions, seven key themes were identified.

Themes (in a non-ranked order)

1. Colonial narratives and erasure/appropriation of Indigenous/Labradorian histories
2. Performativity and Political Correctness
3. Cultural identity, pride, and limits of symbolism
4. Process, consultation, and transparency
5. Blaming international students/minority groups
6. The Perception of the Ode as connecting the University to the province and its people
7. Ode as a historical artefact/product of its time & place

Details:

1. Colonial narratives and erasure/appropriation of Indigenous/Labradorian histories

Colonialism and associated concepts came out in many of the responses in both real-time consultations and in the online survey. In some ways, those who offered perspectives that highlighted colonial aspects of the Ode and the conversations around its inclusion in convocation ceremonies at Memorial could be positioned as speaking in response to the perspectives that highlighted cultural identity and pride.

There were several concerns raised that the Ode was composed by a person not from this land, a colonial governor who spent very little time here. One respondent noted that the Ode to Newfoundland was written with no input or consultation across the territory that comprises the present-day province. Another highlighted that some of the lyrics indicate a lack of historical knowledge on the part of the author. Other concerns included the lack of acknowledgement of the colonial history of the Ode, the need to reckon with and acknowledge truth before there can be reconciliation, and the irony of beginning the convocation ceremony with a land acknowledgement but then also singing the Ode to Newfoundland, which those who highlight the colonial history of the Ode perceive as being at odds with the land acknowledgement due to the understanding that the Ode serves to erase Indigenous and Labrador histories.

A few participants shared their perspective that the Ode is only representative of a select or privileged portion of the population of the province. One participant noted the reliance on resources from Labrador to support the province, but then lacking representation in the provincial anthem and its inclusion at convocation. Others shared a desire to see Labrador represented, and that the Ode to Newfoundland is not meaningful to Labradorians. Although there were some participants who suggested that the university add the Ode to Labrador, there were also some who

said that was not appropriate, and multiple others who noted, “the Ode to Labrador is even worse” or “just as bad” as the Ode to Newfoundland.

The committee also heard that concerns from Indigenous students, about the Ode’s inclusion at convocation, have been brought forward on multiple campuses since at least 2014 and 2015. Also of note is that although there were many responses that revealed beliefs that international students were somehow responsible for complaints about the Ode, and responses that revealed xenophobia, the committee did not hear any of these supposed complaints from international students. What we did hear was some international solidarity with Indigenous students regarding the colonial nature of the Ode.

Finally, with respect to the theme of colonialism, the committee noted many misunderstandings of historical realities, as well as throughout the responses the assumption of unity, or belief that individual views represent universal or collective feelings about the Ode. This was evident in the continued use of “we,” “us,” “everyone,” “taxpayers,” and “the people of the province.” The use of “Newfoundland” and “Newfoundlanders,” while also used repeatedly, could be the result of habits around nomenclature, or could be further evidence of the erasure of Labrador in these conversations. It is unclear based simply on observation which is more accurate.

Please see [Appendix D](#) for direct quotations from participants that further illuminate what is shared here.

2. *Performativity and Political Correctness*

Participants offered two distinct and important perspectives in this theme which appear in conflict. This is yet another indication of the polarization of thoughts, feelings and ideas regarding the issue. Some participants suggested that the removal of the Ode was merely performance, that is, there is a lack of meaningful actions being undertaken across the university beyond the removal of the Ode. One participant said,

“If you are going to make edi decisions you should really do research about the concepts of window dressing, unintended consequences, and the harm that is creating by positioning people in competition based on minority characteristics. If you are not addressing systemic issues at mun than changing a song does nothing other than create outrage. For example, how can an institute charge international hire rates of tuition or charge Indigenous students at all to attend school on their unceded territory. If you are not considering these questions you are not interested in addressing systemic issues. If you are including other patriotic nonsense in the ceremony then the ode should be there. If there is a flag, sing the song. If you sing oh Canada sing the ode.”

Others suggest that the removal of the Ode is a symbol of political correctness where actions are taken to please one group of people, often those who are complaining about long-standing, firmly implanted values. One participant expressed,

“Yes, it should be a part of the ceremony. Memorial University is in Newfoundland and is OUR university, therefore, our ode is an intregal part of our ceremony. You should also include the Ode to Labrador to the ceremony. That should have always been part of it & in my opinion, a huge oversight. You are taking political correctness to the extreme.”

Please see [Appendix D](#) for direct quotations from participants that further illuminate what is shared here.

3. Cultural identity, pride, and limits of symbolism

This was the most preponderant theme in the online surveys, most notably among the alumni respondents, but not disproportionately so among students, faculty and staff. It should be noted that this theme, while voiced in numerous real-time consultations, occupied less prominence in those consultations. Overall, those who noted how the Ode instills a sense of pride tended to accentuate how the Ode is emblematic of Newfoundland identity and heritage, and even how the Ode represented pride in the university. Pride is also said to be felt emotively, through the collective singing of the Ode. The Ode is viewed as an anthem that unifies Newfoundlanders and reminds them of their shared history, identity, and sacrifice. Pride in the Ode also takes the form of pride in the uniqueness of Newfoundland culture relative to the rest of Canada. Opinions differed among the respondents in terms of what exactly is meant by belonging in this provincial community. Some survey responses convey or imply a notion of community and belonging as one that is defined more by the island of Newfoundland; other perspectives include the whole province geographically by noting how the Ode is a symbol of pride and identity for “Newfoundlanders and Labradorians” (admittedly, the first approach may be due to the lingering cultural habits of equating the word “Newfoundland” with the entire province). Many survey respondents noted the didactic value of tradition and heritage in helping people face a currently uncertain future, but at the same time many respondents, while expressing their pride in the Ode, suggested many ways for how the Ode should be updated, or rewritten entirely, or how Convocation Ceremonies should be rethought in order to be made more inclusive, particularly of Labrador.

A sub-theme of this theme that is voiced in some instances is how the Ode expresses pride and appreciation in the beauty of the province’s landscapes. In this regard, the at-time challenging landscape and climate are said to embody the strength and robustness of the people of the province, joining together a perspective of provincial identity, history, land, and sea. Some respondents argued that because the Ode is largely a “love poem” to the landscapes of the province, the Ode is culturally neutral and applies to and thus includes everyone living in the province. Still, a few respondents and participants in the real-time consultations noted the incongruity in extolling a landscape but forgetting that the stands of “pine-clad hills” have disappeared due to overharvesting.

Please see [Appendix D](#) for direct quotations from participants that further illuminate what is shared here

4. Process, consultation, and transparency

A number of survey respondents expressed anger, disappointment, even frustration at the process of removing the Ode from Convocation and continuing the pause. Relevant quotes are provided here with permission:

- “Pathetic. Resign.” (Alumni)
- “I personally will never support Memorial University nor will I recommend Memorial University to any young person considering accessing a post secondary education as long as the ode continues to be excluded from convocation ceremonies” (Alumni)
- “Yes it most definitely should be and its appalling that its been removed.” (Alumni)

Among faculty, students and alumni, there were obvious concerns expressed by the public discourse on social media, the University's status and its commitment to the People of the Province. A relevant quote is provided here:

- "If you don't know where you've come from, you don't know where you're going." Maya Angelou To me the Ode reflects on the history of and struggles of this wonderful place. It is sadly a reflection of the disregard of our history that this is even being considered, and lack of respect for those who sacrificed for this, our New Found Land. Since you have brought us down this path, I expect you'll want to eliminate the name Memorial from this University- perhaps you don't even know its meaning and history." (Alumni, Faculty)

Several of the alumni and students believed the Committee's work and Memorial time spent on consultations was a waste of time and resources. Relevant quotes are provided here, with permission:

- "Include the Ode, get on to other more important business" (Alumni, Faculty)

Most of those concerns were brought forward by alumni and donor groups who essentially are really proud of Memorial, consider themselves Newfoundlanders first, and do not really understand the history of the Ode, it's lack of inclusivity, or it's colonial relicts.

Finally, some quotes from a few undergraduate students and alums regarding the Ode to Newfoundland in Convocation:

- "Absolutely not. That would be letting old white men dictate Memorial's future which is absolutely ridiculous. The Ode was written by a British colonial governor who only lived in Newfoundland for a few years. It is ridiculous that we are having this conversation. The Ode does not matter to students at all. At ALL. We want funding for the university, stop for ing the Ode into our convocations! I am graduating in May and I do NOT WANT IT THERE!" (Student)
- "No. It is appropriate in provincial government settings and official events, however I don't feel that Memorial University or its convocations are part of that." (Alumni)
- "colonial and outdated at present" (Alumni)

5. *Blaming international students/minority groups*

A belief that is expressed particularly among the survey respondents is that the reason why the Memorial administration removed the Ode in October 2022 was because of complaints about the Ode voiced by international or out-of-province students. These respondents generally argue that while Newfoundland and Labrador is a welcoming place, those who come here should respect provincial traditions and should not try to change or repress them, in the same way that those Newfoundlanders who work or study abroad should not attempt to change the culture of those places either. This sentiment is problematic because Memorial belongs to all its students – and international students pay a much higher price for their education (Newfoundlanders are not educating them for free). Regrettably, some comments made by a few of these respondents contain tones and/or statements of xenophobia.

However, there is virtually no evidence in the survey results or real-time consultation sessions that out-of-province or international student participants express their dislike of the Ode for not

reflecting the presence of international/out of province students. A few participants noted an appreciation for the province's uniqueness in having its own ode. One individual in the real-time consultations noted that a balanced approach could be taken to convocation ceremonies, including odes or representative songs from both Labrador and the island of Newfoundland. A few others advocated for permanent removal of Ode if it is not inclusive of Labradorians and Indigenous peoples

Please see [Appendix D](#) for direct quotations from participants that further illuminate what is shared here

6. *The Perception of the Ode as connecting the University to the province and its people*

To many, the Ode signifies the strong connection between the peoples of the province and the university. As the only university in the province, Memorial holds a special place in the hearts and minds of our citizens. This is reciprocated, in the most obvious manner, within the official Vision Statement of the University: "and will fulfill its special obligation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador."³

We heard that Memorial is a very important public institution within our province and that the link between the Ode and the University is particularly vital. One reason for this feeling is that both the Ode and the university are associated with remembering those who fell in the World Wars and subsequent conflicts. Of course, the university itself is named in memory of those citizens that made the biggest sacrifice in fighting for our province. Although the Ode was written before either world conflict, it became the Provincial Anthem and continues to be sung during military tributes and ceremonies. The pride that many individuals conveyed regarding the Ode, and the university, was quite clear in our consultations.

Due to the unique position Memorial University has within the province, compared with other Canadian universities, there was a sentiment within our consultees of "ownership" when it comes to "their" university. The NL government provides ~70% of the budget of the university and many residents of the province also donate directly to the institution. As well, since the majority of students who attend Memorial are residents of Newfoundland and Labrador, additional funding for the running of the university is supplied by our residents through tuition. The peoples of the province naturally feel they have a right to be heard when it comes to decision-making about the inclusion of the Ode in convocation.

In general, we observed that alumni were particularly passionate about having the Ode included in convocation for the reasons mentioned above. However, these were not the only reasons that they conveyed.

Please see [Appendix D](#) for direct quotations from participants that further illuminate what is shared here

³See: [Vision, Mission and Values | President's Office | Memorial University of Newfoundland](#)

7. *Ode as a historical artifact/product of its time and place*

The ambivalence expressed by some survey respondents regarding the Ode to Newfoundland highlights a desire for inclusivity and modernization in the lyrics, particularly in the fourth verse or complete removal of the Ode from convocation at Memorial University.

The Ode is perceived as not actually representative of current realities.

Suggestions for modifications focus on the phrases related to heritage and spirituality, indicating a preference for language that resonates with contemporary values and diverse perspectives while retaining a connection to the province's history and cultural significance.

Many respondents in this category suggested amendments to specific lyrics including “our fathers” “where once they stood we stand” and “God guard thee.”

Ode to Newfoundland (4th verse)

*As loved our fathers, so we love
Where once they stood we stand
Their prayer we raise to heav'n above
God guard thee Newfoundland
God guard thee, God guard thee
God guard thee Newfoundland.*

Respondents that argued for the removal of the Ode from Convocation Ceremonies suggesting that the song is steeped in colonialism, and carries outdated notions reflecting men’s perspectives and mentions women only in their roles as mothers , and focuses on other aspects of the province related to “God, King, and country”, which do not align with the values of equity and diversity that a contemporary educational institution should promote. As society evolves, so too should the traditions within it, allowing institutions to embrace a more inclusive atmosphere that resonates with all members of the community.

Please see [Appendix D](#) for direct quotations from participants that further illuminate what is shared here.

Recommendation

The ad hoc committee (AHC) investigated, consulted, discussed, and considered the inclusion of the Provincial Anthem, 'Ode to Newfoundland' at Memorial University's Convocation ceremonies.

Regarding the pause on the singing of the Ode to Newfoundland at Memorial's convocation ceremonies, the ad hoc committee of senate to consider the inclusion of The Ode to Newfoundland (Ode) at Memorial's Convocation Ceremonies recommends reinstating the Ode as part of the ceremonies.

The AHC is making this recommendation while also requesting that the Senate uphold the promotion of a respectful environment, fostering a culture of respect and inclusivity to prevent harassment or discrimination against any member of the AHC or participant in the consultation process.

At multiple points since forming as a committee, including within the data gathered, AHC members have received threats, experienced harmful dialogue and been subject to unsubstantiated and hurtful narratives. Each AHC member has participated in the work of the committee by learning, listening and challenging each other to consider alternate worldviews.

Also, this recommendation is being made based on a majority vote of the ad hoc committee. Members of the AHC welcome you to view additional information provided by those who voted in favour of the recommendation as presented ([Appendix E](#)) against the recommendation ([Appendix F](#)), and those who abstained ([Appendix G](#)).

Additional suggestions the AHC presents based on their work

Throughout the process the AHC has gathered additional suggestions for the Memorial community to consider. Some actions would need to be taken within the administration, and some would be supported elsewhere. The suggestions are rooted in furthering Memorial's commitment to acknowledging Indigenous culture and people, and supporting equity, diversity, anti-Black racism.

1. Reissued Apology for the Process of Removing the *Ode to Newfoundland*

Memorial University should consider formally reissuing an apology to all members of its community for how the *Ode to Newfoundland* was removed from convocation ceremonies. This apology should acknowledge that the decision-making process caused deep divisions, emotional harm, and frustration among various communities within Newfoundland and Labrador and across Memorial's campuses. Furthermore, if the *Ode to Newfoundland* is reinstated in convocation, the apology must acknowledge its potential impact on Indigenous people, Labradorians and those who wanted to see a permanent removal and/or change of lyrics before reinstatement (recognizing that changing the lyrics are outside of the scope of the university). The apology should come with various action items, including a list of resources being considered to support them.

2. Support for, and reconsidered membership of, the Convocation Advisory Committee in addition to support for individuals impacted by the reinstate/remove decision of senate

That the current Convocation Advisory Committee work to update their Terms of Reference and consider amending their constituency. Given the invaluable information that has been collected through the AHC consultations, and the upcoming opportunities to host convocation at the Labrador

Campus, the potential to expand the Convocation Advisory Committee's work and mandate can be leveraged to realize positive change. To ensure results, appropriate resources to incorporate new cultural elements are essential. Equally, with several members overlapping in their membership with the Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees and Ceremonial, building a bridge to provide information through to Senate via the Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees and Ceremonial should be established. The committee should assess how Memorial's convocation ceremonies can honor the province's rich and unique cultures. One avenue to consider would be offering training and support for volunteers, staff, faculty and graduands to ensure the event is inclusive and welcoming to all. This training should educate participants on the importance of convocation as a celebration for a diverse student body rather than a tradition centered solely on Newfoundlander students. If the Ode to Newfoundland is reinstated in convocation, a support system should be in place for those graduates who find the current provincial anthem harmful and a barrier to their full participation. If the Ode to Newfoundland is not reinstated, supports should equally be available for those impacted.

3. Recommitment to Truth and Reconciliation and Support for the Strategic Framework for Indigenization

Before true reconciliation can occur, one must reckon with Truth. One way to do this is to educate all faculty, staff and students on historical truths, Indigenous perspectives, and what it means to hold ourselves accountable in supporting reconciliation and Indigenization. A significant way to accomplish this is through the Strategic Framework for Indigenization, which, under the leadership of the Vice-President (Indigenous) and the Office of Indigenous Affairs, has outlined a number of actions to support this work.

Additional Thought for Consideration:

Although outside of the mandate and not a question posed during the consultation process, the AHC wants to recognize the substantial response received indicating that consideration should be given to making the Ode to Newfoundland more inclusive. It is suggested that any initiative undertaken by the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador to reconsider, and make more inclusive, the lyrics of the Ode, be met with a willingness from Memorial to assist in a collaborative process.

Please see [Appendix H](#) for direct quotations from participants that further illuminate what is shared here.

Acknowledgments

A sincere thank you to all who participated on this committee. To former committee members who have retired, graduated or changed jobs, your role on the committee was greatly appreciated. To faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors and community members who participated in the various consultation sessions, your voice was an important piece to this process. Also, thanks are extended to the staff of the Registrar's and Senate Offices who supported the work of the AHC.

Year	Month	What happened?
2021	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memorial’s Board of Regents <i>recommended</i> that the official name of the institution be revised from “Memorial University of Newfoundland” to “Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador” (Mar 11, 2021)
2022	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Singing <i>Ode to Newfoundland</i> suspended at Memorial University convocation ceremonies. (Oct. 2022)
	November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Senate of Memorial University (Senate) discussed the inclusion of the Ode at convocation ceremonies at length and proposed putting forward a motion at the next meeting of Senate. (Nov. 8, 2022)
	December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senate tabled a motion to pause the singing of the Ode during convocation ceremonies and consult with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to urge that the composition of the Ode’s wording be updated. (Dec. 13, 2022) Senate moved a subsequent motion to refer the consideration of the inclusion of the Ode at convocation ceremonies to Senate’s Honorary Degrees and Ceremonial (HDC) committee. (Dec. 13, 2022)
2023	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HDC committee received a presentation on reconciliation by Catharyn Andersen, Vice President (Indigenous) and Paul Adjei, Associate Vice President (Indigenous Research).
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The HDC committee discussed the inclusion of the Ode at convocation ceremonies. The decision was made to pause the signing of the Ode for Spring convocation ceremonies. A report was produced by the HDC committee to report to Senate. The HDC committee recommended that a University Committee with a broad representation be struck to review the Ode issue and form a recommendation.
	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senate discussed the HDC report and accepted the recommendation for the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee (AHC). (May. 9, 2023)
	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Senate committee on Elections, Committees, and Bylaws (SCECB) approved for recommendation the Terms of Reference and Selection Criteria for the AHC.
	November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senate approved the Terms of Reference and Selection Criteria for the AHC. (Nov. 14, 2023)
	December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership recommendations (where available) were approved by Senate. (Dec. 12, 2023)
2024	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outstanding memberships approved by Senate. (Jan. 9, 2024) First official meeting of the AHC. (Jan. 19, 2024) Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) considered. (Jan. 25, 2024)
	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AHC received a Presentation on Implicit Bias by Michael Kielly, Manager, Policy and Organizational Effectiveness, and Mandy Penney, Employment Equity Officer. (Feb. 21, 2024) Changes to the Terms of Reference approved by SCECB.
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AHC received a presentation on Historical Background, Context, and Considerations, by Kelly Anne Butler, Interim Director, Indigenous Engagement and Reconciliation. (Mar. 1, 2024) Changes to the Terms of Reference approved by Senate (Mar. 12, 2024)
	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AHC delivered a Preliminary Report to Senate – Recommendation: Ode to Newfoundland continue to be paused for the next convocation cycle. (Apr. 9, 2024)

	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AHC received approval from the Institutional Survey Oversight Committee (ISOC) to proceed with an online Qualtrics survey. Accompanying privacy statement approved.
	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Communications Officer from the Registrar's Office began attending AHC meetings. (Jun. 3, 2024)
	July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ATIPP Considered. (Jul. 18, 2024)
	August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First live consultation session. (Aug. 16, 2024)
	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AHC delivered an Interim Report to Senate – Recommendation: Ode to Newfoundland continue to be paused for the next convocation cycle. (Sept. 10, 2024) Second live consultation session. (Sept. 5, 2024)
	October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Third live consultation session. (Oct. 3, 2024) A motion was presented to Senate to disband the AHC. The motion was defeated. (Oct. 8, 2024) Fourth live consultation session. (Oct. 18, 2024) Fifth live consultation session. (Oct. 24, 2024)
	November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sixth and seventh live consultation sessions. (Nov. 21, 2024) Eight and ninth live consultation sessions. (Nov. 28, 2024)
	December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenth and eleventh live consultation sessions. (Dec. 5, 2024) Twelfth live consultation session. (Dec. 11, 2024) Thirteenth live consultation session. (Dec. 16, 2024)
2025	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fourteenth live consultation session. (Jan. 8, 2025) ATIPP considered. (Jan. 8, 2025) Online Survey opened. (Jan. 10, 2025) Fifteenth live consultation session. (Jan. 20, 2025) Sixteenth live consultation session. (Jan. 30, 2025)
	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online Survey closed. (Feb. 7, 2025) ATIPP considered. (Feb. 18, 2025) Members of the AHC met with the Honorable Dr. Andrew Furey, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, to discuss the inclusion of the Ode at convocation ceremonies. (Feb. 20, 2025)
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final report delivered to Senate's Executive Committee for approval to be included on the April 8, 2025 Senate agenda

Ad-hoc Committee – Ode to Newfoundland

Terms of Reference

1.0 Purpose

a) A committee to investigate, consult, discuss, consider, and prepare a report with recommendations to Senate regarding the inclusion of the Provincial Anthem, 'Ode to Newfoundland' at Memorial University's Convocation ceremonies.

2.0 Responsibilities

a) Committee members are expected to meet regularly, review provided material, provide thoughtful consideration of issues, and offer guidance in the preparation of the report to Senate.

b) Members are expected to meaningfully communicate insights and perspectives as representatives on this ad-hoc committee.

c) The committee shall defer to the usual by-laws of Senate as guidance in matters not otherwise covered in these Terms of Reference.

3.0 Membership

Convener: Interim Secretary of Senate [non-voting] Recording secretary:

Senate support staff [non-voting]

Director, Internationalization Office or delegate

Vice-Provost EDI-AR or delegate

Associate Director, Student Life/Convocation Lead

Office of Indigenous Affairs representative

Indigenous student staff representative

5 Elected academic staff members appointed from among eligible Senators

4 Elected student representatives

4.0 Term

a) In the first instance in order to present a final report to Senate, the committee will convene starting January 19, 2024 (first full meeting).

5.0 Meetings

- a) It is anticipated that the committee will meet weekly to begin and then as needed.
- b) The meetings may be in-person, online, or hybrid as needed.
- c) If a member is not able to participate in a meeting, that member should notify the Recording Secretary as soon as possible. The member may provide perspectives in writing to the Recording Secretary in advance so those ideas can be brought forward to the committee.

6.0 Decision-making

- a) The committee will strive for consensus when making decisions
- b) If consensus cannot be achieved then the committee may agree to a simple majority vote on a matter. Per Section VI of Senate bylaws, quorum shall be one third plus one (rounded down) of voting members, therefore quorum is 6 for this ad-hoc committee.

7.0 Minutes

- a) Minutes of committee meetings will be kept and distributed to members after each meeting.

8.0 Report

- a) A report outlining the preliminary work and findings of the committee will be presented to Senate, at or prior to the regularly-scheduled April 2024 meeting. This report is intended to include an interim recommendation for the spring 2024 convocation ceremonies.
- b) A final report will be presented to Senate at the conclusion of the committee's work.

**Report from the Senate Committee
on Honorary Degrees and Ceremonial
May 7, 2023**

Issue: Guidance regarding the motion referred by Senate to the Committee on Honorary Degrees and Ceremonial regarding the Provincial Anthem-“Ode to Newfoundland”.

Background:

On October 20, 2022 Memorial University paused the singing of the Provincial Anthem, the “Ode to Newfoundland” (Ode), during its Convocation ceremonies following concerns that the anthem was misaligned with the university’s commitment to Indigenization and was not inclusive of Labrador. This decision was taken by Dr. Timmons and the President’s Advisory Team, without prior consultation with the duly appointed Senate Committee on Honorary Degrees and Ceremonial.

There are important and necessary conversations ongoing about the critical importance of Indigenization and the fundamental role universities play in reconciliation. Memorial is actively engaged in a process of indigenizing the academy with the goal of bringing Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing into all areas of the university, and creating safe and welcoming spaces for all Indigenous students and communities. Removing the “Ode to Newfoundland” from convocation ceremonies was seen as one meaningful way to demonstrate that commitment as we work to greater structural and systemic changes.

The decision however was met with mixed and passionate reaction, both internally and externally, from those who both applauded the decision as well as those who were outraged at the removal and by the lack of consultation. Numerous complaints, including from alumni and donors to discontinue their support for Memorial, were received across the university as well as published in local and social media. On November 3, 2022, the provincial House of Assembly passed an all-party motion calling for Memorial to reinstate the Ode and for the addition of the “Ode to Labrador” at Convocation ceremonies. While the motion acknowledged the University’s autonomy on such matters, it was felt by some that as a publically funded institution, such a message from the House of Assembly could not be dismissed.

At a meeting held on December 13, 2022, Senate received and considered a motion (Appendix A) supporting the suspension of the current version of the Ode and to consult with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to urge that the composition’s wording be updated and adapted. Recognizing the complex issues surrounding this topic, and upon review of the terms of reference for the Honorary Degrees and Ceremonial (HD&C) committee, the motion was then referred to committee for

consideration, and requested that the committee report back to senate with guidance on the motion before a vote was held.

The HD&C committee met on November 3, 2022, December 23, 2022, January 27, 2023, March 10, 2023 and March 27, 2023 and gave lengthy consideration to this controversial matter. In its attempt to provide informed guidance to Senate the committee invited Catharyn Andersen, VP (Indigenous) and Dr. Paul Banahene Adjei, AVP (Indigenous Research) to a special meeting on January 27, 2023 to provide informed insight into the basis for some of the concerns with the lyrics of the Ode and in the colonial context it was written. Unfortunately, as a result of the faculty strike in late January/early February the HD&C committee's plan to seek informed guidance from other stakeholders who had expressed concerns on this matter was not able to occur.

Analysis:

After much consideration and frank conversations, the committee has acknowledged that this issue has been divisive for the university and the broader community. While there is strong support for Memorial's Indigenization Framework, there is also an acknowledgement that the ceremonies associated with Convocation at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador should include and reflect the cultural and historical diversity of all graduating students and their families.

The following recommendations attempt to offer a pragmatic balance between recognizing the distinct history of the institution, honoring those that built the institution and continue to support it, and those whose memory it was built to remember, while planning for a future that is more inclusive and reflects the evolving population of the province, celebrating the distinct cultures, history, and landscape of the people of Labrador and the Indigenous peoples of the entire province.

Recommendation:

The Committee on Honorary Degrees and Ceremonial does not support the motion as tabled at the Senate meeting of December 13, 2022. It therefore recommends that the inclusion of the Provincial Anthem at Convocation ceremonies remain paused and proposes the following alternative courses of action for Senate's consideration:

1. That Senate consult with Indigenous people (students, staff, alumni, members, elders) on their opinions regarding the inclusion of the Provincial Anthem, "Ode to Newfoundland" at Convocation;
2. That Senate engage with members of the university community from Labrador (e.g., faculty, students, staff, alumni), and leaders from Labrador from outside the university community, about how to meaningfully include Labrador in Convocation;

3. That Senate strike an ad hoc committee to engage in these consultations which would include broad representation, with members from within and beyond the university (including Indigenous members of our community) as well as representation from Labrador.
4. That this ad hoc committee also engage with other stakeholders in the university and community (students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, funders, etc.) on this matter; and
5. After consideration of the findings from these engagements, that Senate then make an informed decision on the Ode's inclusion in Convocation.

Prepared on behalf of the Members of the Standing Committee on Honorary
Degrees and Ceremonial
May 7, 2023

Appendix A

Revised Motion submitted to the Secretary of Senate, November 27, 2022 and tabled and debated at Senate, December 13, 2022.

The Senate of Memorial University supports the decision of the University Administration to suspend the use of the current version of the “Ode to Newfoundland” (1902) at Convocation, recognizing the problematic nature of the wording of certain passages of the “Ode” along with the gendered wording of the Ode to Labrador (1927). Senate understands the significant historical importance of both “Odes” to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and the emotional attachment to them. We also note that the wording impacts the Indigenous Peoples of the Province, and is not inclusive of the diverse People who cross the stage at Memorial’s Convocations. In constructive consultation with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, who oversee decisions on the provincial anthems, we encourage the University and Government to work together collaboratively to seek a solution to the issues raised by the current dated versions of the Odes and urge that their composition’s wording be adapted and updated to be more inclusive of the diverse ethnic and gender(s)-rich culture and history of the Province – and inclusive, in the spirit and requirements of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Recommendations, of its Indigenous Peoples. We note the changes made to the Canadian National Anthem in 2018 as a positive and progressive example of keeping the spirit and tone of the original, while also amending the Anthem to make it more reflective and inclusive.

Revised Motion forwarded by Dr. Gerard Curtis
Seconded by Dr. Travis Fridgen

Below is a selection of quotes relating to the key themes identified in the report. This information is provided in no identified order and is released with the consent of the participant.

Quotes related to theme 1: Colonial narratives

- And I always felt excluded by the fact that the Ode was, the Ode to Newfoundland was played because this was not representative of where I come from in the province, so recognizing that, to not receive the same kind of recognition or even level of service as other parts of the province. (Staff)
- Until we begin to see that conversation, I will say that the Ode at this moment represents an exclusionary practice for some of us. This is not also to suggest that people who are emotionally attached to don't have grounds. They do, but history is not one thing. (Faculty)
- And yes it's change. May not be the popular decision that we make as a university, but sometimes as institution, we are not making decision because it's popular or is comfortable. But it is the right thing and in this historical moment, I think that history will remember us that when we were confronted with the most difficult question, we choose to do the right thing, even at the risk of being maligned by other people. And I think that the university took the right decision and we should stand by that. (Faculty)
- I'm not dismissing the emotional investment people have in their Ode. But just as people are emotionally attached to the Ode in the same way, Indigenous people are also emotionally attached to the harm that has been done to them. (Staff)
- I believe that people who genuinely want to continue to sing their Ode love this land and this province. And I believe that those of us who have concern about continuing to sing the Ode also love this land. (Faculty)
- Um, I think it's a symbol of colonialism and, I don't agree with the way it was taken out necessarily, but I don't think that it should be there. I hope that when I convocate I will not have it there. (Student)
- It reflects the settler like centric view of Newfoundland and it also talks about like the Ode itself talks about the natural beauty of the land, but it overlooks the displacement and the marginalization and the erasure of Indigenous cultures that accompany colonization and thinking from uh, from that perspective, um me being a settler as well. (Student)
- No, even though it is a beautiful ancient song we have to recognize our history of colonialism and therefore not include it in the graduation ceremony. (Staff)
- No. It is time to move away from the symbols of colonialism and colonial ways of thinking. I know concerns have previously been raised by the students union and Indigenous students about the Ode. Faculty)
- No.

It is one thing that these relics persist in our society because of inertia but for the university to actively go back on the decision it has made, to expend all these resources only to move backwards is ridiculous.

We can not pretend to be a progressive institution when we uphold symbols of colonialism and nationalism. There should be no ode and no national anthem.

I will note I say this as a Newfoundlander who had 2 family members die at Beaumont Hamel. It does not honour them to have people sign an anthem. It would honour them if MUN committed to the spirit of remembers me and peace that it was supposedly founded on and divested from weapons of war.

MUN should take real action to be a institution that champions peace and human rights. Not bow to pressure from people who are afraid of change but know little about what it is they cling so tightly to. (Student)

- It's a nationalist song that denies the Indigenous populations of the province.

No. It is part of our colonial and racist history. If we truly want to decolonize MUN then the Ode needs to go.

We should not be swayed by public opinion on this one. The academics at MUN should make this decision based on our knowledge of colonialism and the ways in which neocolonialism continues to play itself out in the province. (Faculty)

- The Ode to me is an old fashioned, pretty folk song that doesn't recognize the impact of colonialism. It reminds me of home, but it also reminds me of white settler culture. Two things can be true. (Alumni)
- No, excludes a half of our province. The time for celebrating colonialism is long gone. (Student)
- It's a nice song, I like it personally, but i dont think that convocation is the time and place for it. It does not reflect the diverse student body of memorial university. (Student)
- A relic of colonialism. (Alumni)
- The Ode represents an outdated colonial view of Newfoundland and Labrador. I acknowledge that there is a certain nostalgia and pride associated with it, but I believe those emotions are generated in individuals who have benefited from the colonial past of our province. I feel I can speak to that, as I am a beneficiary of that colonial past and my subsequent privilege.

Historical Accuracy: The Ode presents a romanticized and incomplete picture of Newfoundland and Labrador's history, neglecting the experiences and perspectives of those marginalized by colonialism. A convocation ceremony should strive for a more accurate and inclusive representation of the province's past.

Looking Forward: As a university committed to progress and critical thinking, Memorial University should embrace symbols and traditions that reflect its values and aspirations for the future. The Ode, rooted in the past, may not align with the university's vision for a more inclusive and equitable society. (Alumni, Community Member, Former Faculty and Staff)

- No. It is unnecessarily long, adding length to a ceremony that is already lengthy. It is not inclusive (Labrador?). Its roots in colonialism and settler nostalgia is looking not to the future, but rather yearning for a past that was oppressive for many and remembered with rose colored glasses rather than objectivity. Why would any university wish to include something like this in any official ceremony? (Alumni)
- I am a Labradorian who had to travel to the Island for education and returned home to Labrador to work for the past 20 years. The Ode to Newfoundland, to me, is another example of how separate the Island and mainland is in this province. NFLD'ers have a lot of pride in their music and culture, but it is incredibly separate from Labrador. I think it is a NFLD pride song, which is great for the Island, but considering that the majority of the resources that funds the Island comes from Labrador, perhaps something more inclusive could be considered. (Current Student, Alumni, per course instructor)
- No. I've heard some of the concerns about the colonial nature, and I expect there are concerns with respect to reconciliation, gender, religion. Universities are supposed to be about higher learning and critical thinking and making the world a better place. We're supposed to learn from the past. If members of the university community have had the strength to express concerns, then why would we keep playing a song written by a colonizer who wasn't from here and didn't stay here? I'm perplexed by the ado around this. (Alumni)
- It represents colonialism, erasure of Indigenous people on the island, and the complete erasure of Labrador. It was written by a European governor who only spent a short time here. To me it just shows how this province is still colonized. That's the feeling I get when I hear the song. (Alumni)

Quotes related to theme 2: Performativity and Political Correctness

- If the committee decides that the wording of the Ode contains archaic elements, it should endeavour to modernize the words...not eliminate the Ode. "O Canada" is a younger anthem but recently had words updated to be gender neutral....the anthem was not discarded outright. The same is true of the Ode to Newfoundland. If people feel it is not fully inclusive, then work with the province to update the words...include an outright reference to Labrador, and change "as loved our fathers" if necessary....otherwise, leave it alone and keep playing it. The Ode is one of the more beautiful anthems in the world and should not be discarded because of ill-considered political correctness. (Staff)
- What an insult to the people who worked hard to found this university. Founded in remembrance of sacrifice. founded as a means to better the people of the province at the time, and those of the future. Reactionary decision making based on interpretations of political correctness has no place in a university. It could be respected, adjusted, adapted....already proven so without the smear that came with select and tunneled "visionaries". (Staff, Alumni, Community Member, Other)

- Absolutely! It is a highly respected anthem, both inside of this province and elsewhere in Canada. Removing it from Convocation was a step too far in the direction of political correctness. (Faculty)
- This whole debacle has been an embarrassment. This decision was taken by a since disgraced former president and a small cadre of out of touch enablers. The public was rightly outraged by this nonsense, and this committee appears to have been struck simply to cover the university's behind. University administrators must keep in mind that the public foots the bill and will be increasingly unwilling to do so as the university drifts further and further away from mainstream common sense. By insisting on ever more absurd displays of political correctness, the university is sawing off the tree branch on which it sits. (Faculty, Student, Alumni)
- I grew up with the Ode as a part of many public functions. Over the years, the lyrics have been adjusted slightly, to allow for political correctness. The Ode has grown with the society that sings it.

As an educator, I taught the Ode to my students. It was discussed, illustrated and performed by many students. Some of those students were Newfoundland born, some had adopted Newfoundland as their new home. It served as a way to connect us all. I really do not understand how it has come to being seen as an insult to any of the people who call this place "home."

Memorial has always been an institution that shows respect to all. By removing the Ode, a great deal of disrespect would be displayed - to the people of the province who have recognized it for all these years as something we own.

What would be next to go? The province's flag? (Alumni)

- Political correctness sometimes makes one choose the easier path instead of the true path. (Other)
- Yes, it should be a part of the ceremony. Memorial University is in Newfoundland and is OUR university, therefore , our ode is an intregal part of our ceremony. You should also include the Ode to Labrador to the ceremony. That should have always been part of it & in my opinion, a huge oversight. You are taking political correctness to the extreme. (Alumni)
- I'm going to change the question slightly, in two different ways. First, "Should the Ode to Newfoundland have been removed from Convocation Ceremonies?", and second, "Should the Ode to Newfoundland be reinstated to Convocation Ceremonies?". Ultimately, it is the latter question which needs to be answered.

My answer to the first variant is an emphatic "No". While the lyrics may be somewhat archaic, and date from a period when Indigenous peoples were treated poorly and largely ignored, removing it displayed a lack of respect to its legal status as the official provincial anthem (as adopted by the House of Assembly), as well as its cultural significance to a large proportion of the province's population. This has only served to alienate MUN even further from many parts of the community, at a time when its reputation is already struggling.

My answer to the second variant is this: it is impossible for the Ode to be reinstated at Convocation without creating the appearance that the university suddenly doesn't care about issues such as anti-colonialism, Indigenization, anti-sexism, or freedom or religion -- all of which were the supposed justification for removing the Ode in the first place. Clearly, those are all important issues which the

university needs to be considering, but by actions more meaningful than a largely pointless symbolic gesture which backfired so spectacularly. (Staff)

- I think changes to the wording should have been made as part of the Newfoundland and Labrador renaming project. It's a bit odd that it didn't happen as part of that originally. In my opinion, anthem wordings shouldn't be considered sacred, but instead at least somewhat fluid and kept relevant to serve their purpose as rallying cries to the common civic cause of place and purpose.

I think that it should be back on the program to signify a pause and rethink of decisions that may have been made performatively rather than meaningfully under prior leadership. I think that return should come with a commitment to study and consider ways to make the Ode more inclusive of indigenous folks and Labradorians. (Alumni, Community member, Other)

- The focus of convocation should fully be on the graduates and their families and celebrating their accomplishments. The ceremony should be setting the stage for alumni to have a positive and memorable day that compels them to continue their relationship and affinity with Memorial. This issue has lost all relevance to that cohort and has snowballed into a political, nostalgic debate around cancel culture. Memorial has MUCH BIGGER systemic issues that it's attention should be focused on. The Ode has a place in our province and at Memorial....but whether it is sung at convocation while ppl gather their coats and exit the auditorium is not going to destroy our identity as a province. (Alumni)
- I understand the argument about the historical context about the writing of the Ode. There are ways around this. The answer was never to remove the Ode without consultation. Had this been approached more thoughtfully, there would not be the same backlash. Please don't drag this process on, as so many academic committees do. The University's reputation among the public is about as poor as it has ever been. This is an easy win. Reintroduce the Ode and contextualize it through public education, through the inclusion of the Ode, or through a competition to edit the lyrics - all suggestions that I have heard in the public domain. (Faculty)
- I get it that the lyrics could stand some refreshing and modernizing. If anything, the ban on the Ode has shone a light on that. However, that's not MUN's fight. It is up to the Province to decide if and how to change the Ode. MUN got itself into a hole and into a debate that was not its to wage. The way out is to reinstitute the Ode to Newfoundland, and let those who are responsible for the anthem decide what to do next. No matter what we do, somebody will be unhappy. If my suggestion makes sense, then MUN can say it did its part by raising the issue; and is now turning it back over to those responsible to decide what to do next. (Alumni, Other)

Quotes related to theme 3: Cultural identity, pride, and limits of symbolism

- At times, Newfoundland and Labrador is not an easy place to live. We face many challenges. But we can't devalue our history and past that helped make us who we are today. Keeping the Ode does not mean that we don't value different genders and cultures. We can't delete parts of our history because we feel uncomfortable with a male-dominated, colonial past. It does not mean we don't embrace the current changes in our society. It means we can honour the past that we have adapted and grown from while embracing the currents of change that help us grow as a stronger culture and society today and well into the future. The Ode allows us to be proud of who we are. Singing it demonstrates our respect for our history and the people that have come before us. It allows us to show how proud

we are of being a strong, independent people. It allows us to publicly show to everyone how much we love with being Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. It allows us to show how much we love this smiling land. (Alumni)

- The ode is more than just a song, it's a powerful spiritual message that tells us to observe and appreciate nature and how lucky we are to have it. (Alumni)
- Sometimes heritage is dull and dusty. Sometimes it comes with a lot of embedded, outdated and hurtful attributes. The Ode is nothing like that. Its like reciting a Pratt poem about the Island. It celebrates where we came from and reminds us that the future can be wonderful because we came from a culture that survived a lot. We are different than many. Its not a bad thing. (Alumni)
- And [the Ode] doesn't take into account anything that they [nineteenth-century settlers] were doing, the resource extraction, [the pillaging] of the resources of this province; [those actions are] represented not in this song, but in the deeds that were done while the song was celebrating their inaction, their lack of care about this place. We didn't have to bring in moose because the Caribou decided to go somewhere else. There are no more pine clad hills.
- Where it is important to recognize that populations include a diversity of cultures and linguistic or historical backgrounds, a local community can aim to foster a sense of unity by emphasizing a shared geographic identity. Geography plays a pivotal role in shaping a communities identity by fostering a citizens' perceptions of their homeland. No better example are the lyrics of the Ode. Pine clad hills, wind swept land, frozen land. Geography is our special identifier. It delineates physical and mental boundaries between "our home" and "the outside world." These boundaries define our spaces that shape its cultural and identity. (Alumni)
- A tree is only as strong as its roots grow deep. If we keep cancelling and changing every tradition and culture simply because someone somewhere may take offense, our society will scatter at the first breeze of challenge that comes our way, and there's a terrible tempest brewing to the south of us as we deliberate this.
- Absolutely, yes [to including the Ode in Convocation]. Memorial is a Newfoundland and Labrador Institute of Education. It is as unique as the land it is built on and the people who attend. I feel, over the last 10-20 years, NL is being stripped of it's identity, when it is completely unnecessary. We can welcome, hold space and honour people of other culture and religions, without stripping away the details that make us who we are. (Alumni)
- The University is addressing the issue without looking at the root cause and as such is mired in attempting to solve a problem that is not within the purview of the University. The root issue is that the province of Newfoundland and LABRADOR does not currently have an approved anthem that celebrates the distinct cultures and identities of both the peoples of the island of Newfoundland and the peoples of Labrador. This is an issue to be addressed, if needed, by the government of the day contingent on the degree of public concern and outcry.

The University decision is simple, does the provincial University include the official anthem of the province in it's convocation proceedings? This decision should not be subject to an assessment of the lyrics within the official anthem, as chosen by the government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

If the University identifies a lack of provincial and cultural representation with the official anthem, the recourse should be to raise that concern with the government of the day and potentially propose a partnership between the government, the School of Music, and the Centre for Newfoundland Studies in updating the language.

In my personal view, the University of the province should include the current provincial anthem as part of convocation ceremonies. Memorial University is the sole university representing the province on the national and international post-secondary stage. It is important to take this opportunity to re-enforce the sense of pride in place to convocating students whether they are born provincially nationally, or internationally.

Additionally Memorial's own website states, "as Newfoundland and Labrador's only university, Memorial has a special obligation to the people of this province. Established as a memorial to the Newfoundlanders who lost their lives on active service during the First World War and subsequent conflicts, Memorial University draws inspiration from these sacrifices of the past as we help to build a better future for our province, our country and our world." I believe that current anthem, while not perfect, honors that obligation." (Alumni, Staff)

- Yes, the Ode to Newfoundland should be included in Convocation Ceremonies at Memorial University. It is a cherished symbol of Newfoundland's history, culture, and identity, embodying pride and unity for students, families, and the broader community. As the university was founded in memory of those who served in the First World War, singing the Ode also honors their legacy and deepens the connection to our shared heritage. Excluding it risks diminishing the significance of this tradition and its role in celebrating the unique identity of Newfoundland and Labrador. (Current student, Alumni)
- [The Ode represents] Pride and love of our unique province and identity. For years we been seen and made to feel inferior because of our isolation, dialect, weather and ruggedness. (Alumni, Community member, Other)
- It's a reflection of the elements which have shaped us as a people which in my mind also includes the indigenous peoples of our lands as a first people to survive the land and sea. It speaks about the climatic elements and environmental challenges of our ancestors and what has shaped us into who we are today. When I sing this anthem I'm always touched emotionally and spiritually. I'm strengthened when I think about who we are as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and the past peoples of our land.. I also believe that the lyrics and really generic and inclusive of our past. (Alumni)
- 'As loved our fathers . . .' Yes, it betrays its period in being technically patriarchal, and exclusionary of those who are not born Newfoundlanders, but it remains a powerful statement of love for this unlikely place of settlement, despite its weather, its politics, and rapacious exploitation of nature and people. It's flawed but still inspirational. (Alumni)

Quotes related to theme 4: Process, consultation, and transparency

Included in report

Quotes related to theme 5: Blaming international students/minority groups

- It's part of our heritage. We should be able to celebrate that. Regardless if God is mentioned or not. If we went to any other country we would have to accept that countries heritage as is;and would be expected to. (Alumni)
- To retain the Ode is not to disrespect others, be they our first nations peoples or foreign students. Memorial University is the creation of a colonial people and so named to signify the greatest among them - their war dead. Removing the Ode does not change that. I have no problem with a similar recognition of our first nations peoples being included in convocation, as rightly it should be. As for foreign students, with all due respect, they came here knowing this is our university and that it, like most universities have certain traditions. Those are to be respected by all who come here just as I would respect the traditions of a university abroad that I might attend. (Alumni)
- Yes [the Ode should be included]. It is unique among Canada's provinces to have a "hymn" (in the secular rather than religious sense). I think it does more to tie Newfoundlanders to their history than "God Save the Queen/King". I myself am a "come from away". It's an odd title that, having lived in four provinces, I have only been identified as someone "not from here" since moving to Newfoundland. This is despite having now lived here in St. John's longer than I have lived in any city/town in my life. Perhaps it speaks to an underlying "us and them" mentality. I love Newfoundland's sense of identity, for better or for worse, and the Ode is part of that identity. Is it perfect? No. No hymn or anthem is. But I think it can serve to unite more people than it divides. Like our national anthem, it mentions God, which implies a religious affiliation, but that is also part of our past, for better or for worst. I think a song, like any piece of art of literature, can be appreciated for its ever changing sentiment. Should some verses be adjusted? Perhaps. But I find it better to address history than to try to bury it. Much like our leaders of the past, we can lionize them or we can take them for who they are in the cold light of hindsight, wisdom and reflection. How we perceive the world today is different to how it was perceived 50 years ago, and will be perceived 50 years hence. Study it. Change what may require changing. But never, ever bury a part of your past. Learn from it. Own it. For better or for worse. (Faculty)

Quotes related to theme 6: The Perception of the Ode as connecting the University to the province and its people

- While supposedly in the service of inclusion this removal is in fact a most divisive move that underlines the apparently increasing disconnect between the University and the people of this province who pay for it. (Alumni)
- The Ode to Newfoundland is a thank you to everyone who embraced Newfoundland and chose Memorial University of Newfoundland for their place of study. (Alumni)
- MUN is not the property of its senate, board, or faculty and staff. It is the property of the people of this province. These above groups are simply its custodians. (Alumni)

Quotes related to theme 7: Ode as a historical artifact/product of its time and place

- Lead a commission to reconstitute the Ode to ensure words are reflective of current realities without being overly woke. Include Labrador, widen the gender perspective, include a verse on how Memorial has kept the spirit alive through education and creating leaders who serve in different ways. (Alumni)

- Even as a child I found it misogynistic, Eurocentric and, to be honest, arrogant. Also, the hills aren't 'pine clad'. They're largely spruce and fir clad. (Other)
- Maybe an update could be made to some of the lyrics if they aren't felt to be relevant to the times. There are also 9 verses to choose from, so a lot of content to work with. If a reimagination of the Ode were to be created it would be prudent for Newfoundland composers and lyricists to be given the commission to make that happen. (Alumni)
- If the issue is the fourth verse, which has gendered language and reference to God, then instead of singing verses 1 and 4 as is commonly done, sing the first three verses or verse 1 followed by either verse 2 or 3. If the issue is the perceived absence of Labrador from the Ode, I would suggest that the first three verses of the Ode actually do capture Labrador in the description of "starlit night," "frozen land," "wild waves," and "windswept land." Note the similarity in language found in the Ode to Labrador. Similarly, if the issue is the absence of Indigenous Peoples, consultation should be held on whether they feel the first three verses resonate with their experiences on the land. If there is a desire to have the name "Labrador" voiced during the singing of the Ode, then it may be possible to rewrite a section or choose an alternative presentation that honours the history and embraces the entire province for those who may feel left out. (Alumni)
- I do believe that the ode is an important part of Newfoundlands history, however many groups are still left out and of the "Ode to Labrador" was included at the time the Newfoundland ode was said would be more inclusive. (Student)
- I don't like some of the lyrics - the insistence of God and the use of fathers. I think those could and should be changed to reflect secular, non-patriarchic sentiments. Change or omit some lyrics. Update it but don't cut it out. (Alumni)
- Perhaps it is time to consider some updating of the words in the Ode to reflect current sensibilities and norms around equality, inclusion, etc. If so, maybe MUN could propose this to the provincial government. If the province is agreeable, MUN would be an ideal partner in undertaking any such revisions.

If there are concerns about lack of representation of Labrador and the province's Indigenous communities, then those can be added to the ceremony rather than removing something which is part of a 70 year tradition. If lyrics need to be altered that can be considered, though I think it's best to leave the poetry alone. There is no reason to be offended at mentions of fathers/heaven/God. The poetry of the anthem is not purposely trying to exclude anyone. Wouldn't MUN students from other traditions enjoy learning about Newfoundland & Labrador and its symbols? I think I would feel this way if I were studying in/visiting another country. (Alumni)

- Songs are an important part of any place and culture, but convocation ceremonies are already full of pageantry I don't know why it's necessary to sing the song in this scenario. We know we are in Newfoundland. We don't need it as a reminder to honour veterans. I think a lot of people likely wouldn't have even noticed that they stopped singing the song at convocations if it wasn't relayed to the public beforehand. (Alumni)

- In the present it is an anachronism that tends to be used to glorify an upholding of the "virtues" of loyalty to god, king and country, a kind of empty newfie nationalism that does nothing to challenge the worst impulses of historical ignorance and patriotic nonsense. (Alumni)
- Liking, or not liking, this song has no bearing on that. I see nothing wrong with exploring new possibilities to replace this song if necessary. Sometimes I think people just fear change. It's just a song. Get over it. Things change. applaud the university for at least trying something different and maybe calling attention to the fact that this song does not work for everyone. (Alumni)
- It's not a provincial event requiring provincial musical representation. As a multi-cultural post secondary institution, it would be more beneficial adding a musical or cultural aspect to convocation. (Alumni)
- I think that there was a time and place for this in the past, but you should be going forth into the future and your university should reflect this. Times change. (Alumni, Community member, Other)
- The Ode to NL is outdated and needs to be replaced with a song current to our times. Being an atheist I do not like the words God Guard thee. Also, as a woman where are we mentioned? There is mention of father but what about mothers? It should be scrapped.

I have heard that there are some disturbing historical origins/references. There should be no place for this at MUN. We are the keepers of history etc and the leaders in developing inclusive culture. (Alumni)

- People can be as sentimental as they need about this song and their connections to it. But a public university, purporting to support access and equity, needs to model a commitment to diversity and inclusion by not including references that privilege one aspect of the population over another. (Alumni)

The Majority Report: That the Ode to Newfoundland be Re-instated in Convocation Ceremonies

Those members of the Ad Hoc Committee who voted to reinstate the Ode to Newfoundland in Convocation Ceremonies based their decision primarily on listening to the majority opinion expressed in the real-time consultations and online surveys. It should be noted that this majority position to reinstate the Ode is found in all groups who participated in the survey, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, community members, and the “Other” category. In the survey results, outlined in the summary graphs on pages 7 and 8, the alumni category shows the greatest participation rate and the highest percentage in favour of reinstatement. However, the other five groups are not far behind in their support of reinstatement. For the real-time consultations, the majority of the sessions expressed a wish to reinstate the Ode, although that overall majority is less stark compared to the surveys. In general, as one of the necessities of the committee’s work was to convey “what we heard,” it was not possible, nor responsible, to go against such a stark majority perspective.

Also, important numerically minority perspectives, particularly those of historically marginalized groups, were voiced in the consultation and survey process. Although the survey results were more nuanced, in the real-time consultations there were virtually no Indigenous voices who spoke in favour of reinstatement. This latter fact is significant and we hope that it will add much support to the additional recommendations that the committee is putting forward for Senate’s consideration as well as the section Additional Thoughts for Recommendation.

Very few survey respondents provided identifying information (gender, religion, status, etc.). Nor were they asked to do so. A small number of international students/faculty/alumni chose to self-identify as international in the online surveys and were in favour of the reinstatement of the Ode; that number is comparable to the real-time consultations. Consider the following quotation, from a respondent who voted in favour of the Ode’s reinstatement:

I was an international student that came to NL to go to MUN because of its excellent engineering program. As a foreigner in a strange land, I expected to face cultural differences, but believe that the best approach to have a normalize lifestyle is to accept and even adopt the cultures of the community around me. I have since lived in NL now for going on 15 years and have grown to appreciate the vibrant and unique culture NL has to offer. MUN was created as a memorial to the NL troops who fought and died during The Great War and should have no interest higher than to maintain the highest levels of respect for these brave individuals, many of whom gave their lives. The Ode is a significant and important part of the cultural identity of this province, but most importantly, is a symbol of pride for the people of the province. MUN needs to remember where it is and why it was created.

Just like every human group, systematically and historically marginalized or otherwise, there is not a uniform voice within surveyed groups or communities on this question of the Ode's reinstatement.

We must balance the majority perspective with the minority one, but we believe that the way to do this would be for Senate to reinstate the Ode and encourage a dialogue about the provincial anthem. We do not see this entire consultation as a clear yes/no answer where a majority opinion in a survey is simply followed and that is the end of the dialogue. Majority votes carry weight, but democracy is also about compromise and discussion. It is thus our hope that a dialogue about the provincial anthem will take place in the future. As a starting point, we invite the reader to consider what is outlined in the ancillary recommendations as well as the Additional Thoughts for Consideration, supported by material in an appendix.

It is true that those who voted in favour of reinstatement usually did not mention the need to pursue the imperative of Truth and Reconciliation; at the same time, many participants, while calling for the Ode's reinstatement, also suggested changes to the Ode. A particular concern was the omission of Labrador in the Ode. All of this is made apparent in the themes discussed in this report.

We believe that if Senate votes to remove the Ode permanently from Convocation, there will be substantial public negative response to the decision, so much so that the backlash will eclipse any meaningful discussion about the Ode.

We believe that the process undertaken by the AHC, while not perfect, was sound, thorough, and adhered to our guiding principles. Due diligence was done. It was not at all an easy process. However, we note here that, according to the Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning, compared to other surveys the response rate for the committee's survey was quite strong. As such, this material provides a great deal of reliable information to be considered.

Why we voted to remove the Ode from convocation

Those of us who voted against the inclusion of the Ode to Newfoundland in convocation ceremonies at Memorial University are presenting our views here as a means to ensure they are part of the record for any potential usefulness in future discussions, as well as to attempt to mitigate any harm caused by the recommendation, upcoming Senate vote, and/or any related commentary about the process, especially with regard to Indigenous Peoples, Labradorians, and any others who raised concerns about the inclusion of the Ode in convocation ceremonies. This is part of nurturing and maintaining relationships.

The Terms of Reference that outlined the work of the AHC noted several actions expected of the AHC. These actions were to *investigate*, to *consult*, to *discuss*, to *consider*, and then ultimately to prepare a final report to Senate.

Also of note is the composition of the committee, outlined in the TOR that included five appointed members from very specific areas of expertise including Student Life, the Office of the Vice-Provost EDI-AR, the Internationalization Office, the Office of Indigenous Affairs, and the Indigenous Student Resource Centre. These expertise and lived-experience appointments reflect the university's commitments to Reconciliation, Indigenization, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism, and Internationalization. This commitment is also noted in the May 2023 recommendation to Senate from the Committee on Honorary Degrees and Ceremonial.

To investigate

In the aftermath of the initial October 2022 decision to remove the Ode from convocation at Memorial, many public comments were shared either through social media, or opinion pieces and letters sent to local media. What we saw in this commentary was a great deal of passion—passion for the province, passion for the university, and passion for the Ode. What we also saw was information being shared that appeared to reflect some misunderstandings of historical realities. Similar misunderstandings emerged in the real-time consultation sessions as well as in the online surveys. Some examples include the romanticization of the origins of the University, first as Memorial University College, and the belief that the Ode was part of the university from the inception of Memorial University College. The College actually had a school song, the lyrics to which can be found below. The Ode began to be played at the convocation ceremonies once the University was established in 1949, within the context of confederation, as the Ode had been used in the lead-up to the referendum as an anti-confederation rally cry led by Peter Cashin. Excellent works to consult include Macleod's *Bridge Built Halfway*, and Blake and Baker's *Where Once They Stood*.

To consult

Details around the consultation process are well-discussed in the report. What we wish to highlight here is that we, as a committee, heavily skewed the participant pool by spending much more time, care, and direct communication with one group over others. We sent 58,000 direct emails to alumni and donors, but did not do so with other groups to this depth. As a result, the responses are also heavily skewed. Those of us who hold the minority view fully expected that this disparity would be taken into account as we moved forward, especially given the university's commitment to Reconciliation and EDI-AR reflected in the TOR and our guiding principles.

To discuss

While the AHC has done an exemplary job of engaging in discussion with one another regarding the consultation process and the views of participants, the amount of time we've been afforded to do so has

been limited by cyclical instances of external interests taking up valuable time. There have been entire meetings in which the only thing we were able to discuss in the time allotted was something someone outside of the committee (outside the university at times) wanted from us, who did not wish to go through the processes we created for people to participate. This not only took up precious time but created a layer of stress in the process that, whether we wish to acknowledge it or not, has had an effect on members of the AHC.

To consider

Our understanding here is that what we were tasked to do is to take the previous three actions—investigate, consult, and discuss, the guiding principles outlined in the report, as well as the university’s stated commitments including Reconciliation and EDI-AR—and to carefully consider all of this together. From our perspective, and given our own skewing of respondent numbers, this demands that we hold ourselves accountable to participants not necessarily based on numbers, but on perspectives shared. The report notes that some groups face barriers to participation, and that there are known imbalances in influence from group to group. The report further asserts: “Recognizing and accounting for these imbalances, when considering recommendations, was essential.” We believe that everyone on the AHC recognizes these imbalances and has spent considerable time pondering this. Where we may differ is in how or where to account for, or hold ourselves accountable to, these imbalances.

One of the responses offered through the consultation process includes commentary relevant to what and how we consider. This participant identified as Memorial faculty:

I sincerely hope that whichever body is making the decision here understands that this is not something appropriate for a vote, where majority rules. When something that is very important to white heritage causes harm to Indigenous relations and Indigenous peoples are always in the minority in feedback, our university, and the island community, then a vote is not appropriate. Upholding Indigenous rights is more important, as well as just being an enlightened university that is able to recognize that change is central to all our survival and flourishing.

So, when we enter a space in which *to consider*, in addition to what has already been shared above, one of the important pieces we have considered is that we learned through consultations that Indigenous students had already brought forward concerns about the Ode’s inclusion at convocation in the period leading up to 2015 at the St. John’s campus, and in the latter part of 2015 at the Grenfell Campus.

We have also considered the many passionate responses we received in support of the Ode’s inclusion at convocation; and we consider what we learned through our responsibility *to investigate*, about colonialism in the province and about historical realities that we now realize do not always match up with what participants genuinely believe about the past.

In addition to the core recommendation offered in the report to Senate, we encourage Senators to also spend time reflecting on the additional recommendations offered by the AHC.

The Memorial College Song

*Lift up your voices, lift them up
Our College to extol,
Whose doctrines practised through the years,
Our thoughts and acts control;*

*Within whose walls fresh clear-eyed youth
In quest of knowledge rove;
Through whose corridors walk honoured ghosts
Of cov'nants sealed above.*

*Memorial! Memorial!
To you our voices rise!
Memorial! Memorial!
Her name write 'cross the skies!
Memorial! Memorial!
From darkness help us rise!*

*Look down our Alma Mater,
Our Mother wise and kind,
And we—your sons and daughters
With steadfast heart and mind
Stand strongly in the path you set
To Honour, Courage, Freedom's light,
And with one voice we firmly pledge
To keep your Shield of Honour bright!*

*Memorial! Memorial!
We rally at your call!
Memorial! Memorial!
On you may blessings fall!
Memorial! Memorial!
Your honour above all!*

*So firmly guard the things for which
Was reared this fitting fane,
That men who fought—for freedom died,
Might not have died in vain;
That, under God, youth might advance
In faith, and never cease
To strive for progress, and advance
To build a world of peace.*

*Memorial! Memorial!
Strong may thy children be!
Memorial! Memorial!
To keep our country free!
Memorial! Memorial!
They name be liberty!*

Why I Abstained

During the recent vote, I decided to abstain—not out of indifference, but because the binary choice placed before us was not a solution. The reinstatement of the removed Ode to Newfoundland from Memorial’s Convocation Ceremonies was framed as either a necessary correction or a step backward, as though this single decision could resolve or define the deeper tensions at play. Nevertheless, the choice itself was flawed from the outset, reducing a complex and painful conversation into a yes or no, forcing communities into opposing corners when they should never have been placed there in the first place.

To reinstate the Ode to Newfoundland in the Memorial Convocation ceremonies would harm Indigenous peoples, who have rightfully voiced their concerns about the colonial legacy embedded in these traditions. Refusing to reinstate it, however, would inevitably place the burden of that decision onto the most vulnerable—equity-deserving groups and international students, who have been targeted in this debate.

This impossible dilemma—the pitting of marginalized communities against each other—was painful to witness. Some of the faculty, staff, and alums who supported reinstatement blamed international students for the removal, feeding into xenophobic narratives that positioned international students and out of province students as outsiders who had overstepped. This argument was deeply problematic for two reasons: First, it ignored the structural realities of power in these decisions, reinforcing the idea that international students, already a vulnerable population, somehow wielded disproportionate influence over institutional traditions. Second, perhaps more troublingly, it erased the fact that this issue was not solely about international students or equity initiatives—it was about reconciliation. How this debate unfolded effectively erased Indigenous voices from the conversation that should have centered them.

From what I heard and read during the consultation process, if the Ode remained excluded, members of our community who either identify as international or out-of-province would face backlash from those who view any shift away from tradition as an attack on Newfoundland identity. If the Ode were to be reinstated, the harm to Indigenous communities would remain unaddressed, their concerns disregarded once again.

The institution's decision to selectively engage in decolonial gestures—removing the provincial anthem while maintaining other colonial markers—was a form of performativity, a way to appear responsive without enacting structural change. Thus, for me to participate in this vote as though it was a meaningful resolution would have been to legitimize that performativity. In this way, abstention disrupted the expectation of performativity that colonial institutions impose, where participation (even in resistance) is expected to follow a predetermined logic.

To me, neither option challenged the ongoing colonial entanglements of Convocation itself—the regalia, the rituals, and the very structure of the ceremony all remain intact, regardless of the vote. Thus, by abstaining, I refused to grant legitimacy to a process that either erases Indigenous concerns or harms international students.

I abstained because I could not participate in a vote that pretended this binary choice was enough. I abstained because neither option would undo the harm, and both would reinforce the division that colonial institutions rely on to maintain power. I abstained because no matter the outcome, the more extensive decolonization work remains undone.

I call upon the distinguished members of the Senate Committee to consider the recommendations beyond the just “yes” or “no” in the report when making a decision.

Please see below for a selection of quotes relating to the *additional thoughts for consideration*, outlined in the report. This information is provided in no identified order and is released with the consent of the participant.

Could the Provincial Anthem be Revised or Rewritten?

- I think a new “anthem” could be developed. One that serves as a land acknowledgement, pays respects to the indigenous peoples of the province but also recognizes the history of the province.
- Perhaps add a verse for Labrador to represent that part of the province as well or sing a separate anthem for Labrador as well so both parts of the province are represented.
- Is the anthem perfect - probably not. The solution would be to propose language that would bring the Ode to modern standards, not to throw it out completely. Bring new language to the provincial government for ratification.
- If there is some concern over the lyrics or title, and it is a high priority issue for the university, then engage with the provincial government to request it be modified.
- While I am an active member of a religious community I understand not all are and we could consider not including the last verse that references “God”
- Yes, you've got to use an amended version that is more respectful of indigeneous, gendered and other legitimate interests.
- I am an anthropologist and historian, I understand cultural change, viewpoints change, and the need to update things. Oh Canada was changed to update it, to my knowledge dropping Oh Canada altogether was never considered.
- I believe adding a verse to be more inclusive of Labrador would be a worthwhile addition, as it is an important part of our province.
- The odd should be updated to include Labrador if this is the issue.
- Our National Anthem was updated to reflect current language, ideas and messages. I'm sure we can achieve the same with our national anthem.
- While I think the Ode should be included, I think the lyrics themselves should be non denominational and gender neutral, as has been done with the Canadian anthem.
- In its current version it may be beneficial to make some edits to make it more inclusive and up to date if it gets included
- Just as MUN was originally named with the once official province name of “Newfoundland” but later updated to “Newfoundland and Labrador”, I think it would be appropriate to adjust the Ode’s refrain to include Labrador, as a number of talented performers already do.
- To include Labrador, have the Ode to Newfoundland's wording changed slightly or perhaps a few lines of the Ode to Labrador
- Can a verse be added that mentions “Labrador” or the Big Land, and can the title be made more inclusive?

- The ODE written in the early years of 1900 did not recognize Labrador nor its peoples. The ODE can be modified to state "God guard thee Newfoundland and Labardor".
- It would be more inclusive to add a stanza or several about Labrador. Perhaps also alternate "as loved our fathers" with "as loved our mothers" in performances. Perhaps the folklore department and/or music departments can help.
- Yes, it should be included, but only if it can be modernized to be more inclusive with respect to gender, to incorporate mention of Labrador, and to remove mention of God and heaven and prayer, which would make it into more of an anthem and less of a religious invocation.
- Yes, but with changes to the lyrics to make it more inclusive or relevant to today's ideals.
- I think MUN should be open to amendments to the lyrics OR an accompanying 21st-century piece of music also being sung along with the Ode, that is more inclusive of Indigenous Peoples, all gender identifications, and Labrador (and any of the other omissions or transgressions that the current lyrics carry that some people may find objectionable).
- If it is considered acceptable, include Newfoundland and Labrador as part of the wording of the ODE to Newfoundland to address concerns.
- If you want to be inclusive, why not instead of singing the first and last verse like it is normally sung, sing the first verse and then the verse where an edit has been made to include Labrador?
- Yes, it should be included. However the Province should update some words to be inclusive.
- The Ode isn't perfect and could benefit from modernization and updating.
- The Ode needs to be revised. As a woman I resent the reference to "as loved our fathers" which is paternalistic and excludes our female forbears both indigenous and others. I also recognize that Labrador is excluded by referencing only Newfoundland in the final verse.
- I'm fine with any small changes that some people might think make it more inclusive, like changes to parents from fathers, or adding in Labrador at some point.
- While the Ode when it was written as our Provincial Anthem no different than the Canadian National Anthem. Maybe a slight wording change that could reflect Labrador as part of it.
- Lines could be edited to be more inclusive and/or it could be accompanied by the "Ode to Labrador" but it should be sung as part of convocation ceremonies.
- I am open to lyric modification to include Labrador if this is the issue with its exclusion from the convocation. "O Canada" was modified and the world did not end. Canada did not end. We seemed to have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. Just change some lyrics if that is the issue.
- If the issue is the absence of Labrador in the song, maybe the first verse could be switched with the Labrador verse.
- One of the biggest issues for me is that it does not reference Labrador, an enormously important and all too often overlooked part of our polity. Not only this, but Labrador is also home to the majority of our Indigenous population. Leaving them out is just not good enough.

- Some small updates to the lyrics, very small updates to the lyrics. Perhaps forebearers instead of fathers, add Labrador to the title, and perhaps add a verse in the same style that acknowledges those who stood on the land before us. Retain God. Rather we should acknowledge our definition of that has changed with the addition of many faiths from around the world.
- Parts of our national anthem lyrics have been changed so I see no reason not to change some of the wording in our Ode.
- Some words can be changed if necessary but one cannot keep going back and rewriting history. History, both good, questionable and bad, is what it is. One can add the Ode to Labrador as well to reflect the recognition of that part of our province.
- The lyrics stir pride of the province in me, but there needs to be more inclusiveness of our past inhabitants.
- For those who disagree with some of the words of the Ode, I would suggest that the way to change them would be through the House of Assembly.
- (Faculty) The use of the word "fathers" and the lack of reference to Labrador are 2 criticisms which could be fixed by a minor revision to its lyrics, a precedent recently set with the lyrics to O Canada.

Here is one example with the revised words in block capitals:

Title: Ode to Newfoundland AND LABRADOR

*When sun rays crown thy pine clad hills,
And summer spreads her hand,
When silvern voices tune thy rills,
We love thee, smiling land.
We love thee, we love thee,
We love thee, smiling land.*

*When spreads thy cloak of shimm'ring white,
At Winter's stern command,
Thro' shortened day and starlit night,
We love thee, LABRADOR,
We love thee, we love thee,
We love thee, LABRADOR.*

*When blinding storm gusts fret thy shore,
And wild waves lash thy strand,
Thro' spindrift swirl and tempest roar,
We love thee, wind-swept land,
We love thee, we love thee,
We love thee, wind-swept land.*

*As loved our FOREBEARS, so we love,
Where once they stood, we stand;*

*Their prayer we raise to Heaven above,
God guard thee, Newfoundland
God guard thee, God guard thee,
God guard thee, Newfoundland*

- (Alumni) I think your committee should advise MUN to commission a representative expert group of poets, literary specialists, musicians, and others to rewrite the lyrics for a version to be sung at convocation. Such a commission might decide to appoint one individual to ensure that the final version would have a poetic unity. This could jump-start the government to do the same thing -- or maybe just adopt the MUN version -- for the province. The model for the process should be the adoption of the new flag some decades back. I would oppose simply dropping the Ode permanently. This is an opportunity for MUN to take leadership, rather than avoiding a difficult task.
- (Faculty) I would ditch the last verse however "As stood our fathers, so we stand" as it seems exclusionary (and what about our mothers?). Other verses okay.
- (Community member) Also the reference to God in the lyrics is not inclusive of graduates who are not Christian.
- (Community member) If the issue is the lyrics, let's look at a simple amendment... it works for our national anthem
- (Current student, Alumni, community member) Why not just keep the verses about provincial beauty and ditch the forefathers verse? I think we already skip some verses from the original poem. Or better yet, consult some local indigenous poets on how to rewrite the forefather's verse or remove it without mucking up how the song works.
- (Retired staff) As far as the words may not always be inclusive, these few phrases could be amended to include Labrador and whatever other words that are deemed exclusive or otherwise hurtful to others. If this is done, it should be done in a way that does not detract from the poetry of the Ode.
- (Alumni) I believe that our Ode is central to our cultural identity but that doesn't mean we can't amend it. Surely, the people of Labrador could add a beautifully designed verse that hearken to their experience. The same for our Indigenous peoples. As a University, why not start this discussion rather than throwing away our beautiful anthem that means so much to us!
- (Alumni) The Ode as it stands is a product of its time and its author, a white Christian man. He didn't include any mention of Labrador, but he did refer to God and fathers. The omission of Labrador, the references to a religion many don't share, the patriarchal references to fathers – those things could be amended with help from one (or more) of Newfoundland's legion of accomplished poets.
- (Alumni) There are Newfoundlanders who disagree, of course. It might be possible to edit the words somewhat to reflect some of their concerns, although I think that in the case of Labradorians, it might be even better and more inclusive to adopt their own ode, either the Ode to Labrador or one of the popular but unofficial songs that represent Labrador.

- (Staff, Alumni) A couple of small word changes would make it gender inclusive and bring Labrador into it. NO major renovation as suggested in some horrible Letters to Editors.
- (Faculty) If people in Labrador wish to have the Ode refer to that part of our province, then the words can be added to or edited easily.
- (Staff, Alumni) But, if the last three lines are too much for people, then perhaps the last 2 lines (not 3) could be changed from "God guard thee, God guard thee, God guard thee Newfoundland" to "We love thee, We love thee, We love thee smiling land."
- (Retired staff) Please bring back the ode. Change necessary language in it.
- (Alumni) If broader discussions bring forward ideas to make the Ode more inclusive, they should be shared in a constructive way in order to make appropriate changes to the Ode. Canada's National Anthem was updated in 2018 to make it gender neutral! So, acceptable changes can be made.
- (Community Member) As a woman born in Newfoundland, the only change I make when I sing the last verse is to sing, "As loved our mothers..."
An added verse about Labrador would be more inclusive and respectful to make this a provincial anthem.
- (Alumni) WE DO NOT NEED TWO ANTHEMS(NO ONE HAS TWO ANTHEMS) OR TWO OFFICIAL FLAGS.ANY AREA CAN IF THE WANT HAVE THEIR OWN FLAG OR WHATEVER,BUT THERE MUST BE ONE OFFICIAL SYMBOL FOR ALL OF US ,A SLIGHT CHANGE TO THE CURRENT ANTHEM COULD BE JUSTIFIED TO INCLUDE ALL OF US.
- (Alumni) Change the language of the Ode to include the 52 percent who are not male.
- (Alumni) Yes, if Labrador or any indigenous people would like to change or add a line or two...then so be it. The ode to NFLD can be modernized but it should never be ostracized.
- (Alumni) As long as it is the provincial anthem it should be played. Maybe some slight wording changes can be added to the ode to recognize Labrador but that would be up to the provincial government to facilitate as they have made it the provincial anthem. The ode to Canada has been changed many times. Why can't we change the ode to Newfoundland to resolve this very divisive issue.
- (Faculty) If some people are offended by some of the wording of the anthem, the wording could easily be "modernized" to be more inclusive. The Canadian National Anthem has had some wording changes, and the changes seem to be generally welcomed as improvements.
- (Retired staff) If those who feel excluded can be made feel included then change the words. Fix the anthem don't destroy it.
- (Faculty, Alumni) Yes, with adjustments to the final verse and with changes to ensure equal recognition of Labrador and of its peoples with Newfoundland and Indigenous peoples on the Island - whether that means an additional song or something else is a matter for people and peoples from Labrador, I think.

- (Staff) I have no problem with some minor word changes or inclusions to the words of the anthem.
- (Staff, Alumni) In the last verse of the Ode change "God guard thee Newfoundland " to "We'll guard thee Newfoundland and Labrador".
- (Faculty) I am strongly opposed to the idea of adding a verse about Labrador to the Ode as is sometimes proposed. I feel this would unintentionally suggest that Labrador is a lesser part of the province. Instead, people might find it acceptable to revise the Ode by replacing the word "Newfoundland" which appears twice in the last verse. "God guard thee, Newfoundland" might be replaced by "God guard thee native land" or "God guard thee cherished land". Or, if greater inclusivity was preferred, these lines could be changed to "We guard thee, cherished land". All the verses would then apply equally well to both parts of the province, and the title "Ode to Newfoundland and Labrador" would be apt.
- (Alumni) If the concern is around certain words in the ode, perhaps some simple changes can be made while keeping the music and descriptions of the land intact. (Not unlike the process that changed the national anthem some years back).
- (Staff, Alumni) The words 'God' and 'Fathers' may eventually be changed by common and political consent; if so, the 'updated' Ode should be sung on appropriate occasions.
- (Alumni) Changes to the ode would be a reasonable alternative to outright erasing its presence at the provincial university
- (Alumni) The entire notion that perhaps part of Newfoundland may have felt excluded (and where is the proof of that?) a very simple change of the last line could have included the name Labrador with the following "God guard thee, God guard thee, God guard Newfoundland and Labrador". There would be no change in the melody at all, just a VERY yet EVER SO SLIGHT change in the rhythm of the last two measures of the verses.
- (Community member) I would prefer that the Ode be modified to be more gender- and spirituality-inclusive: changing "fathers" to "elders" or "parents" or "forebears" for instance, and reference to prayers and God changed. "Their dreams we work to honour and love"? I support it in its current state over its omission, in any case. Even an instrumental version would be good.
- (Alumni) There needs to be minor edits to include the indigenous, women and Labrador and I'm sure that can be quite easily done with the talents we have in this province.
- (Alumni) Maybe change the wording a little as needed (eg include mention of Labrador) but don't scrap it altogether.
- (Alumni) I do appreciate it may need some changes to make it inclusive.
- yes, given MUN's history. HOWEVER, I would like to see the wording become more inclusive. Labrador should be included in a meaningful way and if there is some way to change the references to God so as to be more inclusive of other faiths and those with no faith, I would strongly support that.
- I am open to the slight altering of the lyrics to include Labrador and to include mothers as well as fathers to be inclusive or maybe "parents" for gender neutrality.

- The Ode should be changed to be more inclusive. The national anthem was changed, why not the provincial anthem? No. Are we celebrating the students, the institution or the province? The convocation should be about the students. There are other occasions to pay respects to the institution's past and the province's past. Just sing the national anthem if you must sing something, but I see this as completely unnecessary. The Ode should be changed to be more inclusive. The national anthem was changed, why not the provincial anthem?
- Add an official verse to the Ode about Labrador rather than squeeze it in.
- All cultures in attendance at the Convocation can't be celebrated but the province's culture should be celebrated - perhaps we can update the Ode to Newfoundland to include reference to Labrador or include Labrador's Ode.
- I ask that the Board of Regents proceed with steps to have the Memorial University Act changed to accommodate the Senate's recommended name change of the university to ' Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador '. The Ode also ought to be changed, including its title, to ' The Ode to Newfoundland and Labrador ', the official name of our beloved province.
- I'd rather you kept it off than change the lyrics if that's one of the things you wanna do.
- Consider playing a modified version of the Ode instead of removing it all together. You could play the first three verses and cut the fourth. That way it doesn't promote patriarchy and Christianity and doesn't exclude or other Labradorian, Mainlander, or International students.
- The ODE needs have a stanza added to include Labrador
- I would like to see Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. Still MUN , but please include Labrador. Maybe a verse in the Ode to Newfoundland and Labrador could include a verse from Harry Paddon's Ode to Labrador.Thanks for allowing input into your decision making.
- I would also support a re-writing of the last verse (or its omission) to update the lyrics in the interest of inclusion.
- Even though the Ode to Newfoundland was not written by a Newfoundlander/Labradorian, it was clearly written with an appreciation for, and an understanding of, the environmental beauty and hardship endured by the people. However, I believe this is a valuable opportunity to be more inclusive of our people by making some revisions and additions to the verses. Some of the words in the verses may no longer be culturally appropriate. Even the title may be changed to be more inclusive of Labrador, and new verses may be added to the song to include our Indigenous history across the entire province. We learn from our mistakes which makes historical accounts so valuable for future generations. We embrace the beauty and meaning of traditions, which brings us together as a people. I believe this is an opportunity to make some changes to the song that are more inclusive and culturally appropriate, and – in my opinion, we should never remove this important historical account from our ceremonies in the only university of the province.
- Updating the Ode could represent an opportunity to incorporate diverse voices and perspectives. This might include inviting Indigenous artists, poets, and musicians to contribute to a reimagining of the Ode. To be more inclusive, a reimagined Ode could focus on shared values and aspirations. There is plenty to celebrate in our province, but also plenty of

opportunities to emphasize themes of unity, resilience, and respect for the land and its people. There is much that we can celebrate about our province's natural beauty and cultural richness, and we lose nothing by doing this in an inclusive way. I believe that if the Ode is used, we should collectively strive for a revised Ode that is both meaningful and aesthetically pleasing. Updating the Ode is an opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to "knowing better and doing better." It's a chance to move away from a colonial past and embrace a future that values inclusivity, reconciliation, and respect for all. However, it's crucial that this process is done with care, consultation, and a genuine desire to create something that truly represents the people and spirit of Newfoundland and Labrador today.

- I feel the ode should be included. I am also in favor of slight lyrics changes to be more inclusive.
- The Government should open the act to update & modernize the wording.
- This province is full of creative people - surely to God someone can tweak the lyrics (in the way we did for "O Canada") to remove the patriarchal language? Government needs to step up on this, I respect that Memorial can't change it arbitrarily.
- Lead a commission to reconstitute the Ode to ensure words are reflective of current realities without being overly woke. Include L, widen the gender perspective, include a verse on how Memorial has kept the spirit alive through education and creating leaders who serve in different ways.
- the lyrics should be amended to not cause anyone distress.
- If you add 4 eighth notes in last measure, you could easily add "and Labrador". God guard thee, Newfoundland and Labrador.
- I am not adverse to the modification of the lyrics to be more inclusive. I would support a thoughtful change, on the way that the words to O Canada were modified. Eg: "as loved our fore-bearers, so we love." There is no need to remove a reference to god. I take no offence to such wording and it does not impose a religious affiliation nor does it promote proselytizing anyone. Surely some of the brilliant talent in the School of Music could have found a creative way to extend our provincial anthem to encompass more than the fathers of Newfoundland included in the lyrics. What a gift that could have been to the University, its graduates and the people of the province. The Ode is not a complicated piece of music, but its simplicity is part of its magic, as is the richness of the lyrics which describe the love and pride of this land.
- The lyrics can always be modified to make more inclusive. The music school could take this on and show leadership in proposing minor changes.
- I think that with minor changes to the words of the Ode, it could evolve to be more inclusive and reflect our province's evolution, growth and understanding of indigenous lands. We can and should respect tradition while reflecting today's culture, and values. I am increasingly worried about a trend towards addressing inclusivity by removing things. It is a very simplistic and condensing solution. MUN was created to honor those who lost their lives in WWI. Those soldiers came from every part of this province and represented all our citizens. Let's not ignore our history, traditions and heritage. Minor changes would address the issues MUN gave for pausing usage of the Ode.

- I wholly support working towards a more inclusive anthem, as we need to keep moving forward. However, MUN needs to remember the basis of its founding - we can't keep just throwing things away. We need to update them, with consideration towards both historical and more current community members.
- Rather than remove it, modify it to address shortcomings
- I totally agree that it is time to consider revising the poetry to address concerns of patriarchy, religion, and no reference to Labrador. Fair enough. During the public outrage that followed Memorial University's decision to not sing the Ode at Convocation, multiple text changes were suggested. But, again, this is the responsibility of the provincial government... not the university.
- if there are outdated components, I would rather see them updated than have the song dropped completely.
- The Ode should be reinstated. If the words need to be changed to make it inclusive, then, do so.
- I understand there are exclusions in the Ode. It mentions sons and not daughters. There is no mention of Labrador. Surely there are many talented people in our School of Music who could make a few "tweaks" to make OUR ODE inclusive to all. I've heard suggestions.
- The first three verses are about the rugged landscape of the province. If the issue is the fourth verse, which has gendered language and reference to God, then instead of singing verses 1 and 4 as is commonly done, sing the first three verses or verse 1 followed by either verse 2 or 3. If the issue is the perceived absence of Labrador from the Ode, I would suggest that the first three verses of the Ode actually do capture Labrador in the description of "starlit night," "frozen land," "wild waves," and "windswept land." Note the similarity in language found in the Ode to Labrador. Similarly, if the issue is the absence of Indigenous Peoples, consultation should be held on whether they feel the first three verses resonate with their experiences on the land. If there is a desire to have the name "Labrador" voiced during the singing of the Ode, then it may be possible to rewrite a section or choose an alternative presentation that honours the history and embraces the entire province for those who may feel left out. Memorial University has an incredibly talented faculty in the School of Music. In collaboration with other departments, they could easily compose/arrange an updated Ode to Newfoundland that addresses whatever issues have been identified (which, again, have not been clearly articulated as the institution has instead chosen silence). For example, if the issue is the lack of representation of Labrador, I'm sure that a version could be arranged that combines the Ode with whatever song/anthem Labradorians feel best represents them. Perhaps, for example, the Ode to Labrador, which also describes the wild and unrestrained landscape. If the issue is lack of Indigenous representation, then why not translate a verse to Mi'kmaq? There are many creative solutions to this poorly-defined problem if the individuals involved in decision making choose to put the effort in.
- The Ode should have some lyrics changed to include reference to Labrador and its name should be changed to include both.
- In the context of a diverse student body, it might be best to leave out the final verse, with its references to a singular, masculine divine being.

- But times do change and we must live in the ones we are in. While the current wording of The Ode may have once been judged generally acceptable (but not by all) that is no longer the case and, as a people, there is a need to do something about it. In my view, while The Ode may now be problematic it is fixable. What follows is a brief outline of the issues as I see them, along with some suggested fixes. I shall do this verse by verse, as presented in the legislation.

Schedule

1.

*When sun rays crown thy pine-clad hills
And Summer spreads her hand,
When silvern voices tune thy rills,
We love thee, smiling land.*

–

Line one is no longer relevant. Over-harvesting, combined with various infestations, has resulted in the almost complete loss of white pines on the Island and they were never emblematic of Labrador. Furthermore only a portion of the province is tree-covered; by no means all of it. I suggest instead we highlight the almost universal presence of hill and bog and modify the rhyme scheme somewhat to allow for this.

The use of “her” in line two is unnecessary. The non-gender-specific “its” fits today’s values better and does not disrupt the overall flow.

Line three uses unnecessarily arcane language. How many of us even know what it means to “tune rills?”

As verse one is set in summer, I suggest that it starts with the transition from “sprinter” to summer, as the heightening sun, bit by bit, drives away the icy cold fog.

Here is my suggestion for a revised stanza 1.

*When sunrays overcome the fog
And Summer spreads its hand
When green enshrouds the hill and bog
We love thee smiling land
We love thee, we love thee,
We love thee, smiling land.*

After examining stanzas two and three I see no need for edits. While the usage of “thy” as opposed to “your” can be viewed as dated and stuffy, It is prudent that the alterations be minimal, that tradition should be upheld as much as possible and that we should only modify the parts that absolutely need to be changed. Stanzas 1 and 2 can be left as-is.

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4.

As loved our fathers, so we love,
Where once they stood we stand;
Their prayer we raise to Heaven above,

God guard thee, Newfoundland .
Refrain
God guard thee, God guard thee,
God guard thee, Newfoundland.

–

Line one is paternalistic with the implication that only the men matter. This is not an acceptable sentiment and can be easily addressed by changing “Fathers” to “Forebears.”

The rest of the stanza, arguably the most important one, certainly the one most remembered, is an exclusionary appeal, one only relevant to the dwindling proportion who still observe the Christian faith. It is irrelevant to those for whom religion is not important, somewhat insulting to the growing proportion of the population who’s deity is not called “God” and, most importantly, serves as an unwelcome reminder of forced assimilation to many of our people who identify as indigenous.

And there's also the fact that The Ode makes no mention whatsoever of Labrador, a holdover from when the province went by a different name.

I suggest the following as a replacement:

*As loved our forebears, so we love
the Island; the Big Land
Our destiny joined hand in glove
Together we will stand
Together, together
Together we will stand.*

The modified refrain can be interpreted in several ways. We can be seen as united as a land—Newfoundland and Labrador—distinct but equal. We can also be seen as united as a people, regardless of the various differences that some would like to use as sources of division. As such I believe this is both a proper as well as uplifting way to finish The Ode.

Here’s the overall suggested modified version:

*When sunrays overcome the fog
And Summer spreads its hand
When green enshrouds the hill and bog
We love thee smiling land
We love thee, we love thee,
We love thee, smiling land.
When spreads thy cloak of shimm'ring white
At Winter's stern command
Thro' shortened day and starlit night
We love thee frozen land
We love thee, we love thee,
We love thee frozen land.
When blinding storm gusts fret thy shore
And wild waves lash thy strand*

*Thro' spindrift swirl and tempest roar
 We love thee wind-swept land
 We love thee, we love thee,
 We love thee wind-swept land.
 As loved our forebears, so we love
 the Island; the Big Land
 Our destiny joined hand in glove
 Together we will stand
 Together, together
 Together we will stand.*

In closing, I do hope that each of you will take the time to consider what I have suggested here, if not as a whole, then at least in part, and maybe as an impetus to get on with the straightforward task of bringing our beloved Ode into a more relevant present.

- The reasons not to are weak. If inclusivity is the issue then just change some words. "We guard thee" instead of "God guard thee" for instance.
- It fails to recognize Labrador. I think the lyrics could be modernized and more inclusive.
- I'd like to see a revised and updated version of the Ode included in Convocation along with a tribute to Labrador. It would show that Memorial is a progressive, flexible institution that is able to change with the times and respond to the community without abandoning our past. It would also demonstrate that people at Memorial are able to collaborate and seek out their shared values instead of always choosing sides and alienating one another.
- I don't like some of the lyrics - the insistence of God and the use of fathers. I think those could and should be changed to reflect secular, non patriarchic sentiments. Change or omit some lyrics. Update it but don't cut it out.
- The Ode should be included only if the Labrador equivalent is included. The Ode was sung at my convocation and I found it very striking that Labrador was once again excluded. Since living in the province for the past +10 years, Labrador is routinely an after thought if that to islanders. It's Newfoundland and Labrador. I needed Labrador represented at my convocation ceremony and it wasn't
- Perhaps it is time to consider some updating of the words in the Ode to reflect current sensibilities and norms around equality, inclusion, etc. If so, maybe MUN could propose this to the provincial government. If the province is agreeable, MUN would be an ideal partner in undertaking any such revisions.
- It's part of our history and maybe a new verse could be added to include Labrador, or maybe the chorus could be altered to include Labrador as well. I recognize that Labrador is left out of the Ode, so maybe it's time to alter it, just like Oh Canada was altered from "all our sons" to "all of us". People are used to that change, so I think incorporating Labrador, people will eventually get used to it.
- Although the song has a great melody, the lyrics no longer represent what Newfoundlanders and Labradorians feel good about when they consider being part of this province. Instead of taking a reactionary response to the critics of the day, MUN should have continued to play the

song at convocation, while at the same time working with the government to update the lyrics. MUN has exceptional resources like the folklore department, amazing students, alumni, etc., and people in government can always be convinced to do the right thing.

- Yes [the Ode should be reinstated in Convocation Ceremonies]. Although first, the lyrics should definitely be amended (updated) as it was composed at a time in which diversity was not celebrated as it is today. With updated lyrics (so they also include Labrador, or also include the Ode to Labrador), it should continue to play at convocation.
- I think as time goes by and we reflect upon historic oversights and historic atrocities it behooves us to reflect an understanding of those whilst maintaining the historic validity of (in this case) a beloved song. I would urge therefore in the spirit of reconciliation, reflection and acceptance of many perspectives to add verses reflecting an indigenous history and Labrador. Alternatively ask for submissions for a new piece and play them side by side to reflect the complex history. Don't throw the baby out with the bath water.
- Much has been made about the wording of the song and that it is very much out of date in today's lenses. But the same can be said for many songs from the past in Newfoundland, yet we still sing them. The Ode is as much about a reflection on the place we call home as it is about the people who live here. The anthem isn't perfect, in consideration of Labrador, indigenous identity and many other important considerations it falls short. To some the Ode has some degree of perceived asymmetry to it. Parts that don't mix, seem incongruent and in-efficient, or maybe some pseudo soft jingoism in its verbiage. The time in which it was written did not include these factors but nonetheless it has a resiliency in spirit and meaning that continues to see it sung at public events today. Most of the older generation all know the Ode and can still sing it today. This has some resonance that cannot be overlooked if we are to consider everything bad and good. Perhaps some editing or more inclusive verses can be added- this might be a recommendation. I think this is fair and should be open to public discussion. If anything about life here in Newfoundland and Labrador we've learned to adapt and making some changes to a song that supposed to be our anthem and representative of the place we call home that we return to, that many long for while living away is in my mind fair.
- I acknowledge that the Ode does not include references to Labrador nor to other groups that should be included; for example, one verse begins "as loved our fathers" does not name mothers. While this reflects the patriarchal attitudes of the time of its writing, it is not enough reason to ban it from what is perhaps the most important ceremony in the province's only University. Petition the provincial government to make the appropriate changes. Do not ban the entire Ode from MUN.
- There were people suggesting changes to the lyrics or the words in the Ode to Newfoundland. Other solutions were to include the Ode to Labrador and I would say that the same applies to the Ode to Labrador is that you might think, 'ok, it solves one problem that it makes [Convocation] more inclusive,' but the Ode to Labrador is as colonial as the Ode to Newfoundland. [...] [Speaking of the emotional attachment to the Ode to Newfoundland and the emotional power of music:] Many people have said, well, 'let's just abandon the lyrics altogether and come up with a whole new set of lyrics that could be done in collaboration with different peoples in the province and come up with something new but to the same music.' But

again, to me that's not a viable solution either, because you've still got the same music that is attached to the same original meaning [of the Ode].

- I do think it's time to look at changing the last verse of the Ode to Newfoundland to remove the references to fathers, prayer and God; this final verse has not stood the test of time. It would be interesting to see how the last verse could be updated to include a reference to Labrador (to reflect the official name of the province) and to be more inclusive and not so focused on religion. I realize this is not the point of this survey but wanted to make this point of view known. However, until the provincial government officially changes the Ode, it should be played at Convocation.
- Yes [the Ode should be reinstated], because of its historical connection and the majority of the ode is a generic reference to the land (e.g., pine clad hills, frozen land). That said it is not inclusive of Labrador, indigenous peoples, or different religious or spiritual views. The ode needs modernization to reflect the values of the province and the university. For example, the section referring to God can be omitted. Perhaps a verse in Inuttitut can be added if deemed appropriate by indigenous peoples. Modernization of the Ode may benefit the province as a whole.