



Students' Representative Council - Meeting Minutes  
Monday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Beveridge Forum

In the Acadia Students' Union, we acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We recognize that we are all treaty people and have commitments to each other and the land in which we live, learn, work, and play upon. As a Students' Union, we commit ourselves to continuous learning about how we can engage in meaningful action towards truth, reconciliation, and justice.

**Present**

President, Yash Gahlot (voting) **P**  
Vice-President Student Life, Sterling Shannon (voting) **P**  
Vice-President Academic and External Affairs, Sam Taylor (voting) **P**  
Vice-President Events and Promotions, Zahide Çam (voting) **P**  
Vice-President Finance and Operations, Archit Singh (voting) **P**  
Arts Senator, Genna Beed (voting) **P**  
Science Senator, Julia Shirokov (voting) **P**  
Professional Studies Senator, Sophia Carpenter (voting) **P**  
Councillor-at-large, Treyvon Nicolls (voting) **P**  
Councillor-at-large, Emma Boles (voting) **P**  
Diversity and Inclusion Representative, Danielle Dullay (voting) **P**  
Community Relations Representative, Cyenna Link (voting) **P**  
Sustainability Representative, Carmen Peng (voting) **P**

**Absences**

Vice-Chair of Council, Gretchen Archibald (non-voting)

~37 students

**Resources**

Chair of Council, Ben McCulley (non-voting) **P**  
Chief Returning Officer, Ahmad Raza (non-voting) **P**

**Agenda**

**1. Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 5:34 PM ADT.



## 2. Roll Call

## 3. Adoption of Agenda and Previous Minutes

**BIRT** the agenda be approved as amended.

Moved by Sam

Seconded by Zahide

Motion Approved

**BIRT** the January 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes be approved as presented.

Moved by Sterling

Seconded by Julia

Motion Approved

## 4. Presentations

## 5. Standing Items

### a) Committee Chairs

- Sterling provided an update for the Student Life Committee:
  - o They are in conversation with Reid and Tegan about St. Patrick's Day programming at the Axe.
  - o Smoking on the Axe patio will not be permitted.
  - o Sterling has an update regarding the RHA and invites anyone to speak with him if they would like more information.
  - o They are discussing plans for improved election engagement in the future—outline each position more clearly, advertisement in classrooms.
  - o Sterling proposed an ASU information session during Orientation Week, Genna will share information on the session she hosted in 2023 with the incoming VPSL during their transition.

### b) President

- The University Senate approved calendar dates for the 2025 summer term as well as the 2029/30 academic year.
- Yash will inquire about why Sam and Genna have not been receiving Board of Governors meetings updates/invites.

### c) Chair of Council

- The Review Board met; updates will be shared once approved by the committee.
- The governance committee met and set a list of policy and constitution goals for the remainder of the academic year. They will meet bi-weekly moving forward.
- Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup> is set as a tentative date for a full-day policy writing session.



## 6. Unfinished Business

- a) University Strategic Planning Committee Appointments
- The committee model is shifting to a smaller focus group which extends into a variety of working groups. There will be one ASU representative on the larger focus group (most likely an executive member), and faculty specific representatives on the remaining groups.

## 7. New Business

### For Discussion

- a) University Protest Policy
- Sterling provided an update regarding the round table:
  - o Students asked questions, raised concerns, and are now discussing next steps. Sterling is interested in an additional meeting to make the meeting document into a more formal list of asks—the group will consist of Sterling, Elizabeth Cox, Zahide, Sam, Cyenna, Danielle, and Yash.
- b) Pool Closure
- Ben opened up the floor for SRC comments regarding the pool closure.
  - o Emma noted she is not in support of the pool closure, and that it creates larger discussions about the facility—pools always run deficits, the Acadia varsity swim team consistently performs at a high level, and the Acadia pool creates opportunity for participants in the S.M.I.L.E. Program.
  - o Zahide met with university administrator Scott Duguay and President Jeff Hennessy, who encouraged students to advocate to the Town of Wolfville for a community pool installation. Zahide is happy to take any questions from students and forward them to university administrators.
  - o Sterling noted funding for a new Annapolis Valley athletics complex has been in discussion between the Town of Wolfville and neighboring town councils for the previous few years, which is one of the university's reasons for their decision to permanently close the Acadia pool. University administrators are open to further discussions regarding the pool closure, and Sterling suggests students advocate for it to remain open for the next couple of years at the very least to match the potential valley athletics complex timeline.
  - o Sam noted the issue was raised in the most recent Acadia University Senate meeting (Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup>), and faculty and community members also oppose the closure. Sam is happy to act as a point of contact between the Acadia varsity swim team and the university senate and administration.



- Zahide reminded students the ASU's main concern is to meet their asks and support them to the best of their ability.
- Emma brought up the 2018 University of New Brunswick Moncton pool closure. She stated they still do not have a new pool due to confusion around who was responsible for the project—the university administration, the town, etc.—but the students have the power to make demands of Acadia. Emma noted an importance in exploring the pool closure beyond the given reasons of budget cuts, and in telling Dr. Hennessy students and community members need an accessible and sustainably built pool facility and athletics complex.
- Zahide expressed her support for a new athletics complex and pool and suggested bringing the issue to the Town of Wolfville could make more financial sense based on the equal use between the two entities.
- Cyenna questioned why the new Students' Union Building is being prioritized over fixing the pool facility.
- Sam noted the students present at the meeting should be given an opportunity to speak about their concerns.
- Emma questioned why students were excluded from the decision-making process, and noted there is nobody to hold the university administrators accountable without students.
- Ben opened the floor to the students present at the meeting to discuss their concerns regarding the pool closure and ask questions to the SRC members.
  - Emma spoke about the pool's impact on both the students and community—creates jobs for students and community members, provides physical exercise to elderly and disabled community members, and provides children with life-saving skills through swimming lessons—and touched on the Acadia varsity swim team members who came to the university to swim for the team. She noted swimmers on the team go to U Sports competitions, Worlds swimming competitions, and Olympic trials. With the nearest pool located forty minutes away from Wolfville, she predicts Acadia university will lose a significant amount of current and prospective students as a result of the closure. She expressed the inconsiderate nature of excluding students from this decision, and stated that if they were involved, they could have helped to find an alternative solution.
  - Zahide responded by noting the ASU shares in these frustrations, and suggests the focus moving forward should be on specific asks to the university administration—i.e. funds, timeline, etc.
  - Emma Boles stated the importance of the Town of Wolfville's involvement in advocating for the pool to remain open, and questioned if they could help to fund it until a more permanent solution is decided.
  - Yash responded by noting the university would like student input on what the facility should be used for once the pool closes.
  - Cyenna reminded the students they can contact the ASU or the Town of Wolfville directly with their concerns. She noted the town is still working on their annual budget



for the next fiscal year, and suggested a letter-writing campaign to ask for their support in keeping the pool open for at least another year.

- Ben noted the Town of Wolfville will hold a budget meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup> from 11:30-2:30. All are welcome to attend. He then re-opened the floor to the students present.
  - o Emma Boles noted that community support is important, but pressuring Dr. Hennessy to keep the pool open until a better solution can be reached is essential; once the pool closes, it will most likely not be re-opened by the university.
  - o Eliza stated the Acadia varsity swim team has received an outpour of support both within the town and nationally, and they are asking that the ASU to support them in their communications with Dr. Hennessy.
  - o Alex expressed the urgency in finding a solution as soon as possible, noting that the team has existed for a long time and rebuilding it in a few years if it is cut will be difficult.
  - o Bo noted he is a team captain for the fifty-three students who swim for Acadia. He stated that, while people are coming to Acadia to swim, there are students who swim for Acadia presently who are being affected by the closure. He noted that the team brings in around \$3 million in tuition money and athletic fees over the course of their degrees, so putting down funds for a potential future pool is not a viable solution for current swimmers. He provided a list of suggested next steps: external funding opportunities, obtaining a second opinion from another engineer, more transparency from the university administration.
  - o Emma Boles stated the importance of transparency when it comes to where student money is going and asked about adding a referendum regarding the pool closure to the upcoming ASU General Election.
  - o Sam asked for clarification about the specifics of the referendum—would it increase student fees to fund the pool or would it open the door to outside funding such as community or university administration.
  - o Emma clarified she was questioning a possible referendum which would support student striking in response to the pool closure.
  - o Sam noted a referendum is not required, and ASU support would be decided on via a vote. They also reiterated the ASU wants all students affected by the pool closure to be able to both continue their studies and utilize the pool facility at Acadia.
  - o Yash noted Dr. Hennessy explored external funding opportunities—provincial and municipal governments and the Town and Gown committee—and that he was struggling to keep the pool running.
- Ben reopened the floor to the students present at the meeting.
  - o Sydney reiterated the potential loss of students vital to the Acadia and Wolfville communities should the pool close permanently. She stated she came to Acadia to swim and the class of 2028 brought the largest group of rookie swimmers the team has ever had, and that there are numerous other universities that are willing to support them all both academically and athletically.



- Julia expressed her frustration at being informed about the closure only after the decision was made, instead of when conversations first began in November. The team was made aware of the closure only ten days before the AUS competition, they have recruits for the 2025/26 year who have turned down spots on other teams to swim for Acadia, and returning swimmers now need to think about transferring to other universities.
- Zahide responded that the university administration is aware they will lose students over this decision, but they believe a higher number of students would use a different facility rather than the pool. She stated it is important to show them why the pool is a necessity so that if they receive the funding, they will spend it on the pool as opposed to an additional facility.
- Emma proposed a round table with students and university administrators to share a list of demands and questions regarding the pool closure decision.
- Sterling expressed his support for the round table, and suggested speaking with the Town of Wolfville about their ability to financially support the pool; as of now, it appears unlikely that the university will continue to fund the facility.
- Zahide inquired about the possibility of extending this request for financial support to surrounding towns in the Annapolis Valley.
- The students present began sharing their concerns again.
  - Aiden noted the varsity swim team is underfunded. They need to contribute \$300 when they join the team, despite the swim team being one of the top performing teams at Acadia.
  - Sydney questioned what conversations were had prior to the pool closure decision.
  - Sam stated the ASU Executive team found out about the decision at the same time as the swim team. They are on a tight schedule of meetings with university administrators and are using their network of university and external representatives to advocate for keeping the swim team as well as increasing their funding. They also noted the university plans to increase funding to the S.M.I.L.E. program.
  - Sterling noted previous discussions between the university and the town about improving community facilities which then led to the conversation about a new valley athletics complex.
  - Emma asked for clarification regarding the increased funding to the S.M.I.L.E. program.
  - Sam clarified it is because they will lose their programming space with the pool closure.
  - Sterling noted the university will honour all swimming scholarships, though this is not a significant amount of support.
  - Emma asked to be present for the meetings with the university administration regarding the pool closures—Ben will discuss this with her following this meeting.
- Students present at the meeting began to share their concerns again.
  - Josh stated that honouring scholarships is not a meaningful solution for the swim team. He also shared he is a head coach for the Special Olympics and has not yet heard anything about how this will affect their spaces. He noted building a new pool would take



years and would greatly harm the Special Olympics and S.M.I.L.E. program and result in many students losing their athletic careers; it is important to keep the team going for as long as possible.

- John shared he has been swimming for fifteen years, and that the pool is an outlet for him and many others on the team. He continued that the Wolfville Tritons were excited to move up in swimming but had to be informed that their team is ending. The pool closure harms more than just students.
- Amaru is not on the swim team but expresses their support for advocating to keep the pool open.
- **Callum noted an article published by Acadia University which highlighted a \$22 million donation from the government two years ago to improve infrastructure. He questioned where the money went and what it was used for.**
- Emma noted that the varsity swim team pays their \$300 operating costs as well as their \$600 racing suits, while other varsity teams are not required to pay for anything. She stated that the swim team trains more than any other team at Acadia, so it is important that they have more information on the financial factors of this decision.
- Julia explained that the pool will close prior to the end of the Triton's season, and that the twelve swimmers who qualified for a meet in July will have to go after two weeks of no training. She believes this is unfair to the kids who train all year to not have a chance to show off their best abilities.
- Sydney questioned why the closure is happening now, as she has been swimming at the Acadia pool for the last thirteen years, and they have always done short-term fixes and let these problems build up.
- Genna asked for more clarification as to what honouring scholarships means.
- Sam clarified that Scott Duguay informed them the university will honour scholarships for all years of the swimmers' degrees.
- Sterling reminded the students present that the ASU will speak with the town and university to hear about their plans for the facility.
- Ben reminded everyone about the Town of Wolfville budget committee meeting.
- Sterling encouraged students to attend the budget meeting and share their concerns with the town.
- Treyvon noted the university has not been transparent with the ASU about how these decisions are made; they are not discussed in Board of Governors meetings—ASU representatives on the Board of Governors were not aware of the closures prior to the email sent by Dr. Hennessy—even though the ASU exists to be present in these meetings.
- Emma informed everyone that the pool closure is being covered on the news and is being seen across the country. She then reiterated the importance of attending the town's budget meeting.
- Sterling stated that university administrators are willing to attend an SRC meeting to discuss student concerns.





- Zahide created a list of the most important points moving forward: delaying the closure, questioning the timeline of the decision, where money goes/is going, working with the town to keep the pool open.
- Emma inquired about who runs the Save Our Pool social media accounts. The students present informed the SRC it was parents of swimmers on the Acadia team, and Emma said she would contact them.
- Students shared their concerns.
  - **Natalie noted other teams travel to surrounding towns to train using their indoor facilities during off-seasons and questioned why the swim team was not given this option. She also shared she requested that a sports psychologist be brought in to discuss the closure with the team and provide support during this transition, but was informed students can go to the Acadia counselling centre; there is no availability at the counselling centre and many swimmers could be ending their careers at AUS, so it is critical they are supported by a mental health professional.**
  - John questioned how realistic it would be for the swim team to travel to surrounding towns to train should the pool close.
  - Oliver noted that the swim team has the most academic all Canadians out of any other team at Acadia, so the university will lose a large statistic should the pool close.
  - **Alex shared that Canadian varsity rules require an even number of female and male athletes. If the swim team is cut, Acadia will lose 22% of their female athletes and will drop to 18% less female athletes than male athletes. Swimming is a female heavy sport, so cutting the Swim team will prevent a large number of female athletes from attending Acadia in the future.**
  - Natalie questioned if the university would continue to maintain the standard of the pool until the proposed closing date (June 15<sup>th</sup>), or if they will risk more damage which would result in an earlier closure.
  - **Victoria is not a swimmer but noted there is a large fine for universities who do not have an even number of male and female athletes. She questioned why the university is unable to fund the pool, but they are able to risk this fine.**
  - Sterling shared that the university requires \$3 million to fix the pool, and decided June 15<sup>th</sup> was the longest they could justify keeping the pool open without fixing it before it is rendered useless.
  - Emma asked how many engineers inspected the facility before this decision was made.
  - Sterling suggested looking into the possibility of the swim team training at the King's Edgehill pool.
  - Cyenna noted the pools in surrounding towns have little capacity to accommodate the swim team.
- Students shared their concerns.
  - Chloe shared that 100 lifeguards, their head coach, and the coaches for the Tritons will all lose their jobs should the pool close.





- Emma noted that Swim Nova Scotia is only allowed to use the Acadia, Centennial, and Dalhousie pools for meets due to size. The Acadia pool closure would leave them with only two pools.
- Zahide and Sterling thanked students for their comments and questions and reiterated the ASU's support.
- An anonymous swimmer stated that time in the pool is critical, even if it is less time than they are used to. They noted the swimmers would be willing to provide their own transportation and cover costs if necessary.
- Sterling and Zahide said they would like to have another meeting with the swim team and try to find a nearby pool they could train in if needed.
- Emma asked what questions they should ask at the town budget meeting.
- Ben noted the Mayor of Wolfville released a statement regarding the closure. He suggested asking her to expand on her statement and to repeat the same questions they asked in this meeting.
- Cyenna got information from the swim team on their availability for a round table—no practice on Friday nights.
- Sophia noted the mayor ran on a platform of supporting students and now is the time for her to prove that.
- Zahide stated the pool closure will bring in less people and revenue to the town.
- The swimmers provided a list of people they would like to be present at the round table: Mark Bishop from the registrar's office, university administrators, and ASU representatives.

**BIRT** the SRC extend this meeting for one hour.

**Moved by** Sterling

**Seconded by** Zahide

**Motion** approved

Meeting extended to 8pm

- Carmen left the meeting at 6:53pm.
- The swimmers shared their concerns again
  - Julia is not a swimmer but has been an Acadia tour guide for the past three years. She believes the closure will lose the university a large number of prospective students based on the number of questions she is asked about not just the team, but also all other programs which use the space.
  - Josh noted during the pandemic, the St. F.X. pool was at risk for closure, but the municipality decided to fund it, and they now have executive control of the facility.
  - An anonymous swimmer questioned the visuals the closure will send to other teams at Acadia regarding their ability to be cut with no warning.



- Natalie noted the swim team is a large contributor to the Kinesiology students' PT program, and cuts to the team would affect this.
- The swimmers made their final points reiterating their concerns for the pool closure. They also added Kinesiology Department representatives, Scott Landry, Acadia Athletics Representatives, and S.M.I.L.E. program representatives to the round table list.
- Ben concluded this portion of the meeting, and the swimmers left.
- Sam got Bo's contact information and will act as the point of contact between the swim team and the ASU.

### **For Decision**

- a) Election Committee Vacancy
- The committee requires an additional executive member. As the only executive member not running in the general election, Archit will sit on the committee.

**BIRT** the Students' Representative Council appoint Archit Singh to the election committee.

**Moved by** Sam

**Seconded by** Cyenna

**Motion** approved

### **8. In-Camera**

### **9. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31pm PM ADT.

Next Meeting Scheduled for: February 24, 2025. 5:30-7pm in the Beveridge Forum.