



Students' Representative Council - Meeting Minutes
March 10th, 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
Arts Senator, Genna Beed (voting) P
Science Senator, Julia Shirokov (voting) P
Professional Studies Senator, Sophia Carpenter (voting) P
Theology Senator, (insert name) (voting)
Graduate Studies Senator, (insert name) (voting)
Councilor-at-large, Treyvon Nicolls (voting) P
Councilor-at-large, Emma Boles (voting) P
Diversity and Inclusion Representative, (insert name) (voting)
Community Relations Representative, Cyenna Link (voting) P
Sustainability Representative, Carmen Peng (voting) P
First-year Representative, (insert name) (voting)

Absences

Vice-President Finance and Operations, Archit Singh (voting)

Resources

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

Agenda

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:41PM ADT.



2. Roll Call

3. Adoption of Agenda and Previous Minutes

BIRT the agenda be approved as presented.

Moved by Treyvon

Seconded by Zahide

Motion approved

BIRT the agenda be amended to include “SRC Excusal” under for decision and “Pool Closure Update” under for discussion.

Moved by Emma

Seconded by Zahide

Motion approved

BIRT the February 24th Meeting Minutes be approved as presented.

Moved by Zahide

Seconded by Carmen

Motion approved

4. Presentations

5. Standing Items

a) Committee Chairs

Financial affairs committee met. They reviewed funding application requests. Archit also met with university admin.

b) President

Yash attended Senate today. Yash gave an update on discussions they’ve recently had with President Hennessey. Council discussed changes to Politics courses. Emma asked about the bill the Senate was discussing.

c) Chair of Council

Ben discussed his work with the governance committee and updates council on the progress of certain policies.

6. Unfinished Business

7. New Business



For Discussion

- a) Arts Program Cuts

BIRT the SRC table this item until the next regular SRC meeting .

Moved by Cyenna

Seconded by Sam

Motion approved

- b) Upcoming 2025 Federal Election

Ben gave a spiel about the upcoming election and how he will be serving as Community Relations Officer- Youth for Kings-Hants. Council discussed a potential get out to vote campaign. Council discussed different aspects of the election and how they will affect students.

BIRT the SRC extend this meeting until 8:30 pm.

Moved by Emma

Seconded by Treyvon

Motion approved

- c) Pool Closure Update

Emma met with a swim team captain and discussed the current pool situation. A large portion of our current swim team has decided to pursue swimming at alternate schools. Emma also discussed a lack of support for certain club sport programs. Sterling discussed the administration of these club sports and what that might look like in the next few years.

For Decision

- a) Protest Policy

Sterling passed out booklets shown in Appendix A of this document regarding the asks of a proposed protest policy, with explanations of edits. Sterling expressed a consultation process including what students have issue with and would like to put the ASU stamp on it to bring it forward to the university.

The document was created with the thoughts of students in mind, it is being asked that the SRC review the changes and potentially approve the proposed changes prior to presenting the changes officially. It should be noted that students are unhappy with the current protest policy as it restricts fundamental rights on campus and poses a threat to academic freedom. Students worry that it may silence critical voices and act as institutional control on campus. Students would like the policy to uphold, protect and promote the rights of students. Students have suggested the changes outlined in the booklet Sterling previously handed out.



Sterling introduced 2 guests who helped to create the changes of the policy, Daniel and Elizabeth (guests).

Elizabeth (guest) explained that they have gone through and crossed out the original policy and replaced them with suggested replacements. The end of the booklet shows a new proposed policy, and then reasonings for the changes that were made.

Sterling expressed that they need to have a conversation with the university and said it will be a long discussion, but they would like the SRC's approval.

Sterling spoke about how the policy has been regulating student's rights on campus. Sterling read through every suggested change in the policy and got Elizabeth (guest) to explain their reasonings for the changes.

Emma asked how the review for the code of conduct works after this is proposed, and if they can make changes after the new protest policy is proposed. It would be really important to make sure this policy is used in the correct way.

Elizabeth expressed there were concerns within the code of conduct, however this is a later issue. Sterling said the last time the code of conduct was revised was August 2021.

Emma suggested a by-law review of the code of conduct is something that should be done as it affects this policy.

Sophia asked if the school defines hate speech or not

Elizabeth said that hate speech is defined as per the Criminal Code of Canada

Sterling added that there is a precedent for how the student code of conduct can be applied

Genna wondered when they present it to the university if they are bringing their reasonings to the university as well.

Sterling said they are planning on bringing everything listed in Appendix A.

Sterling said they explored simply adding protected protest into the code of conduct but were concerned about waiting for it to be updated.

Sam spoke about making sure things are very clear in definition

Genna and Julia left at 6:51pm.

Carmen left at 6:54pm.

Sam asked if we could have a term to define that their consequences depend on their respective agreements (i.e. code of conduct for students, collective agreement for faculty)

Sterling outlined the rest of the package included in Appendix A with some additional questions being asked and answered.

BIRT the SRC extend this meeting until 7:30 pm.

Moved by Sterling

Seconded by Sam

Motion approved

Gretchen left at 6:59pm



BIRT the SRC extend this meeting until 8:00 pm.

Moved by Emma

Seconded by Sterling

Motion approved

Archit arrived 7:29pm

BIRT the SRC table this item until the next SRC meeting .

Moved by Sterling

Seconded by Emma

Motion approved

b) SRC Excusal

BIRT Gretchen Archibald be excused from the February 24th SRC meeting.

Moved by Sterling

Seconded by Emma

Motion approved

8. In-Camera

BIRT the SRC move in camera at 5:44pm.

Moved by Sam

Seconded by Treyvon

Motion approved

a) Review Board Decision

Sam left at 5:50pm

BIRT the February 12th Review Board Minutes be unsealed for the duration of this in-camera session.

Moved by Zahide

Seconded by Emma

Motion approved

Zahide left at 6:28

BIRT the SRC rejects the request to appeal the February 12th Review Board decision.

Moved by Emma



Seconded by Sterling
Motion approved

BIRT the SRC move out of camera at 6:29pm.
Moved by Emma
Seconded by Sterling
Motion approved

Sam, Yash and Genna all joined at 6:30

9. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM ADT.

Next Meeting Scheduled for: TBD

Introduction

This document was created in consultation with students from Acadia University who expressed dissatisfaction with the protest policy approved on August 31, 2024. A working group designated by the Acadia Student Union (ASU) reviewed these concerns and used them to create the following list of demands for changes to the protest policy.

Students across the campus gathered to reflect on Acadia University's protest policy and to voice their concerns outlined in this document. Before presenting the specific proposed changes, it is important to emphasize that students do not agree with the creation and implementation of this protest policy without prior notice, consultation with the student body, or the involvement of the University Senate. Acadia University students are deeply concerned about the implications of this procedure, as it restricts fundamental rights on campus. The lack of communication, transparency, and accountability in this matter poses a significant threat to academic freedom.

The Acadia University campus should fundamentally serve as a hub for sharing ideas and engaging in diverse debates. Students worry that the current protest policy may silence critical voices and act as a mechanism of institutional control on Campus.

A clear, reasonable, and ethically grounded protest policy should be developed through a deeply democratic deliberative process. This will ensure that Acadia University fosters an environment where open exchange of ideas and respectful discourse are both encouraged and supported while also guaranteeing security for all who engage peacefully. Such a policy must uphold, protect, and promote the rights of students.

Therefore, students at Acadia University suggest the following changes to the current protest policy, advocating for clear and transparent guidelines for implementing protest policies. This commitment reflects a dedication to promoting open discourse and ensuring that any restrictions imposed are fair, proportionate, and transparent rather than vague and nonspecific, as outlined in the existing policy.



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Responsible Unit: Safety and Security

Last Reviewed/Updated: August 31, 2024

Approving Sector Head: Vice-President, Finance & Administration and CFO

Policy: **Campus Protests and Demonstrations**

1. Purpose

Acadia University is committed to fostering an environment where the open exchange of ideas and respectful discourse are encouraged and supported. This policy outlines the university's expectations for students, faculty, and staff regarding protests and/or demonstrations on campus.

2. Policy Statement

Acadia University encourages all members of the university community to have active voices in advocating for change and engaging in discussions on important issues. The university supports the right to peaceful and lawful protest and demonstration as a vital part of freedom of expression and the democratic process.

3. Guidelines for Protests and Demonstrations

3.1 Peaceful and Non-Violent Protests

All protests and demonstrations on campus must be conducted in a peaceful and lawful manner. Violence, threats of force or violence, and/or any actions that endanger the safety of others, and/or damage property, and/or interfere with the expressive freedoms of others are strictly prohibited.

3.2 No Impediment to Regular University Business

Protests and demonstrations must not substantially and materially impede or disrupt the regular business of the university. This includes, but is not limited to, the obstruction of entrances or exits to buildings, disruption of classes, academic activities, and/or administrative functions, and interference with scheduled events. For further clarification, the following examples constitute forms of conduct that are not permitted under this policy:

- Holding up signs, shouting, or playing loud music in a manner that substantially interferes with a speaker's ability to be heard or a community member's opportunity to listen (also known as "deplatforming"), particularly if done repeatedly or for a sustained period of time. By contrast,

spontaneous or temporary interruptions are less likely to violate this policy.

- Trespassing by remaining in a building or other campus space when told to leave by the university.
- Occupying a physical location in a manner that obstructs the ability of other members of the university community to move about campus or enter or exit buildings.
- Vandalizing artwork, posters, and/or memorials created by another member of the university community.

3.3 Time and Place Restrictions

- Protests and demonstrations are permitted during normal university business hours, defined as 8:30 AM to 10:00 PM, Monday through Friday, excluding statutory holidays.
- Long-term encampments and/or occupations of campus spaces before 8:30am or after 10:00pm are not allowed without permission from the university.
- Demonstrations should be conducted in areas that do not substantially and materially interfere with university operations and/or violate the rights of other members of the community.

3.4 No Disciplinary Action for Participation

- No student will face disciplinary action from the university on the basis of their participation in a protest or demonstration, provided that the protest or demonstration complies with this policy.
- Faculty and staff who participate in protests or demonstrations on campus must do so in compliance with this policy and their existing employment contracts and collective agreements. In any instance where this policy and a collective agreement are in conflict, the latter shall prevail.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Participants in a Protest or Demonstration

- Participants in a protest or demonstration must adhere to this policy and conduct protests or demonstrations in a peaceful and lawful manner.
- Participants in a protest or demonstration must ensure that their actions do not substantially and materially disrupt university operations or infringe on the rights of others.
- Participants in a protest or demonstration must not violate the rights of others to engage in expressive activities.

4.2 University Administration

- The university administration is responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied neutrally and communicated clearly to all members of the university community.
- The university administration will protect the right of students, faculty, and staff to participate in protests and demonstrations that are consistent with this policy.

- In the event of non-compliance, the university administration will take appropriate actions while respecting the rights of individuals involved.

4.3 Safety and Security

- Safety and Security is responsible for ensuring the safety of all participants and bystanders during protests and demonstrations.
- Safety and Security personnel will monitor protests and demonstrations to ensure they remain peaceful and safe and in accordance with this policy. Participants in a protest or demonstration may not impede Safety and Security personnel in any way.

5. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in actions by the university to restore order, which may include dispersal of the protest or demonstration, and in severe cases, appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with the student non-judicial code of conduct, terms of employment, and/or collective agreements.

6. Review and Amendments

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Office of Safety and Security. Amendments to this policy will be made in consultation with the Acadia Students' Union, employee groups, and in alignment with the university's commitment to freedom of expression and the open exchange of ideas.

7. Exclusions

This policy does not apply to strikes, lockouts, or any action that falls within the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code and shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with applicable laws, provincial regulations, and collective agreements.

Approved By: Erin Beaudin, Vice-President Finance and Administration and CFO

Date of Approval: August 31, 2024

Proposed new policy draft

1. Purpose

Acadia University is committed to fostering an environment where the open exchange of ideas and respectful discourse are encouraged and supported. This policy outlines the expectations for students, faculty, staff, and the university regarding protests and/or demonstrations on campus.

2. Policy Statement

Acadia University encourages all members of the university community to have active voices in advocating for change and engaging in discussions on important issues. The university will protect the right to peaceful and lawful protest and demonstration on campus as a vital part of freedom of expression and the democratic process.

3. Guidelines for Protests and Demonstrations

- A protest or demonstration is a public act of objection, disapproval, or dissent. Protests and demonstrations take place in both physical and online spaces.
- Protests and demonstrations must be conducted following the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct.

4. No Disciplinary Action for Participation

- No student will face disciplinary action from the university on the basis of their participation in a protest or demonstration, provided that the student complies with this policy.
- No student will face disciplinary action from the university based on the actions of other participants in a protest or demonstration.
- Faculty and staff who participate in protests or demonstrations on campus must do so in compliance with this policy and their existing employment contracts and collective agreements. In any instance where this policy and a collective agreement are in conflict, the latter shall prevail.**
- The university will not interfere with a protest or demonstration unless there is a legitimate threat to the rights or safety of others as defined in the "Standards of Conduct" section in the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct.

5. Rights and Responsibilities

5.1. University Administration

- The university administration will apply this policy equitably and with respect for the rights of individuals involved, following the procedures outlined in the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct.

- The university administration will protect the right of students, faculty, and staff to participate in protests and demonstrations that are consistent with this policy.
- The University administration will communicate clearly about applications of this policy with members of the Acadia University community.

5.2. Safety and Security

- Safety and Security is responsible for ensuring the safety of all participants and bystanders during protests and demonstrations.
- Safety and Security employees who respond to violations of the protest policy will have received comprehensive training on human rights, de-escalation strategies, and their responsibilities within this policy.
- Safety and security will respond to reports of violations of the protest policy. If safety and security are present at any protest in response to a report of a violation, they will not instigate aggression towards protestors or attempt to instigate violence. Safety and security will use proportionate actions towards protestors who violate this policy.

5.3. Participants in a Protest or Demonstration

- Members of the Acadia University community have the right to participate in peaceful and lawful protests and demonstrations on the Acadia University campus that follow the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct.
- In the case that a participant in a protest or demonstration believes this policy has not been applied equitably they have the right to follow the appeals process in the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct.
- As outlined in the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct, “All students have the responsibility to contribute to the creation of a community that prioritizes the well-being of self and others as a primary priority.” This responsibility includes the requirement that students “create an environment that ends speech and actions of hate and discrimination”. This section of the code of conduct protects the rights of participants in a protest or demonstration to interfere with hateful or discriminatory speech or actions through the use of protest or demonstration. Under the code of conduct, students are also required to “be accepting of the diverse beliefs in the Acadia community”. In this way, the code of conduct differentiates between restrictions on hate speech and respect for free speech.

6. Non-Compliance

- Non-compliance with this policy will be dealt with through procedures outlined in the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct.
- If interim sanctions are applied under the procedures outlined in the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct, students will be informed of the reason for the applied interim sanctions.

7. Review and Amendments

- This policy will be reviewed annually by the Office of Safety and Security. Amendments to this policy will be made in consultation with the Acadia Students' Union, and all employee groups, and in alignment with the university's commitment to freedom of expression, the open exchange of ideas and institutional transparency.
- Acadia community members and groups can at any time propose amendments to this policy to the Office of Safety and Security.

8. Exclusions

This policy does not apply to strikes, lockouts, or any action that falls within the Nova Scotia Labour Standards Code and shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with applicable laws, provincial regulations, and collective agreements.

**We request that this section of the policy be reviewed with all university employee groups as the disciplinary procedures that would be used to enforce this policy fall under the Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct which does not apply to employees making disciplinary measures for employees unclear.

Reasons for changes

Note: section numbers reference the original protest policy

Section 1- This policy should also outline expectations for the university not just expectations for participants in protests.

Section 2- The university should protect the right to protest, not just support it. This turns this policy into one that affirms rights rather than seeks to restrict and control them under the guise of affirming rights.

Section 3.1- This should be removed, as there already exists precedent that the right to freedom of assembly does not include the right to impede or obstruct lawful activities on their property and the student code of conduct already prohibits violence, threats of force or violence, endangering the safety of others, damaging property and interfering with expressive freedoms of others. We replaced 3.1 with a simple definition of protest because any attempt to define a peaceful protest presents a risk of misinterpretation and abuse. Instead, we believe the policy should define when the university is allowed to interfere with protests which is in line with the way major human rights organizations discuss protest rights.

3.2 - Disrupting or impeding the regular business of a university is the purpose of a protest. This may be misinterpreted to mean that students cannot stage a class walkout, as that substantially disrupts the regular business of the university. This section should be removed, as there already exists precedent that the right to freedom of assembly does not include the right to impede or obstruct lawful activities on their property.¹

3.3- There are no grounds to disallow protest at certain times or days. As cited in the last section, the university already has the legal right to disallow gatherings that disrupt the lawful actions of others. Vaguely stating this allows bad actors to co-opt the article.

¹ Guelph (City) v. Soltys, No. 636/09 (Superior Court of Justice August 13, 2009).

3.4- This should be changed to “provided that the student complies with this policy”. Individuals are incapable of controlling the actions of others and shouldn’t be collectively punished for bad actors. Students should not be punished for the actions of others and allowing this section of the policy would constitute collective punishment.

4.1- For the third time, the university already has the legal right to disallow gatherings that disrupt the lawful actions of others. This section is rehashed for the third time and should be removed. Instead, this section should be defined by the rights that students have to an appeal process if they feel they have been unfairly sanctioned.

4.2- The word neutrality should not be used as neutrality does not exist and choosing to be neutral sides with the status quo and/or the oppressor. Equity is more appropriate here as it requires fairness and that individual circumstances are taken into account.

4.3- These changes are necessary as the current policy presumes that protests will violate the policy and require the presence of safety and security. S&S already has the ability to intervene if violence is occurring anywhere on campus so there should be no need for them to be automatically present at a protest unless they have very good reason to believe their presence is required. S&S employees also need proper training to handle protests safely. Often, violence at protests occurs due to the presence of law enforcement which is why the sentence prohibiting S&S from instigating aggression is necessary.

5.-This section is threatening and unnecessary. Instead, it should refer to the code of conduct procedures. Protestors should be given a reason for interim sanctions to make sure that they understand what they did to earn interim sanctions and to add a level of assurance that the possibility for interim sanctions is not abused.

6.- We added that amendments should be made with institutional transparency in mind as this was clearly a problem with the creation of this policy. As the policy stands, only safety and security can propose amendments to the policy. We want anyone at Acadia to be able to propose amendments at any time.