Students' Representative Council

Friday, January 30, 2026, 6:00 PM
McCain Centre 201B / Microsoft Teams

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Land Recognition** (G. Yee)
   The MSVUSU acknowledges that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of Mi'kmaq people.

3. **Attendance Roll Call**

4. **Approval of the Agenda**

5. **Canadian Federation of Students Nova Scotia**

6. **New Business**

   a) Academic Appeals Policy (M. Minocha)

   b) Student Union Survey Academic Appeals Draft (M. Minocha)

   c) Hiring Committee appointments (C. Lewis)

   - Rook Assistant Manager Hiring Committee
   - Hub Manager Hiring Committee
   - Hub Customer Service Staff Hiring Committee
   - Food Security Hiring Committee
   - Pride Centre Manager Hiring Committee
   - FPC Hiring Committee
   - Social Media & Creative Content Manager Hiring Committee
   - Chief Financial Officer Hiring Committee
   - Administrative Assistant Hiring Committee

7. **Reports from Executives, Committees, Working Groups**

8. **In-Camera**

9. **Date of Next Meeting**
   Friday, February 13, 2026, 6 PM

10. **Adjournment**

1. Guiding Principles for a Restorative Justice Approach

a. Harm, repair, relationship & community

Restorative justice emphasizes that misconduct (in this case academic integrity breaches or appeals conflicts) harms not only rules but also the educational community (peers, faculty, institution). The goal is repair and reintegration rather than only exclusion or punishment.

"A restorative justice approach to addressing academic integrity breaches focuses on repairing the harm caused by misconduct rather than punishing the student." (Kwantlen Polytechnic University)

This aligns with the broader literature:

1. The UNODC "Handbook on Restorative Justice Programmes" defines Restorative Justice as "a flexible, participatory and problem-solving response to criminal behaviour, which can provide a complementary or an alternative path to justice. It can improve access to justice, particularly for victims of crime and vulnerable and marginalized populations, including in transitional justice contexts" (1)

2. The Canadian document "Principles and Guidelines for Restorative Justice Practice" emphasizes:

   - "Restorative justice (RJ) has been used to some extent in the criminal justice system in Canada for over 40 years, and there are hundreds of RJ programs across Canada operating at different stages of the system

   - The use of RJ within the criminal justice system is enabled by provisions in the *Criminal Code*, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*,

the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, and by federal, provincial, and territorial government policies

- RJ is an effective response to crime. RJ is used in cases involving young persons and adults, first-time offenders, and repeat offenders, and crimes ranging from minor to serious

- Many RJ programs have learned from Indigenous legal traditions, which have been used by Indigenous peoples for thousands of years to resolve disputes

- RJ values are consistent with and have been informed by the beliefs and practices of many faith communities and cultural groups in Canada

- Canada led and supported the adoption of four resolutions on restorative justice at the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (1999, 2002, 2016, and 2018), including the *United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles on the use of RJ Programmes in Criminal Matters*

- Canada endorses the *United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime* and the *Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime*, and is committed to the implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples"*

b. Educational, inclusive, equitable

In higher education, this means offering a process that supports student learning, recognizes diverse cultural understandings, and avoids disproportionate impact on marginalized students.

- A policy note from a university states: "Restorative approaches may be employed … in combination with educational requirements and community service." (Karp)

c. Procedural fairness

Participants must have a voice, an opportunity to reflect, and a chance to voluntarily engage in the process; power imbalances must be addressed to avoid replicating restrictive systemic barriers.

- The "Promoting Restorative Justice for Children" UN document underscores that restorative processes should be voluntary and should respect the rights of children and communities (17).
- Restorative Justice guidelines emphasize that a vision should include stakeholder involvement, input from community, facilitators, etc. (CICS)

d. Prevention, capacity building, culture shift

Rather than only responding to misconduct, a restorative justice model for academic offences will promote actual growth and development.

- Restorative Justice "promotes accountability and understanding … supports educational growth … reduces recidivism … fosters relationships, community and collaboration." (Kwantlen Polytechnic University)
- A study about MacEwan University states that "it provides an experiential learning opportunity to all involved that highlights the rootedness of ethical decision-making in relationships and community" (Sopcak and Hood 567)

[**Recidivism** refers to the tendency to reoffend.]

2. Relevant International / UN-Linked Policy References

While most UN documents focus on criminal or juvenile justice contexts, many of the principles transfer into higher education misconduct frameworks (if adapted appropriately):

- The UNODC "Handbook on Restorative Justice Programmes Second Edition" provides foundational definitions and rationale for restorative processes in justice settings.

- The UN document "Promoting Restorative Justice for Children" emphasizes community involvement, reintegration, recovery, and avoiding exclusionary punitive measures.

- The Canadian "Principles and Guidelines for Restorative Justice Practice in Criminal Matters", although based on criminal matters, offers policy framing that can influence higher-education policy.

In conclusion, we can draw from these documents to argue for a shift away from purely punitive, exclusionary approaches, aiming for inclusive, relational, educational responses. In other words, perceiving academic misconduct through the lens of educational growth and development, rather than an adversarial disciplinary system.

3. Proposed Three-Step Restorative Academic Appeals/Integrity Model

A draft policy framework for MSVU (to be proposed to be adapted to the Senate policy). It uses a three-stage approach for academic misconduct, namely - warning, educational repair, and community involvement. Each stage includes options, responsibilities, outcomes, and appeal/resolution pathways.

3.1 Scope

This model applies to cases of academic misconduct or academic appeals where a student's action/inaction has had an impact on the academic community, faculty, or student body. The intent is to operationalize the university's commitment to integrity, inclusion, and restoration.

3.2 Guiding Principles

- All participants (students, faculty, staff) are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

- Responses focus on repairing harm, educating, and reintegration rather than solely sanctioning.

- The process supports student learning, development of ethical academic practices, and connection to the academic community.

- The process is culturally responsive, inclusive, and attentive to power dynamics, especially for Indigenous and equity-seeking students.

- Options should be timely, transparent, and incorporate student voice.

- Students are provided with resources, support, and the opportunity to reflect and commit to improved practices.

- Recurrence of misconduct will lead to higher stages of intervention.

3.3 Model Framework

Stage 1: Warning and Reflective Conversations

Minor breach or first offence (or an appeal case where student acknowledges responsibility).

Process:

- The student meets with a designated faculty or staff member (for instance, an academic integrity officer) for a restorative conversation exploring what happened, why it happened, and what harm may have been caused (to self, peers, faculty, institution).

- The student completes a reflective assignment on academic integrity, expectations in MSVU, and how they will act differently.

- A written agreement is created between the student and institution, where the student agrees to specific actions for upcoming work (attending an integrity workshop, meeting with library/instruction centre) within a mutually agreed timeframe.

Outcomes:

- No formal record of misconduct appears on transcript (or minimal formal notation) provided the agreement is completed satisfactorily.

- The student obtains access to educational resources (workshop, peer tutoring) to strengthen integrity practices.

- The student is aware that further misconduct will escalate to Stage 2.

Appeals/Review: If the student believes the matter is mischaracterized, they may request an appeal.

Stage 2: Educational Repair and Engagement

Either a second instance of misconduct after Stage 1, or a first incident in which Stage 1 is considered insufficient.

 Process:

- The student participates in a restorative conference or facilitated meeting involving the student, the instructor/faculty member, and possibly a peer-mentor or student integrity advisor. The conversation explores root causes (time management, language, cultural factors, supports), the impact of the behaviour, and collaboratively develops an "academic repair plan".

- The student undertakes a course or workshop on academic integrity, citations, collaboration norms, etc. (we could develop a module for this).

- The student engages in a community-oriented activity related to academic integrity (peer mentoring in the writing centre, hosting a short workshop for fellow students, contributing to a campus awareness campaign about plagiarism).

- A written agreement is signed (repair plan) with timelines, outcomes and reflection.

 Outcomes:

- The incident may be recorded internally, but the student may avoid exclusion or major sanction if they complete the obligations.

- If the student successfully completes all obligations by the deadline, the case is considered resolved.

- The student is notified that any further misconduct will move to Stage 3.

Appeals/Review: Student may appeal the decision to avoid this process or participate in Stage 1 (if they have not committed a prior offence).

Stage 3: Community Involvement & Reintegration

A third offence, or a serious incident.

Process:

- A restorative panel or circle meeting involving the student, faculty/department representative, peer/s (selected by the student) or other stakeholders (could include the Students' Union or Academic Staff) to reflect on the harm/community impact, identify what repair is needed and how the student will reintegrate.

- The student completes a substantial community-oriented project or service tied to academic integrity and the MSVU community (leading or co-designing an academic integrity awareness campaign, facilitating workshops for incoming students, contributing to policy review or peer-education).

- The student enrolls in a course (free course but needs to be completed for them to graduate) about academic integrity, entailing academic ethics, procedures, supports, resources, and so on based on the student's needs.

- The student develops a reflective portfolio or presentation on what they learned, how they will change practices, and how they have contributed/will contribute to the community's integrity.

Outcomes:

- A more formal record may be placed on file (with a clear timeframe for review).

- Depending on severity, additional sanctions may be applied/dropped, but only after the restorative components are completed/reviewed.

- The student is required to meet periodically with a mentor or integrity advisor throughout the remainder of their program (for example, once per semester) to support reintegration.

Appeals/Review: Student may appeal the process or may request to participate in other stages (if this is their first offence).

3.4 Policy Integration & Process Flow

- Include a clear flow-chart in the policy showing how incidents move from Stage 1 to Stage 2 to Stage 3, with options for escalation, review and appeals.

- Incorporate definitions (academic misconduct, harm, repair, community, etc.) that align with MSVU's equity, diversity, inclusion, Indigenous engagement frameworks. The current definitions are not very clear.

- Provide roles and responsibilities (academic integrity officer/advisor, peer-mentors, community partners).

- Outline supports available (writing centre, library instruction, peer mentoring, counselling, equity services) to address underlying causes (English as an additional language, time-management, mental health, etc.).

- Efficient data-tracking and review of the restorative system; that is, the frequency of each stage, completion rates, student feedback, and recurrence rates.

- Training for facilitators - restorative conversations, conferences or panels for Restorative Justice facilitation, cultural responsiveness, power dynamics, etc.

- Provide safeguards: Students must have the right to be heard, to appeal, to request an alternate process, voluntary participation in restorative processes, clear timelines, and confidentiality provisions.

- Option for opt-in/opt-out: For some cases, if a student declines the restorative option, the institution may proceed via updated disciplinary pathways (but this should be rare and reviewed).

- Ensure monitoring and review to evaluate effectiveness, reduction in repeat offences, student satisfaction, and fairness in outcomes across equity groups.

3.5 Brief Sample Policy Text (this needs to be more detailed)

The University is committed to fostering a culture of academic integrity grounded in learning, inclusivity, and community. Recognizing that academic misconduct impacts students, faculty, and the institution, the University will respond in ways that emphasize repairing harm, supporting student learning, and reintegration into the academic community. In doing so, the University moves beyond a purely punitive model toward a restorative justice-informed approach.

Stage 1: Warning and Reflective Conversations

When a student is found to have committed the first instance of minor academic misconduct, the student will be invited to meet with an Integrity Officer for a reflective conversation. The student will complete a reflective assignment and agree to an action plan. If the student fulfils the requirements within the agreed timeframe, the matter will be concluded without formal sanction, and a record of misconduct will not appear on the transcript.

Stage 2: Educational Repair and Engagement

In the case of a second offence, or a first offence where Stage 1 is considered insufficient, the student will participate in a facilitated restorative meeting, complete an integrity workshop, and engage in a community-oriented assignment relating to academic integrity. Successful completion will resolve the matter pending review; failure to complete will lead to escalation to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Community Involvement & Reintegration

In the case of a third offence, or more serious misconduct, the student will engage in a restorative panel or circle meeting involving the student, faculty/department representative, peer/s (selected by the student) or other stakeholders (could include the Students' Union or Academic Staff), lead or co-design a community integrity initiative, maintain a mentor relationship through the remainder of their program, and enroll in a course on academic integrity (which will need to be completed in order for them to graduate). Additional formal sanctions may be applied/dropped following the outlined restorative obligations.

The University reserves the right to escalate at any stage where the harm is significant, or the student does not engage. At all stages, students retain the right to appeal and receive fairness in procedural decisions, participate voluntarily, and access support.

The outcomes of this model will be reviewed annually, with data disaggregated across equity-seeking groups to ensure fairness and remove barriers, consistent with the University's commitment to decolonizing practices and maintaining an inclusive academic culture.

4. Next Steps and Implementation Considerations

- Review MSVU's current Senate policy and map where the new model needs to be implemented and what needs to be removed/modified.

- Consult with Indigenous Student Centre, EDIA Committee, Students' Union, Faculty, Administration, Committee on Academic Policy and Planning, International Student Centre, Black Student Support Office, etc.

- Develop training modules for restorative conversations and appoint peer mentors or academic integrity advisors.

- Design the educational workshop/module on academic integrity (to be used in Stage 2).

- Create a flow-chart and policy annex with roles, timelines, and record-keeping guidelines.

- Pilot the model (perhaps for a term) and evaluate academic community satisfaction, recidivism, and equity outcomes.

- Incorporate a review system: annual reporting to Senate/Committee on Academic Policy and Planning on restorative system outcomes.

- Ensure alignment with MSVU's broader strategic priorities (student success, inclusive campus, decolonization, academic excellence).

- Communicate to students (orientation, services, pamphlets), faculty, staff, so that expectations and resources are clear.

6. References

A Holistic Approach to Academic Integrity, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, www.kpu.ca/academicintegrity/faculty/a-holistic-approach.

Karp, David. "Restorative Approaches and Practices." *Student Conduct Office*, Queen's

    University, www.queensu.ca/studentconductoffice/process-and-resolution/restorative-

    approaches-and-practices.

"Principles and Guidelines for Restorative Justice Practice in Criminal Matters (2018)." *Federal-*

    Provincial-Territorial Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety,

    CICS, 29 Aug. 2019, https://scics.ca/en/product-produit/principles-and-guidelines-for-

    restorative-justice-practice-in-criminal-matters-2018/.

Promoting Restorative Justice for Children. United Nations, 2016. PDF.

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Sopcak, Paul, and Kevin Hood. "Building a Culture of Restorative Practice and Restorative

    Responses to Academic Misconduct." *Ethics and Integrity in Educational Contexts*, 3 Mar.

    2022, pp. 553–571, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83255-1_29.

UNODC. *Handbook on Restorative Justice Programmes*. 2nd ed., Thailand Institute of Justice,

    2020. PDF. https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/20-

    01146_Handbook_on_Restorative_Justice_Programmes.pdf

A. Overall Experience

1. **How would you describe your overall experience with the academic appeals process (application and the committee hearing)?**
   ☐ Positive
   ☐ Neutral
   ☐ Negative

2. **Did the appeals process feel more like a punishment than a support for learning?**
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Not sure

3. **Did the appeals process negatively affect your well-being (for example: stress, anxiety, loss of confidence)?**
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

4. **Did you feel treated with dignity and respect during the process?**
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

B. Fairness

5. **Did you feel your side of the story was genuinely heard?**
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

6. **Did you feel the evidence was fairly evaluated?**

   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

7. **Are the Academic Integrity Definitions and Sanctions clear?** Enlargeable picture
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Not sure

8. **Did you feel there was a power imbalance that worked against you as a student?**
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Not sure

C. Equity

9. **If you identify as an equity-denied student, did the process respect your background, culture, or lived experience?**
   ☐ Yes

☐ No
☐ Not applicable

10. **If you identify as an equity-denied student, did the outcomes perpetuate systemic disadvantage/inequality or affect your life in a more severe way?**
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not applicable

D. Impact on Trust and the University

11. **Did your experience with the appeals process reduce your trust in the university?**
☐ Yes
☐ No

12. **Would you recommend MSVU to your peers after your experience with the appeals process?**
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not applicable

E. Review Principles

12. **Do you think the appeals process should focus more on learning, self-reflection, and repair instead of punishment?**
☐ Yes
☐ No

13. **Which of the following should be part of a revised appeals process?**
(Select all that apply)
☐ Stronger Student voice in the committee
☐ Student Equity offices (Accessibility, Indigenous Student Center, Black Student Support Office, International Education Center, Pride Center) representatives in the committee
☐ Restorative approaches (e.g., dialogue or circles)
☐ Clear and transparent definitions and rules
☐ Training committee members in cultural competency (including Indigenous perspectives), anti-ableism, and bias awareness.
☐ Training in Trauma -awareness and supportive inquisitorial practices
☐ Community based- or educational outcomes instead of sanctions/ punishment

14. **Is there anything you would like to add to the discussion on MSVU's Academic Appeals Policy?**