

Academic Council Meeting MINUTES

Tuesday, April 07, 2026

5:00 – 6:30 PM

MS Teams



Time	Agenda Item	Action	Owner
A.	Welcome and Treaty Acknowledgment		
5:00	Attendees: Leadership: Arlene Eaton-Erickson, Jackie Nelson, Jelena Bajic, Jody Benders, Melissa Rothwell, Morgan Gauthier, Nancy Thornton, Neetu Shah Faculty: Bonnie Holtby, Erin Turnell, Jeff Ryan, Janelle Morrison, Melanie Mattila, Ortensia Norton, Rowena Quedado, Taylor Scanlon Students: Anish Ranabhat, Anjana Jagatheesh, Arnold Lapay, Deniz Cakil, Gursimran Kaur, Hebah Abukhadra, Jissel Diaz, Khadijat Idowu, Sukhmanpreet Kaur Guests: Jennifer Kerwin, Mary Stewart, Stephanie Husby, Parveen Hundal, Sara Gnida Regrets: Anne Bello, Bev Suntjens, Courtney McElrea, Debbie Little, Irine Rijo, Karen Cook-Newbury Chair: Loni Robertson Scribe: Safa Harb Meeting started at 5:00 PM.		
B.	AGENDA ITEMS		
5:02	1. Approval of Agenda – Apr. 07, 2026 Loni proposed an update to the agenda - Sara Gnida would join Jennifer Kerwin, Mary Stewart, Stephanie Husby and Arlene Eaton-Erikson for their agenda items. MOTION: That Academic Council approves the presented Apr. 07, 2026 Agenda with amendment. Moved by Hebah Abukhadra. Seconded by Jelena Bajic. All in favour. Motion Passed.	Approval	Loni Robertson (Chair)
5:05	2. Approval of the Minutes – Feb. 10, 2026 MOTION: That Academic Council approved Feb. 10, 2026 minutes. Moved by Janelle Morrison. Seconded by Anish Ranabhat. All in favour. Motion Passed.	Approval	Loni Robertson (Chair)

5:07	Update: Loni Robertson, Associate Dean – Academic Development is chairing this meeting as Bev Suintjens is away.	Information	Loni Robertson (Chair)
5:12	Teaching and Learning Policy and Procedures - Loni Robertson, Associate Dean, Academic Development and Parveen Hundal, Associate Chair, Teaching & Learning Development presented the new teaching and learning policy and suite of procedures, seeking input and feedback from the council. - NorQuest is developing a teaching and learning policy as a parent policy, accompanied by procedures for teaching, curriculum, and educational technology, aiming to ensure consistent learning experiences and alignment with institutional frameworks. - What is changing? - Updated Teaching & Learning Policy - Teaching Procedure - Curriculum Procedure - LMS/Educational Technology Procedure - Why are the changes needed? - Ensure consistent learning experiences across courses - Strengthen the academic governance framework - Align NorQuest with best practices across post-secondary institutions - Clarify expectations for teaching excellence, including: - Learner engagement - Curriculum quality - Use of educational technologies - Provide instructors with clear standards to support quality and accountability - How this impacts instructors? - Clearer expectations for teaching and learning - Greater consistency across courses - Standardized templates and guidelines - Better alignment between program requirements and daily teaching - Increased support for teaching practice and engagement - Fewer grey areas in instructional decision-making - More predictable, student-centered learning environments - Risks if no changes are made: - Inconsistent student experiences - Avoidable student complaints and appeals - Weakened academic governance and quality assurance - Confusion for new or sessional instructors - Increased compliance risks - Falling behind post-secondary best practices - Risks span institutional, instructor, student, and reputational areas - A request for further opportunity for the international office to review and provide feedback. A confirmation of ongoing consultation rounds, including Academic Council, NCFA, and other major stakeholders, with plans for additional meetings and feedback consolidation. - An inquiry about the intersection of Generative AI policy. A confirmation that Generative AI is addressed in supporting	Information	Loni Robertson & Parveen Hundal

	standards and frameworks rather than directly in the procedures, due to rapidly evolving nature of AI and slower policy update cycle. - Participants are encouraged to email any feedback or identify contradictions between documents, emphasizing the goal of consolidating existing guidelines and standards into a formalized policy suite without introducing new requirements. Email inquiries can be sent to TLD@norquest.ca - Further consultation with NorQuest College Faculty Association (NCFA) to happen. Feedback: - Clear expectations are needed such as: - Timely and consistent instructor responsiveness to student inquiries (e.g., defined response time standards). - Transparent communication of course expectations, grading criteria, and assessment methods at the outset. - Timely, constructive, and actionable feedback on assignments and assessments. - Availability of regular office hours (including in-person options where possible), recognizing that many students find face-to-face interaction more effective than email. - In terms of early interventions to ensure learner success and with the reduced Academic Program Advisors and Retention Advisors team, roles of instructors may need to be assessed. A stronger learner-centered framework could include: - Early identification (let's say by mid-term) of struggling students and proactive intervention. - Flexibility, within reason, to accommodate individual circumstances (e.g., opportunities to retake assessments, extensions in justified cases, alternative assessment formats where appropriate). - Stronger connection to support services, with expectations that instructors actively refer students when needed. Concerns: - Some concerns were raised about potential workload increases and changes for Program Chairs. A clear response is that the intention is to formalize existing practices without adding new workload, noting that universal design for learning procedures will be enveloped within the new suite and previous related policies will be retired or relocated.		
	Note: During the meeting, the following items were discussed and voted on. Due to an oversight, a formal motion and second were not recorded at the time of the vote. The Chair confirms that consensus was reached and the items were carried as passed. This correction is noted for accuracy and completeness of the official record.		
5:25	Educational Assistant (EA) Program Changes - Mary Stewart, Program Chair, Disability Studies and Education Assistant and Sara Gnida, Learning and Development lead presented proposed changes to the Educational Assistant Certificate Program, including new prerequisites and co-requisites for field experience. - The proposed prerequisite and co-requisite changes are aimed to better prepare students for classroom complexity	Approval	Mary Stewart & Sara Gnida

	and applied learning and are outlined as the following: - o Addition of EDAS 1002 as a prerequisite in the first term - o Addition of EDAS 1003 and EDAS 1004 as co-requisites in the second term for field experience • The rationale behind the changes is that they are intended to equip students with foundational knowledge in universal design, adaptive instruction, behaviour management, and applied curricular area, aligning field experience assignments with course content. Feedback: • A strong support for the changes from a student perspective, emphasizing the importance of relevant preparation for neurodiverse students and field work. Questions: • How will this impact the students who fail prerequisite courses? The block-enrolled structure may create barriers, but the applied nature of the courses supports high completion rates. In addition, the course offerings are scheduled to meet graduation timelines as required by advanced education. MOTION: That Academic Council approves the proposed program changes of Educational Assistant (EA) Program for Fall 2027. Motion Passed		
5:38	Machine Learning Analyst Diploma (MLAD) Program Changes • Stephanie Husby, Program Chair, Technology and Sarah Gnida, Learning and Development lead presented changes to the Machine Learning Analyst program, including new admission pathways, elective options, and standardized prerequisite grades. • An addition of open admission pathways and recognition of prior post-secondary credentials, as well as the inclusion of an Indigenous elective option to align with college strategy. • A move to standardize prerequisite grades to C minus across all courses, particularly for challenging subjects like Calculus and Statistics, to improve consistency and accessibility for students. Questions: • What are the lessons learned from open admission pathways in other programs? Data shows mixed success, highlighting the need for supportive structures and clear communication about funding implications for students entering through open pathways. MOTION: That Academic Council approves the proposed changes for the Machine Learning Analyst Diploma (MLAD) Program for Fall 2027. Motion Passed	Approval	Stephanie Husby & Sara Gnida

5.47	Social Work (SW) Program Changes • Arlene Eaton-Erickson, Associate Dean, School of Arts and Applied Social Sciences, Sara Gnida, learning and Development Lead with the support of Paula Cornell, Instructor, presented extensive curriculum and admission changes to the Social Work program, including removal of volunteer hour requirements, course architecture updates, and new course additions to take place in Fall 2027. • The changes will ensure curriculum alignment with students' needs, industry expectations, and Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW) standards, as an accrediting body that accredits NorQuest's Social Work Program. • First change: A change in the course titles and descriptions to reflect curriculum updates, and that's done on nine courses. • Other changes include the removal of the 100-hour volunteer admission requirement, reorganization of course architecture, changes to prerequisites, and addition of new courses such as Indigenous Health and Wellness, Social Work practice with families, and an English course focused on Indigenous literature. • The 100-hour volunteer requirement posed significant barriers for rural and Indigenous students, and its removal aligns with practices at other institutions and aims to reduce entry barriers while still encouraging voluntary community engagement. • Extensive consultation happened with internal and external stakeholders, including community partners and other post-secondary institutions. • Changes to impact University Transfer and Indigenous Studies due to new course requirements. Questions: • Does this program include work experience? The students are required to complete two practicums (350 each), totaling 700 hours, matched with registered Social Workers for theory-practice bridging. Concerns: • Concerns raised about balancing practical and theoretical preparation, referencing feedback from students and transfer institutions. An explanation confirmed that the curriculum is designed to balance both, ensuring students are prepared for fieldwork and further academic progression. MOTION: That Academic Council approves the proposed program changes of Social Work (SW) Program for Fall 2027. Motion Passed	Approval	Arlene Eaton-Erickson & Sara Gnida
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6.02	Academic Upgrading (AU) Program Changes - Jennifer Kerwin, Associate Chair, Academic Upgrading and Sara Gnida, learning and Development Lead presented proposed prerequisite changes for Academic Upgrading courses, including adjustments to Math and Science requirements and new pathways for English as an additional language learners. - Changes will be effective as of Fall 2026; where prerequisites for Chemistry 30 and Science 30 will be lowered to make entry more accessible. - For Fall 2027, Physics 20 and Chemistry 20 will require Math and Science foundations to support student success. - Changes will also include the addition of English levels as prerequisites for English 30-1 and 30-2, providing alternative pathways for English as an additional language learners due to fluctuating enrollment and funding changes in ESL courses. - This has been consulted with Chairs, Program Developers, Office of the Registrar, and Dean's Councils and will impact Academic Upgrading and English as an Additional Language. Questions: - What is the timeline for those changes? The barrier-removing changes can be implemented sooner, while others follow the standard year-out process. Removing requirements allows quicker adoption. MOTION: That Academic Council approves the proposed program changes of Academic Upgrading (AU) Program for Fall 2026 and Fall 2027. Motion Passed	Approval	Jennifer Kerwin & Sara Gnida
6:09	Meeting Adjourns Moved by Jelena Bajic. Meeting ended at 6:09 PM.		