

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE
EDUCATION COUNCIL AT THE COMOX VALLEY CAMPUS AND ON TEAMS
ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 2026**

APPROVED

PRESENT: Aisling Brady, Faculty, Comox Valley, *Chair*
Alex Blair, Faculty, Comox Valley
Alexia Birosh, Student, Comox Valley
Ethan Olson, Student, Comox Valley
Jennifer Fallis Starhunter, Faculty, Campbell River, *Chair; Curriculum & Fast Track*
Jocelyn Moreau, Faculty, Campbell River
Judith Marriott, Faculty, Comox Valley, *Chair; Planning & Standards*
Katherine Carpenter, Faculty, Comox Valley
Meghan Sheehan, Student, Comox Valley
Michael Androschuk, Faculty, Campbell River
Michelle Badger, Administration
Neil Cruickshank, Administration, Comox Valley
Paris Gaudet, Support Staff, Comox Valley/Campbell River
Rahul Kumar, Student, Comox Valley
Rebecca Mackenzie, Faculty, Port Hardy
Sandra Milligan, Faculty, Campbell River
Tony Bellavia, Administration, Comox Valley
Lisa Domae, President (Ex-Officio)
Kara Foreman, Recording Secretary (RS)

REGRETS: Brooke McIntosh, Support Staff, Campbell River
Julia Baratto, Faculty, Port Alberni
Roger Kishi, Board of Governors (BOG) Representative

1. Indigenous Acknowledgment

Declaration of Quorum: A. Brady declared quorum at 1:01pm.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by J. Marriott / Seconded by A. Blair **TO ADOPT THE AGENDA FOR JANUARY 23, 2026.**
MOTION CARRIED.

Housekeeping

Notice to observers:

Meeting is recorded for minutes only and only accessible to recording secretary and chair.

Education Council (EdCo) is guided by its bylaws and the BC College and Institute Act (the Act) and generally follows Robert's Rules for its meeting format.

Per EdCo bylaw 5.8, meetings are open to the NIC community and the public. Only EdCo members and those invited to present have speaking privileges. At the discretion of the chair, EdCo may request information or a statement of clarification from an observer.

Observers on Teams

The chat has been disabled so EdCo members will use the raise hand feature to speak. To vote, raise your physical hand.

Online observers, please keep your videos off.

Chair's Note:

Two EdCo members have raised concern about the perception that the chair may be in conflict of interest due to preferential alignment with a particular constituent group and reactions by members at the last Council meeting on January 16th.

Conflict of Interest falls under Article 8 of the EdCo bylaws which states:

A conflict exists when a member's personal and or professional interests supersede or compete with their ability to decide fairly on an issue.

Normally, a member who believes another member is in conflict will discuss the conflict with the chair prior to the meeting. Since the conflict pertains to the chair, she brought the concerns forward to the vice chair.

The chair doesn't agree with this perception of conflict. The intention behind her actions was always to provide the most clarity to all Council members and it reflected past practices with program work being done by faculty proponents. She took steps to rectify this situation immediately after the meeting.

She does not believe she has any personal or professional interests that supersede the issues at hand and the vice chair agrees.

However, to ensure full transparency and impartiality for this meeting, and to respect and protect the work Council is doing today, she asked that the vice chair preside over the meeting. The bylaws allow the vice chair to fulfill the duties of the chair as needed.

As Council has been asked by the board to provide a written statement providing their advice, the chair and vice chair will collaborate to prepare the written report and ensure it accurately reflects EdCo's discussion and advice.

It was noted by an EdCo member that she also didn't feel the chair had any conflict of interest in these matters and was "quite perturbed, upset and stunned by the suggestion that she does."

Vice Chair presides at this point.

The chair has stepped aside but remains a full participating member. The chair is not in conflict unless Council determines otherwise. If any member wishes to raise a concern about a conflict, the bylaws outline the process.

Conflict of Interest Process & Motions

There will be two categories of conflict of interest at this meeting. One for the entire meeting and another for each separate motion. Any member with a conflict may not vote and will not be counted toward quorum on that vote. They can participate in the discussion and are not required to leave the meeting. A vote will be held to determine if Council feels that anyone is in conflict. If a member feels they are in conflict for a specific motion, but not for the entire agenda, they can declare themselves at that time.

The vice chair asked if there were any members who know they are in conflict for the whole agenda.

Paris Gaudet declared a conflict as she is also a Board of Governors (BOG) member. She will not be voting or counted toward quorum.

The vice chair asked if any member felt that the chair, Aisling Brady, had a conflict of interest. No one did.

The chair received an email from a member stating they felt that S. Milligan had a conflict because she made several statements at the meeting on January 16th suggesting that without access to financial information, which is outside the EdCo's mandate, she (S. Milligan) would be compelled to vote no, which may reasonably be perceived as prejudging the matter. She (S. Milligan) also stated in that meeting that her role was to represent faculty which appears to be in tension with the bylaw requirements and the members' primary duty to the institution as a whole.

The chair informed S. Milligan of this email. S. Milligan did not agree that she had a conflict. She requested it go to a vote.

MOVED by J. Marriott/Seconded by K. Carpenter THAT SANDRA MILLIGAN HAS A CONFLICT OF INTEREST AT THIS MEETING.

Discussion:

S. Milligan noted that a conflict of interest exists typically when the person will gain some personal or professional benefit. She doesn't teach in any of the programs considered for suspension and has no relationship with faculty, administrators or staff involved in those programs. She feels that her request for more information to make an evidence-based decision on these matters does not constitute a conflict of interest.

3. New Business

3.1 Advice on Recommended Program Suspensions

1. Board of Governors Request for Advice letter from Board Chair
2. Education Council Chair's Request for Further Clarification letter from Board Chair
3. Board of Governors Response to Clarification letter
4. Education Council Agenda Item Cover Sheet & Supporting Information
5. EPIA Recommended Program Suspensions Package from Board Chair
6. Policy 3-20 Suspension, Relocation or Cancellation of Academic Credentialed Programs
7. Policy 3-20-1P1 Suspension, Relocation or Cancellation of Academic Credentialed Programs Procedures

Included in the agenda package, the correspondence asks that it be clearly understood that certain portions of the guidance, specifically the characterization of recent case law and the inference drawn from it, represent interpretive commentary rather than a fact or express findings of the court. Council members are encouraged to consider this portion of the attachment (4) as one interpreted framework among others.

MOVED by K. Carpenter/Seconded by J. Marriott THAT EDUCATION COUNCIL VOTE TO ADVISE THE BOG FOR OR AGAINST THE SUSPENSION OF EACH CREDENTIAL.

Discussion:

The BOG has asked us for advice. It needs to be meaningful. We need to recognize that the more recent court decisions supersede our outdated policy. For our outdated policy to not reflect what's happening in the legal world is inappropriate. EdCo is not a decision-making authority on suspensions. However, given the nature of the judicial review and how these suspensions are coming forward, it's prudent to provide clear advice as to whether or not EdCo agrees with and endorses these suspensions.

A member expressed concern that this motion is a deviation from the proposed agenda.

A member noted the EdCo currently has no clear process for how it comes to a consensus on advice that will be provided. It's important to distinguish between advice and recommendation. When we bring something to a vote, it is more of a recommendation than advice.

A member expressed concern that the attached documents regarding the court proceedings were limited in their interpretation and were pre-guiding the discussion.

A member suggested that anything institutional, legal or financial is outside the Council's scope. She felt the proposed motion was out of scope.

MOVED by J. Fallis Starhunter/Seconded by S. Milligan TO POSTPONE THE CURRENT MOTION UNTIL MEMBERS HAVE A BETTER GRASP OF THE BOUNDS OF THE ADVICE THAT COUNCIL CAN PROVIDE.

(2 abstentions) **MOTION CARRIED.**

Discussion:

A member suggested referring to Section 23.1 of the Act that lays out the specific advisory role of EdCo and the purview and scope of advice.

MOVED by M. Badger/Seconded by S. Milligan THAT EDUCATION COUNCIL AGREES AND RECOGNIZES THAT THE EXPEDITED PROGRAM IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EPIA) PROCESS OCCURRED AND WAS INFORMED OF THIS PROCESS IN NOVEMBER 2025.

Discussion:

A member noted that in the minutes of that meeting, it says that Education Council may be approached for further work on this EPIA process, so she didn't see a problem with including the second sentence in the proposed motion (in the agenda package) that stated that "No advice was requested from Education Council on metrics related to matters under their purview."

Another member stated that she felt the motion should remain precise, neutral and actionable and does not include any rationale or opinion beyond the action.

The mover of the motion stated that she was only moving the first sentence as she did not agree with the second sentence.

(1 abstention) **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOVED by J. Fallis Starhunter/Seconded by J. Marriott THAT EDUCATION COUNCIL NOTES THAT BEYOND THE NOVEMBER 2025 MEETING, EDUCATION COUNCIL WAS NOT APPROACHED FOR ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE OR INFORMATION ON THE EPIA PROCESS.

Discussion:

The mover felt that if anyone were reading the meeting minutes of November 2025 and wondering what Council contributed to the EPIA process and how that might affect their advice to the BOG, they would know that no additional work was requested of Council.

A member stated that she didn't see how this motion contributed to advice that EdCo would provide to the BOG.

The vice chair clarified that the motions put forward would help to gather a consensus of opinion that will inform the letter of advice that he and the chair would be crafting without Council's presence.

A member suggested that these motions should speak to the actual advice and be written in a way that will assist the chair and vice chair in crafting their letter to the BOG. It was also noted that beyond the EPIA, there will be an ongoing program impact assessment review process.

A member noted that EdCo is being asked for advice on something that they were not explicitly involved in and this motion speaks to that.

A member raised the question, should EdCo discuss whether in their role they should have been asked for input, or whether it's appropriate for them to be asked in the future.

A member felt that that wouldn't be part of the advice given to the BOG but rather be an internal discussion regarding EdCo's own procedures as it isn't related to the decision in front of the BOG.

(1 abstention) **MOTION CARRIED.**

Point of Clarification

If a member has declared a conflict of interest, they do not need to abstain from voting as they are not included in the voting process.

MOVED BY K. Shopland/Seconded by M. Badger THAT EDUCATION COUNCIL NOTES THAT WHILE THE BOG MAY REQUEST ADVICE ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY, THE CURRENT REQUEST TO PROVIDE ADVICE ON PROGRAM SUSPENSION DOES NOT ALIGN WITH POLICY 3-20.

Discussion:

A member proposed that Policy 3-20 does not apply in this case as the fact that the suspensions went to the BOG for approval is already out of scope of policy as this policy states that suspensions are approved by the Vice President Academic (VPA), not the BOG. In policy 3-20, only program cancellations go to the BOG for approval. In this case, the request for advice from the BOG falls under Section 23.1 of the Act which states "...the board must seek advice from the education council, on the development of educational policy for the following matters:" "(o) other matters specified by the board." Therefore, Policy 3-20 is not applicable in these circumstances.

A member noted that the implication that the BOG's request for advice is outside of a policy means the policy is out of date and needs to be revised.

A member stated that there is an opportunity for a motion regarding the need to update the policy, however, in its current form, the motion on the table is accurate.

(1 abstention) **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOVED BY K. Shopland/Seconded by M. Badger THAT EDUCATION COUNCIL REQUESTS THAT POLICY 3-20 BE REVIEWED AND IF NECESSARY REVISED AND BROUGHT FORWARD TO EDUCATION COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION WITHIN ONE YEAR FROM TODAY'S DATE WITH REGULAR UPDATES.

Discussion:

A member suggested the motion include a timeline and the motion was amended to include one.

A member suggested that with the ongoing provincial review and possible legislative changes, a one-year timeline would be more appropriate. This amendment was added.

A member suggested it would be valuable to include a request for regular updates during the revision process. This amendment was added.

(1 abstention) **MOTION CARRIED.**

MOVED BY J. Marriott/Seconded by J. Fallis Starhunter THAT ALL PROPOSED SUSPENSIONS INCLUDE A PLAN TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE DECISION ON AFFECTED STUDENTS PRIOR TO THE SUSPENSION BEING APPROVED.

Discussion:

A member noted that this would entail an extreme amount of work for a program that may not be suspended and would pull advising resources away from current students.

A member noted that this was outside EdCo's scope as it is operational not educational.

A member noted that Principle #4 in Policy 3-20 states, "Decisions to suspend, relocate, or cancel an academic program will include a plan to mitigate the effects on the decision on affected students..."

A member stated that she understood from interpreting the policy that part of what goes into the decision regarding program suspension is the work plan for completion, and also a work plan for getting the program back on track. This is the key difference between program suspension and cancellation. In crafting advice for the board, it might be worth saying that this is what's expected for making that decision.

A member noted that the policy doesn't state the need for an individualized plan, but just for a plan to ensure we're considering the needs of the students.

A member noted that in the two years between program suspension and cancellation there is always a work out plan to ensure students can complete their credentials.

A member noted that in the Guidelines of the policy, under suspensions, student completion is not specifically held to a timeline. There is language under cancellations that says that "...the timeframe for completing the credential will be communicated to students" and "Opportunity to complete the credential will not be offered indefinitely." This is not included in the language for program suspensions.

(1 abstention) **MOTION REJECTED.**

A member stated that Council still hasn't come up with anything helpful to the chairs in crafting EdCo's advice to the BOG. All that's been agreed on is that Policy 3-20 needs to be revised. As there are intelligent representatives from all areas of the college sitting on Council who care deeply about the future of the college, we must be able to come up with something useful to give the BOG.

A member noted that the Act affords EdCo the ability to advise on educational policy. Anything else is out of EdCo's purview. Perhaps there is a need to develop policy apart from Policy 3-20.

A member suggested that perhaps additional policy could include a role for EdCo to provide curricular advice or input into the decisions regarding program suspensions. However, that is not the situation with the policies we currently have.

A member noted that Section 23 of the Act, as with any legislation, is open to interpretation. The important thing is to provide the chair and vice chair with something useful other than we need to update a policy.

MOVED BY J. Fallis Starhunter/Seconded by S. Milligan THAT EDUCATION COUNCIL REQUESTS TO BE INCLUDED AS PART OF THE REQUIRED STEPS AS PART OF PROGRAM SUSPENSION IN THE PROCEDURES OF POLICY 3-20.

Discussion:

A member noted that in light of the fact that if the board makes decisions on suspensions going forward, in light of the fact that the board can ask us for advice, in light of the fact that this table brings a lot of value in finding things that are often not seen at other parts of the consultation process, and in light of the fact that consultation is not voting and that our table is very collaborative and often very constructive, it wouldn't add significantly to the timeline. EdCo is not in control of procedures. They can be modified as desired by the VPA. Consider how this process of providing advice to the BOG on these suspensions would have unfolded if EdCo had been part of the consultation process for these suspensions. The work would already have been done, and the advice would be straightforward.

A member noted that EdCo received no information about the curricular aspects of these suspensions. Members received the same one-page document for each program that the BOG is getting only a week before this meeting. With insufficient time and information, EdCo is being asked to provide advice to the BOG. This motion allows for a change in policy so that EdCo never has to be in this situation again and can move forward in a collaborative, consultative way such that EdCo would be involved in these types of decisions at a much earlier stage.

A member stated that the VPA's office highly values the opinions of EdCo members. Consultation has legal implications. If Council is referencing process or steps similar to cancellations, they should give consideration to that. However, suspension is an operational decision under the VPA. If Council would like to be advise on suspensions, they may want to reference advice not consultation.

The mover noted that this motion may not be appropriate for the discussion on giving advice to the BOG. She asked that it be tabled for a future discussion at the EdCo table. When reviewing changes to the policy, that a change to procedures would include taking the perspective and expertise of EdCo members into consideration.

MOTION TABLED.

Postponed Motion

MOVED by K. Carpenter/Seconded by J. Marriott THAT EDUCATION COUNCIL VOTE TO ADVISE THE BOG FOR OR AGAINST THE SUSPENSION OF EACH CREDENTIAL.

Discussion:

A member referred to the letter from the BOG that states, "The Board invites Education Council to provide any advice it considers appropriate within the scope of the responsibilities and limitations under the Act." She felt that the language in the motion that speaks to voting to advise "for or against" is inaccurate based on Section 23.1 of the Act and suggested an amendment.

Proposed amendment: Council will vote to advise the board within the scope of its responsibilities under the ACT.

The mover stated that the intent of the motion is to provide clear and specific advice for each credential. Whether that advice is whether there is enough information or not, or whether EdCo can provide advice or not, would be up to Council. While EdCo doesn't have decision making authority, the BOG has asked for advice. This is one suggestion for how we might provide that advice. She was fine with the amendment because Section 23.1 (o) states that the BOG can request advice "other matters specified by the board." She felt that EdCo may have different advice for each program from an educational, pedagogical, curricular perspective which is EdCo's scope.

A member stated that she would vote no on this motion because she doesn't have any curricular information on these programs to make a decision based on the scope of EdCo's responsibilities and limitations. She didn't feel she could give any advice to the BOG on any of these programs because she has no information about the curricular aspects.

A member asked if Council were to look at each program, was it necessary to revisit the question of conflict of interest.

2nd proposed amendment: Council will vote to advise the board within the scope of its responsibilities under the ACT, for the suspension of each credential.

A member noted that suspensions are not part of EdCo's purview. It may be its purview to look at the impact on the credential areas.

A member stated that when the VPA sent the suspensions to the BOG, that it took this process out of Policy 3-20 so it no longer applies in this situation. The BOG then asked EdCo for advice. That advice may be that we don't have enough information or that we agree with some suspensions and not others. The purpose of this meeting is to help the chair(s) write a letter saying we discussed these suspensions, have voted on motions and this is how we feel about these suspensions.

A member noted that Section 23.1 (e) states that EdCo will advise on cancellations not suspensions.

A member noted that the BOG has determined that this request falls under 23.1(o) "other matters." They passed a motion "to seek the advice of Education Council on without prejudice and without precedent basis regarding programs being recommended for suspension as a result of the Expedited Program Impact Assessment." When the EdCo chair requested clarification on the scope of advice the BOG was requesting, the response was that the BOG was, "inviting Education Council to provide any advice it considers appropriate within the scope of its responsibilities and limitations under the ACT." She didn't think that talking about the programs being recommended for suspension was out of line.

A member noted that the BOG is inviting Council to provide advice "without prejudice and without precedent" but there is no expectation of advice. That is a different intent.

A member encouraged members to look at the definition of "without prejudice and without precedent."

The mover asked that the chair call the vote. The chair took a vote on whether members were finished with their discussion of the wording of this motion. This would require 2/3 of members voting in favour of ending the discussion. Votes were 5 for, 5 against and 2 abstentions. Discussion continues.

A member asked what metric(s) within its scope would Council use to look at each program and formulate advice.

A member noted that EdCo has the same information as the BOG. So if our advice is that on a program-by-program basis we don't have sufficient information, then that is our advice.

A member stated that while it's not EdCo's role to vote on suspensions, it is our role to ensure students are being appropriately supported in completing their credentials when a program is suspended, and that our academic policies are supportive of them during suspension.

The registrar welcomed an invitation from Council to discuss teach out plans, answer questions and take recommendations.

A member noted that if EdCo feels there is insufficient curricular information in the EPIA reports for members to craft advice, then that is advice which doesn't need to be based on a credential by credential basis.

Final amended motion:

MOVED by K. Carpenter/Seconded by J. Marriott THAT EDUCATION COUNCIL WILL VOTE TO ADVISE THE BOARD WITHIN THE SCOPE OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS UNDER THE ACT FOR SUSPENSION ON EACH CREDENTIAL.

(1 abstention) **MOTION REJECTED.**

MOVED BY J. Marriott/Seconded by K. Carpenter THAT EDUCATION COUNCIL ADVISES THE BOARD THAT NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED WITHIN THE SCOPE OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS UNDER THE ACT REGARDING PROGRAM SUSPENSIONS UNDER THE EPIA PROCESS.

After discussion and a vote to amend the wording of this motion, the majority of members agreed to the revised wording.

Amended Motion:

MOVED BY K. Shopland/Seconded by R. Mackenzie THAT EDUCATION COUNCIL IS UNABLE TO ADVISE THE BOARD, WITHIN THE SCOPE OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS UNDER THE ACT, ON THE PACKAGE OF PROGRAMS RECOMMENDED FOR SUSPENSION AS INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION WITHIN THE COUNCIL'S PURVIEW WAS AVAILABLE.

(1 abstention) **MOTION CARRIED.**

A member suggested there be a motion to thank the BOG for their request for advice.

After discussion it was agreed that instead of a formal motion, that the spirit of the motion would be reflected in the letter of advice crafted by the chairs.

MOVED BY S. Milligan/Seconded by (*no seconder*) THAT EDUCATION COUNCIL AUTHORIZES THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR TO WRITE THE LETTER OUTLINING THE ADVICE PROVIDED AT THE JANUARY 23 SPECIAL MEETING TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS. THE LETTER WILL ALSO BE SENT TO ALL EDUCATION COUNCIL MEMBERS.

(1 abstention) **MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Meeting Evaluation – Roundtable Discussion

Everyone agreed it was a challenging meeting and acknowledged all the hard work done by both chairs.

5. Next Meeting – February 6, 2026 TBC

6. ADJOURNED AT 5:18pm