

Report of the Task Force on Principles for Institutional Partnerships

Message from the Chairs

In August 2024, two related but distinct Task Forces were launched. The Task Force on Social Responsibility in Investing (TFSRII) was assembled to examine the University of Waterloo's Responsible Investment Policy and related policy framework with a lens on social factors. At the same time, the Task Force on Principles for Institutional Partnerships (TFPIP) was created to recommend principles to ensure a consistent and transparent approach to partnerships across the University in alignment with our vision, mission and values.

The resolve to begin this work was underscored by members of the University community raising issues for the University to consider related to current global conflicts. The work of both Task Forces was grounded in a desire to increase transparency and to hear the voices of the whole community.

While the origins and processes for the Task Forces share similarities, they had different scopes and remits. The TFSRII had the task of reviewing and making recommendations on matters relating to responsible investing, which are embedded in existing Board of Governors processes, policies, and delegated responsibilities. The TFPIP's scope was somewhat broader, given its remit to propose a unified approach and common terminology around institutional partnerships, which are currently managed in a decentralized manner.

An example of how the organizational context impacted the drafting is the definition of "human rights" in each of the reports. For the TFSRII, "human rights" is defined by the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, to which the University became signatory when it incorporated environmental factors into its investment policy a few years ago. Because the TFPIP mandate encompasses a wide range of activities and processes, this Task Force took a different approach, referencing all international human rights treaties to which Canada is a signatory.

On behalf of the two Task Forces, we want to thank the members of the University community for taking the time to share their feedback and concerns with us whether through the webform or at one of our feedback sessions. The feedback we received informs the Principles and Recommendations articulated in our respective reports.

As Chairs, we also want to thank members of the Task Forces for the time, care and work they devoted over the past several months to the development of these reports. We also wish to thank the resources across campus for the help and support they provided to this important work.

Peter Barr
Chair, Task Force on Social Responsibility in Investing

Christiane Lemieux and Ian Milligan
Co-Chairs, Task Force on Principles for Institutional Partnerships

Executive Summary

The University of Waterloo engages in many partnerships across Canada and the world in support of its mission of teaching, research, and learning. However, the lack of unified principles and processes across units managing partnerships has led to inconsistent approaches across the University. This has made it challenging to address campus questions and concerns transparently and consistently. The issue became evident during recent campus discussions relating to ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, highlighting the need for a cohesive framework.

The Task Force on Principles for Institutional Partnerships was accordingly established to review Waterloo's existing approaches, conduct an environmental scan of peer institutions, and to then critically develop principles that ensure a consistent and transparent approach to partnerships across the University.

Our Task Force has thus developed a set of principles for institutional partnerships, growing out of the University's mission, vision, and values. Key principles include ensuring that partnerships respect institutional autonomy and academic freedom, the prioritization of safety and security, supporting environmental responsibility, and adhering to international human rights standards. These principles are supported by a series of recommendations, including the creation of transparent review mechanisms, updating relevant policies as appropriate, ensuring equitable access to partnership opportunities, and designating leadership for implementation.

We believe that these principles and recommendations will create a unified and transparent approach to managing institutional partnerships.

1. Introduction

As a global institution, the University of Waterloo has engagements across Canada, as well as internationally, in service of the University's teaching and research missions. However, Waterloo lacks overarching principles and processes to manage institutional partnerships; many different units approach partnerships based on their own internal processes. This does not mean that our current processes lack principles, but rather that they lack transparency, as well as a unified and consistent approach.

The lack of a unifying approach makes it challenging to respond to questions and concerns raised by community members about a partnership in a consistent, principled, and transparent way.¹ This became an acute issue in light of the ongoing war in the Middle East, particularly with respects to the University's strategic research partnership with Technion - Israel Institute of Technology.

¹ University community is here defined as students, employees, and alumni.

The mandate of the Task Force on Principles for Institutional Partnerships included three key components. We were to:

- Review the University's existing policies and procedures related to institutional partnerships;
- Conduct an environmental scan of work being done on institutional partnerships by institutions, such as peer universities in the U15, as well as other international approaches;² and
- Develop a set of principles that will ensure a consistent and transparent approach to institutional partnerships that reflect institutional values.

To further clarify our scope, it is important to stress that only some of the many partnerships undertaken by the University of Waterloo are considered “institutional” in scope. Generally speaking, institutional partnerships include institution-to-institution partnerships or institution-to-donor relationships (e.g., for research or student mobility, gifts and donations, and sponsored research agreements), but not procurement decisions or individual work-integrated learning experiences (e.g., co-op work terms, internships). Principal investigator-initiated/driven relationships with researchers at other institutions are not considered institutional partnerships. Additional information is provided in Section 4 where we briefly review the University’s current practices for institutional partnerships.

We stress that our mandate does not include reviewing or making recommendations with respect to specific partnerships. Our goal is to propose a framework that can be used by those managing institutional partnerships to make decisions about initiating, renewing, reviewing, pausing, or terminating partnerships in a consistent and transparent way. We achieved this by consolidating many of the principles currently being used by the units managing partnerships, adding several that resulted from our community consultations and environmental scan, and making recommendations about the underlying processes required for consistent application of these principles.

The concerns raised by the University community, particularly but not limited to students, that spurred the establishment of our Task Force, also included concerns about the University’s investment policies. A parallel Task Force on Social Responsibility in Investing was initiated at the same time as our Task Force. Furthermore, these two Task Forces were created in the wake of an earlier Task Force on Freedom of Expression and Inclusive Engagement, which also included recommendations on partnerships and investment policies.

² The U15 is an association of fifteen Canadian public research-intensive universities, which together undertake a considerable majority of research across the country. We often use the U15 to “benchmark” our institution against institutions of comparable scope and size, such as Toronto, Queen’s, or UBC.

Given the intersecting scopes of these three Task Forces, and their proximity in time, we approached our work with the goal of compatibility with the work of the other two Task Forces. Ultimately, however, ours was an autonomous Task Force arriving at its own conclusions.

In the next section, we provide additional information on the formation of our Task Force and the process we followed to do our work. We then review the mission, vision, and values of the University, which helps establish a foundation for the discussion that follows, where we provide our principles and recommendations.

2. Process

The Task Force on Principles for Institutional Partnerships was established alongside the Task Force on Social Responsibility in Investing in June 2024, growing out of conversations at the University Senate and across the institution. Throughout Summer 2024, the executive sponsors – the Vice President, Research and International and Vice President, Administration and Finance – worked to select members for the two Task Forces. Members were selected based on one or more of these criteria:

- Demonstrated sound judgment and critical thinking skills
- Experience with international engagements and partnerships
- Experience in international human rights law, justice, rights, and freedoms
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion criteria, allowing for members to bring lived experiences and diverse backgrounds to bear on these questions
- Diverse representation across the University

Members for both Task Forces were announced in August 2024. The Principles for Institutional Partnerships membership, noted in Appendix A, includes major employee groups (staff, faculty), students (graduate and undergraduate), and members drawn from all six Faculties across Waterloo. The first meeting of the full Task Force was held October 1. Six additional working meetings were held between October and December 2024, inclusive.

To support this work, Task Force members received training workshops from external experts as well as training in implicit bias. The external experts had expertise in responsible investing and international human rights, and the Task Force thanks them for their time. Additional background work done by the Task Force included reviewing existing Waterloo partnership policies, principles, and processes, and a briefing on the results of the Task Force on Freedom of Expression. The Task Force also looked at policies at several peer universities, such as the

University of Toronto’s [“Statement on Research Partnerships”](#)³ and Queen’s University’s [“Partnership Principles.”](#)⁴

The Task Force recognized that the development of a set of principles would require robust consultation across the University of Waterloo. Because two Task Forces were running simultaneously, outreach mechanisms were coordinated to not overwhelm the community. Both Task Forces announced, via e-mails sent to all staff, students, and faculty, as well as publicity in employee newsletters, a web form to receive feedback. Given that our Task Force had a slightly wider scope than the concurrent investment Task Force, our Task Force also hosted three separate virtual focus groups on Microsoft Teams. One was open only to students, another only to staff, post-doctoral fellows, and faculty members, and a third was open to the entire community. The two Task Forces held a joint in-person engagement session. Finally, given that one of the principles involves Indigenous reconciliation and decolonization, the co-chairs consulted with the Office of Indigenous Relations. Further details on these engagement activities are provided in Appendix B.

3. Mission and Values of the University of Waterloo

The University of Waterloo has the overarching objective of “the pursuit of learning through scholarship, teaching and research within a spirit of free enquiry and expression,” as articulated in its 1972 Act.⁵ More recently, a vision, mission, and values exercise was carried out by the Waterloo community and is relevant for this work⁶.

In the context of institutional partnerships, our mission of advancing “learning and knowledge through teaching, research, and scholarship, nationally and internationally, in an environment of free expression and inquiry” highlights the critical need to uphold institutional autonomy and academic freedom as foundational principles. Partnerships must thus not impose restrictions on our ability to investigate or teach certain topics and community members should ideally be able to share the results broadly for the advancement of knowledge and the benefit of the broader community.

The University’s vision describes “a community of curious, collaborative, innovative and entrepreneurial problem-solvers and leaders who seek to understand and identify equitable and

³ University of Toronto, Secretariat, Research Partnerships [Statement on February 1, 2007], accessed December 19, 2024, <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/research-partnerships-statement-february-1-2007>

⁴ Queen’s University, Global Engagement, accessed December 19, 2024, <https://www.queensu.ca/international/global-engagement/partnership-principles>

⁵ University of Waterloo, University of Waterloo Act, 1972 (Waterloo, ON: University of Waterloo Secretariat), accessed December 10, 2024, <https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/university-waterloo-act>.

⁶ University of Waterloo, “Values”, accessed December 18, 2024, <https://uwaterloo.ca/values/>

sustainable solutions for the future of humanity and our planet”, which speaks to a long-standing priority of having a positive global impact.⁷

A series of imperatives, derived throughout this values exercise, grounded the work carried out and thus informed the principles and recommendations developed by the Task Force.

Waterloo’s imperatives are:

- Uphold Waterloo’s leadership and excellence in education, scholarship, innovation, and entrepreneurship
- Ensure the physical and mental health and well-being of our students and employees
- Embrace decolonization, Indigenization, inclusivity, equity, anti-oppression, and anti-racism
- Co-ordinate and collaborate across disciplinary and organizational boundaries⁸

The grounding imperatives inform a series of values: that members of the University of Waterloo think differently, act with purpose, and work together⁶. For **“Think differently”**: “great ideas are born when we challenge the status quo and ask bold questions and embrace risks.” For **“Act with purpose”**: “we make a positive impact in the Waterloo community and around the world.” And for **“Work together”**, “we encourage our community to stand up for one another to advocate for positive change through decolonization, Indigenization, inclusivity, equity, anti-oppression, and anti-racism.”

These values, developed through extensive consultation with the Waterloo community and engagement with the Board of Governors, must be at the core of all activities carried out at the University. These activities span day-to-day conduct in meetings and in operations, through to engagements that the University has with the world.

Waterloo must also view institutional partnerships through the prism of risk. As a publicly supported university, Waterloo must manage its resources and operations in a prudent manner, avoiding unacceptable risk. A core framework for assessing, managing, and approving different levels of risks is Policy 11 - University Risk Management. Under this policy and accompanying guidelines, risks relevant to international partnerships include government policy, accountability, security (safety), reputation, student satisfaction, academic program management, resource allocation, research, and confidentiality/access.⁹

⁷ University of Waterloo, “About the Initiative,” accessed December 10, 2024, <https://uwaterloo.ca/values/about>

⁸ University of Waterloo, “Vision, Mission, and Values,” accessed December 10, 2024, <https://uwaterloo.ca/values/>.

⁹ University of Waterloo, “Policy 11 - University Risk Management,” Office of the Secretariat, established May 27, 2015, last modified June 29, 2023, accessed December 10, 2024, <https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policies/policy-11-university-risk-management>.

4. Current Practices for Institutional Partnerships

The scope of institutional partnerships across the University is broad, encompassing international institution-to-institution academic agreements, corporate research partnerships, donations, decisions to partner on the naming of spaces (e.g., building, lab), sponsorships, broader industrial partnerships beyond the research enterprise, and partnerships with Indigenous communities, governments, and organizations.

Current practices vary across the University, giving rise to this current process. For example, Waterloo International carries out general risk assessments and partner risk, while also being attentive to both the specific risk of a given agreement as well as the relative research strengths of the potential partner. Advancement has its own set of principles, growing out of Waterloo values, policies (such as Policy 7 on Gift Acceptance), as well as external codes such as the Donor Bill of Rights and the Association of Fundraising Professionals' code of ethics. Human rights are named as a consideration by many units without specific reference to the standards for determining compliance. As noted above, we also reviewed peer university policies. In particular, we found the University of Toronto's "[Statement on Research Partnerships](#)" and Queen's University's "[Partnership Principles](#)" helpful in understanding how other institutions have approached these questions.

We wish to clarify that employer relationships managed by co-operative and experiential education (CEE) do not fall under the scope of our mandate, because the employment agreements that result from these relationships are primarily between students and their employers. We further determined that procurement decisions are not part of our scope because they have their own specific rules, guidelines, and processes that have little in common with other types of institutional partnerships. As noted above, relationships with researchers at other institutions that are initiated/driven by a principal investigator are similarly not considered institutional partnerships.

5. Principles for Partnerships

Just as "values" drive institutional behaviour, a more granular and specific set of principles must inform University decision-makers as they decide when to enter into, review, or terminate partnerships. The following principles, presented in no particular order, reflect the vision, mission, and core values of our institution and represent our proposed framework for establishing and managing partnerships. These principles emerged from our environmental scan, consultations, and our own deliberations as a Task Force. Adoption of these principles across the University would ensure a consistent approach towards institutional partnerships.

PRINCIPLE 1: Align with the University of Waterloo's mission, vision, and values.

Partnership activities must align with the University’s mission. This includes activities such as fostering the creation and sharing of knowledge, promoting excellence and innovation, supporting teaching objectives, enabling cross-sector and interdisciplinary collaboration, and creating positive impacts locally and globally. Partnerships should also be approached in a fiscally responsible manner. The University should seek national and international partners with the capacity to help advance these aims.

PRINCIPLE 2: Respect institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

Institutional autonomy and academic freedom are overarching and essential foundations of any partnership. Institutional autonomy refers to the University of Waterloo’s ability to establish its own research and educational priorities. Academic freedom “entails the freedom of individuals to practise their professions of teacher, researcher and scholar, the freedom to publish their findings, the freedom to teach and engage in open discussion,” and is fundamental to the University’s mission of advancing learning and knowledge.¹⁰ Accordingly, institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and research integrity are critical for any partnership. The University must seek partners who support the University’s freedom to set its own research and educational priorities, and our academics’ right to conduct research, teach, publish, and articulate their arguments, free of undue external pressure. Furthermore, the University’s approach to partnerships should not unduly restrict researchers from pursuing any line of academic inquiry.

PRINCIPLE 3: Prioritize safety and security of Waterloo community members.

The University must take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect the health and safety of employees and students working for or studying at the University. The University must require partners to take similar responsibility for the wellbeing of University community members when hosting or otherwise interacting with community members who are carrying out work as a result of the partnership. This includes both their physical safety during travel as well as the security of their personal data, research information, and proprietary intellectual property.

PRINCIPLE 4: Adhere to international human rights standards.

The University should strive to pursue partnership activities that uphold universal human rights. The University must not conduct activities with a partner if such activities would cause, contribute, or be actively linked to severe or adverse impacts on human rights. For the purposes of this principle, “human rights” means recognized standards codified in international legal

¹⁰ University of Waterloo, “Memorandum of Agreement between the Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo and the University of Waterloo,” section 6.1, adopted May 1, 1998, current as of September 1, 2024, accessed December 10, 2024, <https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/memorandum-agreement-uw-fauw>

instruments and guidelines that Canada has adopted.¹¹ When making decisions about whether to enter into or renew an institutional partnership, the University must consider both the partner's record with respect to human rights infringements, as well as the potential for the partnership activities to adversely impact human rights. The University should also consider the partner's record of respecting and upholding Indigenous rights, which are recognized and affirmed by the Constitution of Canada and relevant case law. Prioritizing such standards will help ensure that partnership activities do not undermine the University's commitments to embracing decolonization, Indigenization, inclusivity, equity, anti-oppression, and anti-racism, and acting with purpose.

PRINCIPLE 5: Embed reciprocity, respect, mutual benefit, and cultural sensitivity.

A diverse array of institutional partnerships offers positive opportunities for the Waterloo community and reflects the diversity of people who make up the Waterloo community. Similarly, partnerships – by definition – should offer mutual benefits for all parties. This is particularly important when the partner is an Indigenous community, government, or organization, in which case reciprocity must be prioritized.

Collaborating with institutions that hold different perspectives exposes our community to new ideas, cultures, values, and ways of thinking. Limiting partnerships solely to like-minded institutions would unnecessarily constrain Waterloo's ability to engage with much of the world and undermine its commitment to having a positive global impact. To realize the benefits of diverse collaborations, the University should seek partners who similarly value reciprocity, respect, mutual benefit, and cultural sensitivity. Provided a partnership activity is not undermining the University's core principles guiding partnerships, such as causing, being actively linked to, or contributing to severe or adverse impacts on matters such as academic freedom, human rights, or the environment, the University should respect the right to self-determination of its institutional partners and the communities they serve.

PRINCIPLE 6: Comply with law, regulation, and policy.

The University takes its institutional responsibilities concerning contractual, policy, statutory, and legal compliance seriously and expects that partners will similarly prioritize legal compliance. Partners, or partnerships, that do not respect the law or university policies undermine the University's reputation, could cause harm to members of the University community, and increase legal liability risks. In particular, the decision to undertake an institutional partnership requires close attention to government legislation related to charitable

¹¹ For a list of international human rights instruments and guidelines that Canada has adopted, see <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/canada-united-nations-system/treaties.html>, and https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/rbc-cre/guidelines-lignes_directrices.aspx?lang=eng, accessed December 16, 2024

gifts, sanctions, immigration, research integrity, and health and safety, contractual obligations to employees and other partners, and university policies such as University Risk Management, Conflict of Interest, Gift Acceptance, and Ethical Behaviour.

PRINCIPLE 7: Respect Waterloo’s approach to intellectual property.

Waterloo’s inventor-owned intellectual property policy is a key institutional differentiator. This policy lies at the core of the institution’s entrepreneurial culture and its role in the broader innovation ecosystem. Although intellectual property laws and ownership policies differ globally, for many partnerships the University expects its partners to respect the rights of Waterloo employees and students to own and control the intellectual property they create. However, the way in which intellectual property rights are handled must differ for partnerships where Indigenous knowledge and cultural expressions are involved, in keeping with principles of Indigenous data sovereignty and Indigenous reconciliation.

Outside of Indigenous contexts, if intellectual property rights are signed away through a contract with a partner, such an outcome must be supported by good-faith negotiations, in line with Waterloo values, and transparency. This principle is especially critical when student intellectual property is involved, given the inherent power imbalances and potential for substantial negative impacts on a student’s academic progress or future opportunities.

PRINCIPLE 8: Support environmental responsibility in partnership activities.

The University is committed to being a leader in environmental sustainability and research. Institutional partnerships that include research and activities with a direct impact on the environment should support environmental sustainability and responsibility. This includes, for example, consideration of the environmental implications of partnership activities, such as their impact on climate change, biodiversity, water quality, pollution, deforestation, and waste management, in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct. Wherever possible, Waterloo should seek partnerships with institutions that uphold strong environmental principles in their activities, reinforcing a shared commitment to sustainability.

PRINCIPLE 9: Uphold the University’s commitment to reconciliation and decolonization when initiating institutional partnerships.

Before entering into a partnership that includes activities directly involving or impacting Canadian First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, there must be proactive engagement with these communities in order to develop a genuine productive relationship between partners. The unit proposing such partnership should engage with the Office of Indigenous Relations for guidance on how to develop an appropriate engagement plan. These partnerships should also support the University’s commitments toward reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenization.

6. Recommendations

We now present recommendations that should be implemented to ensure the principles are applied as intended, resulting in a consistent and transparent approach to partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION 1: All units managing partnerships should adopt processes that integrate the proposed principles, with clear accountability and documentation requirements.

The proposed principles must serve as a consistent framework for initiating and renewing institutional partnerships across all units at the University of Waterloo. By embedding these principles into partnership processes, the University reinforces a commitment to its mission, vision, and values, while safeguarding institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and our institutional commitment to human rights, anti-racism, Indigenization, and equity, diversity, and inclusivity, as well as environmental sustainability.

Units managing partnerships must establish clear procedures that integrate these principles at every stage of the partnership lifecycle, from due diligence and agreement formation to ongoing evaluation and renewal. These procedures should include well-defined accountability measures, specifying roles and responsibilities for assessing and managing risk (per Policy 11), monitoring compliance, and addressing potential issues. Documentation requirements must also be outlined to ensure a transparent record of the partnership's alignment with institutional principles, to promote consistency across the institution, and to facilitate record retrieval. Specifically, units responsible for partnerships should use legal agreement templates approved by Legal and Immigration Services that reflect these principles and recommendations.

The University should investigate what is needed to develop and maintain a central database of institutional partnerships going forward. In addition, to improve transparency, every new or renewed institutional partnership should be communicated to the University community, for example with an announcement in the Daily Bulletin.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The University should establish a clear and transparent process for reviewing partnerships.

The University requires a structured, transparent, and accountable process for evaluating ongoing institutional partnerships when concerns arise. Such a review process would ensure that partnerships align with these proposed principles, such as respect for human rights, environmental sustainability, institutional autonomy, and academic freedom. Any review of such partnerships must adhere to national and international standards of procedural fairness and due process, including the presumption of innocence. A “trigger mechanism” will be needed, which would identify when a partnership requires formal review, whether due to routine evaluation, significant events, or emerging concerns. In acute situations, such as credible evidence of significantly higher risks associated with the partnership, this mechanism should provide for a temporary pause of the partnership while the review is underway.

Specifically, the University should pause partnerships, pending review, where credible evidence suggests the partnership activities are causing, actively linked to, or contributing to severe or adverse impacts on human rights. This approach ensures that the University's commitment to human rights is balanced with fairness and accountability in its institutional relationships. Such due diligence is consistent with the United Nations' 2011 Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which emphasize that organizations must avoid infringing on human rights and address adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved. It is important to recognize that the presence of an institution in a state associated with human rights abuses does not, by itself, condemn that institution. Due diligence must establish the partner's direct role in such abuses or determine whether they are under the control or undue influence of the state engaging in these violations.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The University should review and update, as necessary, University policies relevant to the formation, review, and management of partnerships and related agreements, as well as those relevant to partnership activities on and off campus, to incorporate and ensure observance of these principles.

We have identified several policies that require review to ensure consistency with our identified principles. However, the units responsible for forming, reviewing, and managing partnerships and agreements may be aware of others that require updating similarly. Identified policies, defined as those housed on the Secretariat website, also encompassing any guidelines and procedures referenced within those policies, include: Policies 7 (Gift Acceptance), 8 (Freedom of Speech), 10 (Naming Opportunities), 11 (University Risk Management), 33 (Ethical Behaviour), 34 (Health, Safety and Environment), 53 (Environmental Sustainability), 58 (Accessibility), 69 (Conflict of Interest), and 73 (Intellectual Property).

For Policy 11 and its associated Risk Management Guidelines, Institutional Risk Appetite, and Institutional Strategy on Risk Management, the risk associated with the wide variety of institutional partnerships should be appropriately complemented and captured, especially those implicating global or Indigenous partners. Policy 11 and its subsequent documentation, in sum, should present concrete guidelines for administrators to objectively interpret and assess these varied domains of risk, as relevant to partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION 4: A work plan and accountable senior leader are necessary to oversee the implementation and accountability of these principles and recommendations.

The University must designate a senior leader, or leadership body, to ensure that a consistent, transparent, and principle-based approach is applied to all institutional partnerships. This should include both an individual accountable for these recommendations, as well as a properly constituted support body, including potential representation from faculty, staff, and students. A work plan to implement the recommendations of this report should be developed promptly. It

should include documentation, reporting, and requirements providing reasonable transparency to the campus community into the University's partnerships.

The development of a review process as per Recommendation 2 should be prioritized so that the University is prepared to address concerns that arise with respect to an institutional partnership. To receive and analyze concerns that remain unresolved after consideration by the unit responsible for a partnership, a committee or board with appropriate representation and expertise should be designated. This committee should ideally already exist within existing operational or governance structure, and would require a clear description of its authority.

RECOMMENDATION 5: The University should ensure equitable access when prioritizing and enacting institutional partnerships.

The University should take into consideration the representation of community members and their academic and co-curricular objectives with respect to the partnerships and opportunities created through partnering. This would involve, for example, whether there are opportunities accessible to all members of the community regardless of demographic characteristics. This would enable the University to satisfy Principles 1, 4, and 5.

7. Conclusion

The Task Force on Principles for Institutional Partnerships arose at a challenging yet pivotal time in the University of Waterloo's history. It became clear that community members across the institution hold diverse but deeply held views on the roles of institutional partnerships, the balance between academic freedom and human rights, and the role that the University plays in international events. These perspectives, shared with passion and intensity throughout our community consultation, reflect an institute united – despite differences – by a shared desire to contribute to a better and more just world.

Even though we recognize that these principles and recommendations will not provide simple or immediate resolution, we believe they offer a thoughtful framework for the University as we navigate complex issues together. We are confident that through these principles, the University can remain committed to international human rights, sustainability, and academic freedom, ensuring that its partnerships reflect our values and belief in a brighter future.

Appendices

Appendix A: Membership

- **Christiane Lemieux** - co-chair – Professor of Statistics and Actuarial Science, and Associate Dean, Operations and Academics, Faculty of Mathematics (faculty)
- **Ian Milligan** - co-chair – Professor of History, and Associate Vice President, Research Oversight and Analysis, Office of Research (faculty)
- **Suman Armitage** – Director, Brand, Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives, Co-Operative Education (staff)
- **Jennifer Clapp** – Professor and Canada Research Chair in Global Food Security and Sustainability, School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability (faculty)
- **Samantha Meyer** – Associate Professor, School of Public Health Sciences (faculty)
- **Bessma Momani** – Professor of Political Science, and Associate Vice-President, International (faculty)
- **Maia Norman** – Graduate Student, School of Public Health Sciences, Faculty of Health
- **Josh Neufeld** – Professor and University Research Chair, Department of Biology (faculty)
- **Catherine Rosenberg** – Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (faculty)
- **Michael Saunders** – Undergraduate Student, Faculty of Science
- **Andrew Thompson** – Adjunct Assistant Professor of Political Science and Global Governance Programs Partnership Manager, Balsillie School of International Affairs (staff)

Supported by Rebecca Wickens, Director, Strategic Initiatives & Communication, Faculty of Environment; Anne Galang, Director, Executive Communications, Office of the President; Ryon Jones, Media Relations Manager, University Relations.

Appendix B: Community Consultation

The Task Force sought input from the University community through various consultation activities and welcomed submissions of written feedback.

- **Email:** When the Task Force was announced, a dedicated email address was shared with the University community, which community members could email with questions or recommendations.
- **Online feedback form:** A feedback form with the option for anonymous submissions was open from October 16, 2024 to November 6, 2024, and collected 71 submissions.

- **Focus groups:** The Task Force hosted online focus groups via Microsoft Teams, with a total of 51 participants registered across three sessions:
 - October 30 - For students
 - October 31 - For staff, post-docs, and faculty
 - November 5 - Open to all members of the campus community
- **Feedback Forum:** On November 15, the Task Force on Principles for Institutional Partnerships co-hosted a feedback forum with the Task Force on Social Responsibility in Investing. A total of 31 community members attended. The Forum included a short presentation on the mandates of the two Task Forces, with most of the time dedicated to break-out sessions where participants offered feedback and recommendations to task force members.

The following questions were available to answer on the online feedback form, and helped guide the discussions during focus groups and the feedback forum.

1. What factors should the University consider when entering into or reviewing an institutional partnership? Why?
2. What factors should trigger a review of an existing institutional partnership? Why?
3. Are there other considerations the task force should keep in mind when drafting principles for institutional partnerships?

Members of the Task Force also met with the President of WUSA, who presented the results of the [Responsible Partnerships and Investments Referendum](#). A meeting and follow-up consultation was also held with the Director of Indigenous Faculty Relations (Office of Indigenous Relations).