

**University of Waterloo
Senate
Minutes of the May 5, 2025 meeting
[in agenda order]**

Present: John Abraham, Nasser Abukhdeir, Bilal Ahmed, Avery Akkerman, Veronica Austen, Aubrey Basdeo, Jordan Bauman, Jean Becker, Andrew Chang, Martin Cooke, Cecilia Cotton, Kim Cuddington, Hans De Sterck, Laura Deakin, Charmaine Dean, David DeVidi, Catherine Dong, Mark Ferro, Paul Fieguth, Teresa Fortney, Genevieve Gauthier-Chalifour (Secretary), Mark Giesbrecht, Vivek Goel (Chair), Mike Grivicic (Associate Secretary), Vikas Gupta, David Ha, Peter Hall, Kevin Hare, Meray Sadek, Natalie Hutchings, Nadine Ibrahim, Marc Jerry, Acey Kaspar, Achim Kempf, Veronica Kitchen, Scott Kline, Sachin Kotecha, Christiane Lemieux, Ondrej Lhotak, Lili Liu, Brad Lushman, Jennifer Lynes, Stephanie Maaz, Shana MacDonald, Carol Ann MacGregor, Blake Madill, Colleen Maxwell, Kristiina Montero, Richard Myers, Cathy Newell Kelly, Christopher Nielsen, James Nugent, Troy Osborne, Nicholas Pellegrino, Damian Mikhail, David Porreca, Jacinda Reitsma, Mary Robinson, James Rush, John Saabas, Beth Sandore Namachchivaya, Asher Scaini, Mark Seasons, Marcus Shantz, Jagdeep Singh Bachher, James Skidmore, Christopher Taylor, Alexie Tcheuyap, Sharon Tucker, Diana Vangelisti, Johanna Wandel, Mary Wells, Clarence Woudsma, Changbao Wu, En-Hui Yang

Regrets: Marc Aucoin, Judy Castaneda, Bruce Frayne, Murray Gamble, Rob Gorbet, Chris Houser, Ellen MacEachen, Peter Meehan, Kirsten Muller, Neil Randall, Rida Sayed, Siva Sivoththaman, Katie Traynor, Stanley Woo

Guests: Graham Brown, Aldo Caputo, Ashley Day, Nenone Donaldson, Bernard Duncker, Donna Ellis, Melanie Figueiredo, Jenny Flagler-George, Richard Florizone, Katy Fulfer, Jennifer Gillies, Diana Goncalves, Janine Graham, Sarah Hadley, Marc Hurwitz, Samantha Hurwitz, Diane Johnston, Andrea Kelman, Alex Kunert, Tony Ly, Nick Manning, Jon Mason, Norah McRae, Christine McWebb, Ian Milligan, Elena Neiterman, Josh Neufeld, Fayaz Noormohamed, Nicholas Pfeifle, Nick Pfeifle, Daniela Seskar-Hencic, Nadia Singh, Kathy Smidt, Greg Smith, Allan Starr, Kerry Stryker, Brandon Sweet, Tim Weber-Kraljevski, Maris Weiss, Kate Windsor, Esther Wingate, Katy Wong-Francq

OPEN SESSION

The chair welcomed senators to the meeting and offered remarks. Today is Red Dress Day, which is a National Day of Remembrance for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S+). Earlier today, there was a celebration of life for Professor Siv Sivaloganathan, and members of the community may contribute to the Siv Sivaloganathan Memorial Scholarship which will fund graduate studies in his area of mathematical medicine research. The chair welcomed two new members of Senate: Damian Mikhail as the new president of WUSA, and Meray Sadek as the new GSA president.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

The territorial acknowledgement was given by the chair.

2. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

2.1 Conflict of Interest.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2.2 Approval of the Agenda, and Approval of the Consent Agenda.

A motion was heard to approve the agenda as presented, and to approve or receive for information the items on the consent agenda, listed as items 10.1-10.7 of the Senate agenda. Seasons and Lynes. Carried.

2.3 Minutes of the March 3, 2025 Meeting – open and confidential.

One senator noted a few minor amendments, and the Secretariat will liaise with them following the meeting to confirm the suggested amendments. A motion was heard to approve the minutes of the meeting (open session) as amended. Bauman and Gupta. Carried.

2.4 Business Arising from the Minutes.

Various business items were noted in the memo included with the agenda.

3. Report of the President

3.1 General Update

President and Vice-Chancellor Vivek Goel provided his report. He noted the recent federal election which resulted in several new MPs from the Waterloo area, and observed that none of the platforms of the leading parties paid significant attention to postsecondary education – in this context, the sector continues to advocate on a variety of issues. Slower study permit renewal processing times are being observed (around 220 days) which move the prospective approvals past the start of fall term. The province has announced \$750 million in STEM program investment over five years, and while this is welcome support the increment does not fully address funding gaps. The University continues to monitor the situation in the USA, with issues of relevance including changes to agency funding. Recently, the Vice-President, Research and International issued a memo providing guidance on international travel to reflect the shifting geopolitical situation.

3.2 Amendment to Policy 40 – The Chair

Goel provided a short overview of the report and recommendation. Vice-President, Academic and Provost James Rush observed that these amendments were initiated by the Faculty Relations Committee to update language that was gendered and anachronistic, to update titles, and to align language around new appointments to clarify current practices for internal/external searches. FAUW President David Porreca indicated that further amendments have been identified since this initially was recommended, but that those amendments will be held in abeyance to not hold up the current approvals. Members noted that reference to St. Paul's should instead refer to United College, and the minor amendment to correct this reference will be reflected in the version that proceeds to the Board of Governors for final approval. A motion was heard that Senate recommend the Board of Governors approve the proposed revisions to Policy 40 – The Chair, as amended. Porreca and Hare. Carried.

4. Report – Teaching Awards Committee

4.1 Teaching Award Winners. Associate Vice-President Academic David DeVidi announced the winners of the Distinguished Teacher Awards: Chad Wriglesworth (St. Jerome's), Elena Neiterman (School of Public Health Sciences), Marc Hurwitz (Conrad School) and Martin Pei (Combinatorics & Optimization), with an honorable mention of Katy Fulfer (Philosophy) in recognition of her extraordinary courage and care in the face of targeted classroom violence that occurred in June 2023. Interim Co-Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs Clarence Woudsma announced the winners of the Amit & Meena Chakma Awards for Exceptional Teaching by a Student: Alexandra Kunert (Earth and Environmental Sciences), Ali Syed (Pharmacy), Jeremy Cohen (Kinesiology & Health Sciences), and Serena McDiarmid (Psychology).

Senate invited Elena Neiterman and Alexandra Kunert to offer comment in relation to the awards. Neiterman and Kunert spoke to the importance of making connections with students, the impact that teachers have on students' lives, being able to create space for growth and thriving, being able to learn from students, having tremendous support from colleagues including exemplary mentorship from other teachers. They thanked the members of the selection committees, the nominator, and the award donors.

5. University Task Force Updates

5.1 Reports from the Task Force on Principles for Institutional Partnerships and the Task Force on Social Responsibility in Investing

Associate Vice-President, Chief Financial Officer Sarah Hadley and Associate Vice-President, Research Oversight and Analysis Ian Milligan provided a slide presentation to convey the key findings and recommendations of the two task forces along with outlining prospective activity arising from those reports through the end of 2025. Discussion questions were provided to foster conversation at Senate. Hadley and Milligan relayed some of the challenges pertaining to these task forces' recommendations, including measurement issues for certain investments, what engagements would be considered to be institutional partnerships, the relative complexity of having to make assessments of partnerships in the context of human rights issues, and the potential need for a mechanism to review partnerships.

Discussion was invited. A senator observed that the existing Responsible Investment Policy is not a numbered policy, and perhaps this should be considered. The language in the task force reports is not necessarily binding and there is less comfort among some senators if implementation is done through the establishment of guidelines whereas a policy would be a stronger response. The prospective action on investments would apply to the endowment and pension plan funds. A question was raised as to whether the policy could be applied to the Student Venture fund run through the School of Accounting and Finance. In reviewing partnerships, it would be advisable to review the partner institution's record on human rights. The move to increase investment disclosure is laudable. There was question of how credible evidence would be defined for the purpose of investigating partnerships, and who specifically would be involved in any potential review mechanism. An active process of continual review of partnerships would be beneficial. The cited UN conventions are relatively old and may not be germane. Senate may establish ad hoc committees, and a senator suggested that this could be a mechanism for

Senate to be engaged on these matters. There are differing levels of investment flexibility for the endowment and the pension plan, which may suggest that differing approaches ought to be applied to each fund. Institutional neutrality applies to institutional communications, but not necessarily for operational considerations.

5.2 Statement on Institutional Neutrality, Institutional Restraint and Communications – Guidelines for Collective Bodies

Goel provided a short introduction and Associate Vice-President, Faculty Planning and Policy Christine McWebb spoke to the report. It is proposed that when a body want to take a collective position, that body should make the greatest possible effort to emphasize that the position is taken only by the body and not by the University. The aim today is to obtain feedback from Senate to be combined with feedback from others in the campus community toward a recommendation that is anticipated to be brought in Fall 2025.

Discussion was invited. It was noted that while Faculty Relations Committee is observed on the governance path, that body did not formally endorse this. The approach seen here for implementing task force recommendations has been commonly taken in recent years, however some senators believe this would be better implemented as a policy. . In response to a concern raised regarding guidance on social media and for non-unit informal collectives, it was confirmed that bodies are not barred from using social media but would not be able to utilize University communications brand assets since amplification of this collective message in that way could be seen as an institutional position, which in turn could abridge the academic freedom of colleagues who may not agree with the collective position that was taken. Questions were raised around clarification between the applicability of policies which require upholding, and guidelines which aim to provide guidance without enforcement. For digital assets, it may be helpful to delineate which assets' use would be construed as the University's endorsement of the position. A senator expressed concern at the prospect of selective application of guidelines, and at the absence of policy guidance in the formulation of guidelines.

6. Report of the Senate Executive Committee

6.1 New Committee Proposal: Senate Planning and Finance Committee

Goel provided a short overview of the proposal, and senators discussed the report. The version brought forward to Senate includes minor amendments which were not included in the versions recommended by the two bodies, and the terms of reference proposed do not have any reduced scope but rather increases the scope of the combined committee. The combination of the two committees will help to increase synergy and support the integrated planning approach through generative discussions. A motion was heard that Senate establish a new committee, the Senate Planning and Finance Committee, as described in this report and effective September 1, 2025. DeVidi and Woudsma. Carried.

6.2 Senate Graduate & Research Council Restructuring Proposal

Goel observed that this proposal arises from the Senate Governance Review, with considerable discussion having occurred at the council over several years. A motion was heard that Senate approve the restructuring of the Senate Graduate & Research Council into two separate councils of Senate – the Senate Graduate Council and the Senate Research and Innovation Council – as described in this report and effective September 1, 2025. Dean and Woudsma. Carried.

6.3 Amendment to Senate Bylaw 2

Goel indicated that this report will reconcile the removal of the progenitor bodies to the new bodies approved in 6.1 and 6.2 of the agenda, and that in keeping with modern practices Senate has been approving new terms of reference outside of bylaws and this approach is reflected here. A motion was heard that Senate approve and give first reading to the amendments to Senate Bylaw 2 as presented in this report and effective September 1, 2025. Lynes and DeVidi. Carried.

6.4 Submission Received – Proposal to Amend Senate Bylaw 4

Goel noted that the Senate Executive Committee agreed in principle with the merits of adding staff representation to Senate, with further investigation and consultation as described in the report. Senator James Nugent indicated that he would elect to withdraw his motion on the basis that the staff association is currently reviewing its structure.

7. Report of Senate Undergraduate Council

7.1 Senate Undergraduate Council: Faculty of Science – Major Modifications

DeVidi provided an overview of the report and recommendation, noting that this new program will provide more flexibility and replace a program that has been seeing increasing attrition. A senator asked whether the BScFM is too similar and may be confused with the Bachelor of Sustainability and Financial Management (BSFM), and it was clarified that the latter program's marketing is sufficiently differentiated. A motion was heard that Senate approve the creation of a Bachelor of Science and Financial Management (BScFM) program with three new science and three new business specializations, and, to retire the Bachelor of Science, Biotechnology/Chartered Professional Accountancy program at the same time, effective September 1, 2026, as presented. DeVidi and Deakin. Carried.

8. Report of the Faculty of Health

8.1 Amendments to the Faculty of Health Constitution

Dean of Health Lili Liu provided a short overview of the report. A motion was heard that Senate approve the amended Constitution for the Faculty of Health at the University of Waterloo, as described in this report. Liu and Giesbrecht. Carried.

9. Report of the University Secretary

9.1 Election of Graduate Student Senator to Board of Governors

With no further nominations forthcoming after a call from the floor, a motion was heard that Senate elect Meray Sadek as the graduate student senator for a two-year term to August 31, 2027. Maxwell and Porreca. Carried.

9.2 Election Results - Senators to Board of Governors

This item was received for information.

9.3 Senate Governance Processes

Nugent takes issue with the approach taken by the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) in considering how to integrate his submission [see item 6.4] into the Senate agenda, asserting that the submission ought to have been brought for a potential first reading. Nugent agreed with the committee's ability to comment on the submission, but not with the committee placing the report on the agenda for information and argued that action exceeded the committee's role in preparing the Senate agenda.

Senators discussed the matter. Senate may consider ways to foster discussions/debates initiated by senators. The role of SEC in preparing the Senate agenda also includes examining the soundness of all reports/submissions to Senate. A senator suggested the Senate agenda might add a new section to offer a forum where senators may raise potential new business, which thereon may be taken up or declined. SEC has established processes in the context of an appropriate agenda development function for the Senate. One perception could be that SEC was acting in a paternalistic manner in referring said submission to Senate in the form that it was, rather than as the submission was received. There are many ways to debate items of interest, and the format of debate that is frequently taken up by Senate does not invite all types of input. University Secretary Gen Gauthier-Chalifour indicated that the submission in question was not necessarily out of order but rather that SEC was of the view that not enough information had been provided, and this is appropriate in the context of SEC's responsibilities under section 1.04(g) of Senate Bylaw 1 "To receive and review the reports and recommendations of all committees and councils, prior to their presentation to Senate and to make at its discretion recommendations to Senate thereon". She further observed that most Senate operations are carried out through its committees and councils, and that SEC's terms of reference would be slated for review in the coming year. It was noted that Gauthier-Chalifour and Nugent will meet following the meeting, and that this item may come forward for discussion again at a future meeting.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were received for approved / received for information.

10.1 Senate Work Plan

10.2 Senate Graduate & Research Council

10.3 Senate Undergraduate Council

10.4 Senate Long Range Planning Committee

10.5 Academic Quality Enhancement Committee

10.6 Report of the Provost: Faculty Appointments, Leaves

10.7 Report - Vice President, Research and International: Awards, Distinctions, Grants, Waterloo International Engagements

11. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

No items removed from the consent agenda.

12. Other Business

12.1 Report – Honorary Degrees Committee: 2025 Spring Convocation List of Honorands

This item was received for information.

There was no other business. Senate proceeded into confidential session.

May 14, 2025

Mike Grivicic
Associate University Secretary