

University of Waterloo
Senate
Minutes of the October 21, 2024 meeting
[in agenda order]

Present: John Abraham, Nasser Abukhdeir, Marc Aucoin, Veronica Austen, 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, Genevieve Gauthier-Chalifour (Secretary), Mark Giesbrecht, Vivek Goel (Chair), Rob Gorbet, Mike Grivicic (Associate Secretary), Vikas Gupta, David Ha, Peter Hall, Kevin Hare, Neela Hassan, Chris Houser, Natalie Hutchings, Nadine Ibrahim, Narveen Jandu, Marc Jerry, Acey Kaspar, Achim Kempf, Veronica Kitchen, Scott Kline, Sachin Kotecha, Christiane Lemieux, Ondrej Lhotak, Lili Liu, Brad Lushman, Shana MacDonald, Ellen MacEachen, Carol Ann MacGregor, Blake Madill, Colleen Maxwell, Kristiina Montero, Richard Myers, Cathy Newell Kelly, Christopher Nielsen, James Nugent, Troy Osborne, Everett Patterson, Nicholas Pellegrino, Nicholas Pfeifle, David Porreca, Neil Randall, Jacinda Reitsma, Mary Robinson, James Rush, John Saabas, Beth Sandore Namachchivaya, Rida Sayed, Asher Scaini, Mark Seasons, Marcus Shantz, Siva Sivoththaman, James Skidmore, Christopher Taylor, Alexie Tcheuyap, Sharon Tucker, Diana Vangelisti, Johanna Wandel, Mary Wells, Stanley Woo, Clarence Woudsma, Changbao Wu, En-Hui Yang

Guests: Graham Brown, Aldo Caputo, Ashley Day, Nenone Donaldson, Bernard Duncker, Melanie Figueiredo, Jenny Flagler-George, Anne Galang, Diana Goncalves, Sarah Hadley, Diane Johnston, Andrea Kelman, Jennifer Kieffer, Nick Manning, Jon Mason, Eleanor McMahon, Norah McRae, Christine McWebb, Ian Milligan, Fayaz Noormohamed, Donna Rheams, Karl Schuett, Daniela Seskar-Hencic, Allan Starr, Brandon Sweet, Nickola Voegelin, Tim Weber-Kraljevski, Roly Webster, Tom Willett, Sarah Willey-Thomas, Kate Windsor, Katy Wong-Francq

Regrets: Bilal Ahmed, Avery Akkerman, Aubrey Basdeo, Judy Castaneda, Teresa Fortney, Murray Gamble, Jennifer Lynes Murray, Stephanie Maaz, Peter Meehan, Kirsten Muller, Jagdeep Singh Bachher, Sivabal Sivaloganathan, Katie Traynor

OPEN SESSION

The chair welcomed all in attendance to the meeting. The secretary provided a brief overview of the meeting room technology as well as for the governance portal.

1. Territorial Acknowledgment

Nasser Abukhdeir provided the territorial acknowledgement and a personal reflection, and asked that a report be circulated to senators.

Following the territorial acknowledgement, the chair provided opening remarks: welcome to two new Senators; thanks to staff who supported Waterloo's presence at the recent Ontario Universities Fair; upcoming convocation ceremonies on October 25-26; groundbreaking ceremony for the new Mathematics 4 building to take place on Monday October 28.

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. Members agreed by consensus to allow recording of the meetings proceedings for item 4. 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 10-16 of the Senate agenda. Patterson and Deakin. Carried.

2.3 Minutes of the September 23, 2024 Meeting. A motion was heard to approve the minutes as presented. Giesbrecht and Ibrahim. Carried.

2.4.1 Approved appointments to Senate committees/councils by Senate Executive Committee. This item was received for information.

2.4.2 Update on Task Forces: Principles for Institutional Partnerships and Social Responsibility in Investing. This item was received for information.

3. Faculty Update Presentation [Science]

Chris Houser provided a presentation. Success metrics for students/alumni and research funding/awards. Theme of discovery and exploration with focus on three broad categories of scholarship - health and biomedical, sustainable materials and sensing, and environment and ecology. Recent organizational changes to support advancement and communication functions, and adjustment to associate dean portfolios to align with priority areas. Promotion of Science offerings to prospective incoming students, and support/expansion of student offerings toward an outstanding student experience. Members clarified that additional support for undergraduate student research aims to support supervisors broadly and that these funds may free up external research funding that could be deployed to other areas.

4. Deans' United Way Presentation

The Faculty deans and senior administrators executed a masterful line dance to bring awareness to the University's annual United Way campaign and were joined by some senators. Eleanor McMahon, Vice-President University Relations, thanked the deans and conveyed that the University hopes to surpass the goal of \$230,000 raised for United Way last year. The chair underscored the importance of this campaign, noting that even though the University and its members are facing financial challenges there are many in the community facing even greater challenges and to consider supporting those who are in need.

5. Report of the President

Goel provided a verbal report on recent events/announcements:

- Announcement of new student permit caps for international students along with new requirements for attestation letters for international graduate students, in parallel with other announcements that have caused churn and confusion, are conveying a message that Canada is a less welcoming destination for international students
- Additionally, new tensions between the governments of Canada and India will complicate international recruitment efforts
- The province's announcement of new compliance requirements (with short timelines to completion for some requirements) will divert resources within the institution to fulfill externally imposed requirements

6. Report - Senate Graduate & Research Council

Woudsma provided an overview of the recommendation and highlighted that this is brought forward as a joint initiative of three departments. Members discussed the recommendation. This proposal broadens engineering offerings beyond the existing departmental structures. Students' home department obtains a portion of funds; however this program is largely administered via the Department of Systems Design Engineering. Offering this program is expected to provide a net addition to student complement. Chemical Engineering was involved in the initial development but bowed out of this proposal due to prospective costs, though faculty in that department may still be involved e.g. graduate supervision. A motion was heard that Senate approve the proposed new academic programs of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and research-based Master of Applied Science (MASc) degrees in Biomedical Engineering (BME), as presented; and, that the effective date be either January 1, 2025 or May 1, 2025, to be confirmed and subject to the date of review and approval by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. Woudsma and Wells. Carried.

7. Report - Senate Undergraduate Council

Senate agreed to take items 7.1 and 7.2 together, and DeVidi provided an overview of each item. Two motions were heard as follows:

To approve the proposed major modification to create a new option, Quantum Information (Bachelor of Computer Science, Bachelor of Computing and Financial Management, Bachelor of Mathematics, Bachelor of Software Engineering), effective September 1, 2025, as presented.

To approve the proposed academic regulation revisions to Mathematics: Averages and Academic Standings, Addition of First Term Withdrawal Policy, effective September 1, 2025, as presented.

DeVidi and Giesbrecht. Both motions were carried.

8. Report - Senate Executive Committee

8.1 Guidelines for Visitors to Senate Meetings. Senate heard that work on these guidelines began in the spring months at the direction of Senate Executive Committee (SEC), with iterative drafts reviewed by the same committee. This document reflects existing practices as well as following best practices among comparator institutions, as well as having parallels with similar practices adopted at various level of governments. The registration process proposed under section 3 would be developed by the Secretariat and shared with SEC.

A motion was heard that Senate adopts the Guidelines for Visitors to Senate Meetings as presented. Deakin and Aucoin.

Members discussed the draft guidelines. Meeting accessibility is especially important, and registration process for visitors should be simple and allow people to easily walk in when room capacity is not an issue. Concern that any barriers could impact community participation and add unnecessary work when resources can be devoted to other priorities. This proposal comes following a review of comparator institutions' practices. The resources costs to implement this proposal are relatively small in comparison to the resources costs that may arise without having such guidelines, and this proposal fosters transparency for visitors and calibrates expectations for senators. Some senators felt that registration of visitors is not necessary, and could run afoul without consultation with Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism (EDI-R) Office and the Office of Indigenous Relations. It was noted that guidelines such as these can help to reduce the incidence of bad actors, based on some senators' experiences with municipal governance.

Gauthier-Chalifour clarified that the guidelines do not intend to preclude engagement or to turn people away, and that those who do not want to sign in to a meeting will not be turned away on that basis. Further consultation can occur with the two offices.

A motion was heard to defer consideration of the guidelines pending additional consultation with the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism (EDI-R) Office and the Office of Indigenous Relations. Abukhdeir and De Sterck.

Members discussed the secondary motion to defer. Some members felt deferral was unnecessary, and that Senate can adjust any processes over time as experience informs the application of the guidelines. Some members expressed concern that the guidelines may have a chilling effect on deliberation at Senate, and that there is merit in deferring consideration so that marginalized populations are not deterred from engagement. It was noted that many in the community do not know how to engage with Senate, and that the guidelines would have a positive effect to provide those people with a starting point.

The question on the deferral motion was called, and the motion was defeated.

Senate resumed consideration of the main motion, and the secretary noted that the registration process for visitors would be brought forward to SEC. The chair confirmed for the record that consultation would include Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism (EDI-R) Office and the Office of Indigenous Relations, along with WUSA and GSA, and that the document would be available for Senate as part of a report from SEC.

The main motion was carried.

8.2 Senate Undergraduate Council – Report on Curriculum Subcommittee Pilot. DeVidi spoke to the report and recommendation, noting that the pilot was successful, and that the subcommittee's work has been seen to free up bandwidth for the Council to focus more attention on items of strategic importance. A friendly amendment was accepted by the mover and seconder to provide that the student member on the subcommittee may be drawn from any student senator or any student member of a Senate committee. A motion was heard that Senate approve the establishment of a curriculum subcommittee for Senate Undergraduate Council, as amended. DeVidi and Deakin. Carried.

8.3 Election to Senate Committee. A motion was heard to elect Neela Hassan as the graduate student member of the Academic Quality Enhancement Committee. Pellegrino and Patterson. Carried.

9. Report - Senate Finance Committee

9.1 Mid-Year Update, 2024/25 University Operating Budget. James W.E. Rush provided a presentation to Senate to convey budget developments and to keep Senate informed on progress in dealing with the deficit through in-year measures. Rush illustrated further context surrounding the briefing note provided in advance. Rush reminded Senate of the measures proposed in the opening budget to address the in-year deficit and discussed emerging developments. The University will hold a town hall event in November pertaining to the budget.

Members discussed the operating budget mid-year update. There is significant demand for Waterloo's academic programming, but this demand is not supported with sufficient funding from the province. Funds carried forward from previous years within certain accounts of the operating budget may be accessed to mitigate the current year's deficit, though much of the funds carried forward within the University's various accounts are dedicated to specific purposes and may not be applied to the operating budget. Many faculty and staff within the community are hazy on the budget situation, and communication will be important to engage the community, particularly to convey the situation transparently and to mitigate rumours taking the place of verified information in the absence of communication. Goel and Rush observed that the decentralized nature of Waterloo will mean that the decisions of multiple individuals in charge of their own budgets will be consolidated toward mitigating the overall budget deficit, and that the town hall and the separate budget education session in the winter term will aim to foster communication of the budget situation to the community.

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent agenda items were handled under item 2.2 of the agenda.

10. Senate Work Plan

Received for information.

11. Report - Senate Graduate & Research Council

Received for information.

12. Report - Senate Undergraduate Council

Received for information.

13. Report - Senate Long Range Planning Committee

Received for information.

14. Report - Honorary Degrees Committee

Received for information.

15. Report - Vice President, Research & International

Received for information.

16. Report - Vice-President, Academic & Provost

Received for information.

17. Other Business

There was no other business.

With no other business, the committee convened in confidential session.

October 28, 2024

Mike Grivicic
Associate University Secretary