

University of Waterloo
SENATE UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL
Minutes of the November 19, 2024 Meeting

Present: Katherine Acheson, Faisal Al-Faisal, Veronica Austen, Benoit Charbonneau, Victoria Chu, Ashley Day (secretary), Laura Deakin, David DeVidi (Chair), Chloe Ding, Leanne Ferries, Jason Grove, Kristiina Montero, Cathy Newell Kelly, Alex Pawelko, Nicholas Pfeifle Cynthia Richard, Helena Shilomboleni, Robert Stark, Chris Vigna, Johanna Wandel, Richard Wikkerkink

Resources/Guests: Angela Christelis, Blair Clarence, Jennifer Coghlin, Mike Grivicic, Andre Jardin, Danielle Jeannault, Carrie MacKinnon Molson, Christine McWebb

Absent: Avery Akkerman, Namrah Hasan, Carol Ann MacGregor, Victoria Swanson, William Wong

Organization of Meeting David DeVidi took the chair, and Ashley Day acted as secretary. The secretary advised that a quorum was present. The agenda was approved without formal motion.

1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

CONSENT AGENDA

Council heard a motion to approve or receive for information the items of the consent agenda. Benoit and Acheson. Carried.

2. MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 17, 2024 MEETING

Council approved the minutes of the meeting as distributed.

3. CURRICULAR SUBMISSIONS

Council approved item 3(a) and (b) on behalf of Senate.

4. UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS REPORT

Council received for information the Undergraduate Awards Report.

REGULAR AGENDA

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising.

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

DeVidi welcomed a new member to SUC, Robert Stark, who is an Assistant Professor in Anthropology. A reminder was given that the due date for the next curriculum subcommittee is December 19, 2024. DeVidi spoke to the Presidential Nomination Committee and the extensive selection process. If members wish to put their name forward for the committee, nominations are due November 25th, and there is a 1-year commitment. It was also noted that the next meeting of SUC will take place in the new year, on January 28, 2025.

7. CURRICULAR SUBMISSIONS

Charbonneau spoke to the Mathematics submission for the new AMATH Specialization. Council heard a motion to recommend that Senate approve the following proposed AMATH Specialization, effective September 1, 2025, as presented. Charbonneau and Pawelko. Carried.

8. ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS

Jardin presented the changes to the English Language Proficiency Requirements for information to the Council. The Office of the Registrar is working hard to attract and retain international students.

The first change presented will support the admission of international students on a full Khotwa scholarship from the Emirates. The Faculties that are eligible for this opportunity are Arts, Environment, Health, and Science. There could be as many as 10 students per Faculty in the cohort. Jardin spoke to the support from Renison in creating a third term for the Bridge to Academic Success (BASE) program called BASE 20. This will also support students joining full-time degree studies with their peers during orientation and start of the academic year. The second change involves updating and simplifying two of the existing English language proficiency test scores as presented.

9. 2025-2026 Academic Calendar

Coghlin spoke to the development of the proposed 25/26 Academic Calendar, as presented. Coghlin clarified that the holidays have been adjusted to align closer with Wilfred Laurier during the drafting process and the Office of the Registrar will also consult with HR in the future for any planned closures for holiday observances.

The Council discussed the regulations related to rule 10 and online course exams; start of spring term transition and time available for make-up exams; co-op work term start dates and the impacts to students finding off campus housing.

A motion was heard to recommend that Senate approve the 2025-2026 calendar dates as presented. Montero and Ferries. Carried.

10. Credentials Framework Overview and Report

Newell Kelly presented for information and discussion the Credentials Framework overview and report. There is currently no common institutional framework. Key inputs are the Strategic Plan and Waterloo at 100. The goal of the framework is to remove barriers, support interdisciplinarity, bundling, and new alternative credentials. The framework will provide appropriate governance to regularize ad hoc processes, create efficiencies and build relationships between credentials. This will support the long-term vision of the university by focusing on foundational issues first.

Newell Kelly spoke to pathways and the need to agree on definitions across Faculties to create flexibility. An example is the building blocks model which uses standard definitions of majors and minors to support student flexibility across programs. The governance structure will have a new Senate standing committee that will replace ACAC and have a mandate to approve a wider range of credentials. Additionally, the new Senate AQuE Committee will begin in December 2024.

Council discussed: the complex process of transfer credits and the need for a process for stacking noncredit credentials towards a traditional credentials; many ideas coming forward from the Faculties for WATSPEED; importance of reducing barriers and allowing students to mix and match; ensuring transfers are working and students are successful; importance of student representation on ACAC and AQuE.

11. Freedom of Expression and Inclusive Engagement Task Force Report

McWebb presented an overview of the Freedom of Expression and Inclusive Engagement Task Force. The impetus for this task force was the Hagey Hall attack. The task force report was submitted in summer 2024 and is currently in the implementation phase. The recommendations in the report have formed the action plan presented to Council. McWebb reviewed in detail the three clusters of recommendations: University's Voice, Policies and Guidelines, Culture and Climate.

The task force will develop principles to guide University members (faculty, staff, students) in upholding freedom of expression and in understanding the relationship between freedom of expression and academic freedom as components of an inclusive environment that fosters respectful engagement. Policies and guidelines were part of the taskforce work and identified several policies that are related to freedom of expression and may include operational policies such as Policy 15: Bookings. McWebb gave an overview of the governance structure for implementation and highlighted opportunities for engagement, including Conrad Grebel's Dialogue4Sharing Program, the Freedom of Expression and Inclusive Engagement Presidential Advisory Group, and future programming for new faculty and students.

The Council discussed: the program from Conrad Grebel will initially be for students and open in the Winter term; opening of the Office of the Ombudsman with support from WUSA, GSPA and the Secretariat; policies that may adversely affect students, in particular Policy 33; faculty may refer to the report for further information on expression in the classroom; the perception of communications from leadership and careful consideration of language used.

More information can be found at <https://uwaterloo.ca/provost/committees/freedom-expression-and-respectful-engagement-task-force>

12. OTHER BUSINESS

No other items of business were identified.

13. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting adjourned. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, from 1-3pm in NH 3318.

November 20, 2024

Ashley Day
Governance Officer