

**University of Waterloo  
Senate Finance Committee  
Minutes of the January 23, 2025 meeting  
[in agenda order]**

**Present:** Marc Aucoin; Andrew Chang; Cecilia Cotton; Charmaine Dean; Paul Fieguth; Bruce Frayne; Mark Giesbrecht; Vivek Goel (chair); Mike Grivicic (secretary); Vikas Gupta; David Ha; Chris Houser; Scott Kline; Lili Liu; Ellen MacEachen; Nicholas Pfeifle; Jacinda Reitsma; James Rush; Alexie Tcheuyap; Justin Wan; Johanna Wandel; Mary Wells; Stanley Woo

**Guests:** MaryAnne Chan; Ashley Day; Gen Gauthier-Chalifour; Sarah Hadley; Jennifer Kieffer; Beth Namachchivaya; Karl Schuett; Allan Starr

**Absent:** Stephanie Maaz

**1. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes**

**1.1 Conflict of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**1.2 Approval of the Agenda**

A motion was heard to approve the agenda as presented. Kline and Aucoin. Carried.

**1.3 Minutes of the October 16, 2024 Meeting**

A motion was heard to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2024 meeting as distributed/amended. Aucoin and Kline. Carried.

**1.4 Business Arising from the Minutes**

No business arising.

**2. Remarks from the Chair**

The chair observed that item 4 is brought forward having also been discussed at the Senate Long Range Planning Committee in November 2024.

**3. Presentation, Budget Planning Process**

The chair noted that ordinarily the committee would receive an in-year update on the operating budget at this meeting, however given that such an update was given in October this meeting would focus on the operating budget challenges for the upcoming 2025-26 year.

Rush provided a PowerPoint presentation, including key considerations and major challenges. Three-year time horizon to return to a balanced operating budget, and the University will need to go beyond strictly budget measures to transform in how the University works. Anticipating reduced revenues from enrollment and grants, and generally increased expenses with unknowns pertaining to current employee agreements that do not reach the three-year horizon. The province has signaled that there will be no change to the revenue architecture in the first two years of the SMA, and further has not adopted any of the recommendations of the Blue-Ribbon Panel to ameliorate the budgetary pressures facing the sector. Salary and benefits make up a rising portion of the operating budget, from 69% in 2018/19 to 83% in 2024/25. The formulation of budget mitigation measures in 2025/26 will in part depend on the final outcomes of those measures put in place for 2024/25. Several external risks are ongoing, including federal policy impacting international students, however the University is proceeding with risk mitigation measures including strategic enrollment management, expense reduction, supports and tools for leaders, enhanced internal communication, and conservation of cash and one-time funding sources. A large portion of reserve funds on the University's balance sheet are dedicated to specific purposes and cannot be used for budget mitigation. In the absence of external funding for new/renovations to buildings or IT infrastructure the only mechanisms to fund these projects are from internal savings or by issuing debt externally.

Member entered discussion. A cash flow analysis from the recent years would help to visualize the impacts on the budget. Waterloo's deficits have been resolved annually, whereas other institutions have accumulated deficits. Engagements with the federal and provincial

governments are ongoing, however there is no indication that assistance from any government is forthcoming. While immigration and student visas will become a greater risk in future years, the current budget difficulties are attributable to provincial actions to limit tuition and grant income, resulting in forgoing of hundreds of millions of dollars.

#### **4. Review of Senate Governance Structures**

**4.1. Consideration of Restructuring of Senate Long Range Planning Committee and Senate Finance Committee.** Gauthier-Chalifour spoke to the material distributed with the agenda, noting that considering a potential restructure would be congruent with a broader review of committee structures for currency, that synergies would exist with the greater emphasis on integrated budgeting, and Waterloo is a relative outlier among the U15 in having the two committees separate. This stands as a potential measure to increase efficiency within the Senate governance structure, while also offering greater efficacy. The environmental scan included with the agenda was provided to Senate Long Range Planning Committee in November and is similarly brought to the committee here.

Members enter discussion. It would be prudent to have a Board member on a combined committee to bring that perspective. A combined committee with a broad mandate would require broad representation. Fewer meetings overall would be anticipated, while maintaining sufficient focus on strategic topics. Similar discussions are occurring in the Board sphere for relevant committees and proposals are expected to come over the next year.

By consensus, members agreed that a terms of reference for a combined committee be brought forward for consideration at a future meeting.

#### **5. Other Business**

There was no other business.

#### **6. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday March 31, 2025 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in NH 3318.

January 30, 2025

Mike Grivacic  
Associate University Secretary