

**University of Waterloo
Senate
Minutes of the June 9, 2025 meeting
[in agenda order]**

Present: John Abraham, Nasser Abukhdeir, Avery Akkerman, Marc Aucoin, Veronica Austen, Aubrey Basdeo, Jordan Bauman, 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, Bruce Frayne, Murray Gamble, Genevieve Gauthier-Chalifour (Secretary), Mark Giesbrecht, Vivek Goel (Chair), Rob Gorbet, Mike Grivicic (Associate Secretary), Vikas Gupta, David Ha, Peter Hall, Kevin Hare, Meray Sadek, Chris Houser, 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, Ellen MacEachen, Carol Ann MacGregor, Colleen Maxwell, Peter Meehan, 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, Asher Scaini, Mark Seasons, Marcus Shantz, Jagdeep Singh Bachher, Siva Sivoththaman, James Skidmore, Christopher Taylor, Alexie Tcheuyap, Katie Traynor, Sharon Tucker, Diana Vangelisti, Johanna Wandel, Mary Wells, Stanley Woo, Clarence Woudsma,

Regrets: Bilal Ahmed, Jean Becker, Judy Castaneda, Blake Madill, Kirsten Muller, Neil Randall, John Saabas, Beth Sandore Namachchivaya, Changbao Wu, En-Hui Yang

Guests: Graham Brown, Laura Bruno, Mark Clunes, Ashley Day, Nenone Donaldson, Tom Duever, Bernard Duncker, Melanie Figueiredo, Anne Galang, Jenny Flagler-George, Jennifer Gillies, Diana Goncalves, Diane Johnston, Andrea Kelman, Mario Loukas, Tony Ly, Christine McWebb, Ian Milligan, Chris Read, Gerry Schneider, Daniela Sesar-Hencic, Greg Smith, Allan Starr, Brandon Sweet, Meghan Whitfield, Katy Wong-Francq

OPEN SESSION

The chair welcomed members to the meeting and offered opening remarks. It was noted that the Pride Flag raising event held last Tuesday was well attended and received strong support from the community, and the President's Golf Tournament was a great success, raising funds in support of student athletes. Reunion events took place over the past weekend, with a strong turnout from alumni. Senate was reminded that June is National Indigenous History Month, with Indigenous Peoples Day to be celebrated on June 21st. Convocation will begin on June 10th, with a record number of graduands expected to attend. Appreciation was extended to all those participating in the celebrations.

Thomas Duever, incoming interim Vice-President, Academic and Provost, was welcomed to the meeting. He will officially begin his role on July 1st. This meeting marks the final Senate session of the academic year, and the chair thanked all outgoing senators for their service. Appreciation was also extended to John Saabas, whose term as governor appointee to Senate will conclude with this meeting.

Two administrators were recognized as their appointments will end on June 30th. Mark Giesbrecht completes his five-year term as Dean of Mathematics and was thanked for his leadership and service to both the Faculty and the University. Jim Rush was also acknowledged, marking his approximately 70th and final Senate meeting as Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Vice-Chair of Senate.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

The territorial acknowledgement was given by Marc Jerry, along with a personal reflection.

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 Consent Items

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 9.1-9.8 of the Senate agenda. Woudsma and Deakin. Carried.

2.3 Minutes of the May 5, 2025 Meeting – open and confidential

A motion was heard to approve the minutes of the meeting (open session and confidential session) as presented. Skidmore and Porreca. Carried.

2.4 Business Arising from the Minutes

As noted in the memo included with the meeting book, the amendments to Senate Bylaw 2 are brought for second reading and final approval.

3. Report of the President

3.1 General Update

President and Vice-Chancellor Vivek Goel provided his report. There were power issues over the weekend on campus and plant operations are addressing the issues. The University is tracking positively for this admissions cycle with 65,000 applicants and 37,000 offers; there is still volatility in the sector and continued impact on international student recruitment. Our students are experiencing a tough job market but through the work of CEE, we are focusing on co-op and work-integrated learning placements. The provincial Strategic Mandate Agreement should be finalized in the coming weeks.

Last week as part of the announcement of Bill 46: Protect Ontario by Cutting Red Tape Act, the Ministry initiated consultations with publicly assisted colleges and universities to explore ways to improve board governance. The University is working with its colleagues through the Council of Ontario Universities and the Working Group on Leading Practices on University Governance to identify key points for the consultations.

Goel invited Rush to give an overview of the Academic Innovation Working Group and the importance of academic programming while dealing with current challenges. It was emphasized that the working group is not a decision-making body, but meant to identify, develop, and facilitate the adoption of processes and practices that will enhance the quality and viability of academic programming and its delivery. DeVidi provided details of the three sub-groups and their purpose, noting the sub-groups were expected to report into the steering group at the end of June. Senators inquired about various roles on the working group including a humanities faculty member, librarian, and students. DeVidi clarified that roles may be added as appropriate and that any recommendations would move through the appropriate consultations and governance bodies prior to approval. Goel added that there is a desire across units to share more information nimbly and foster better collaboration between units locally.

4. Presentation - Waterloo Student Experience & Engagement (WatSEE)

Marlee Spafford, Special Advisor to the Provost on Student Experience, provided an overview of the WatSEE program, highlighting the work completed to date and tools available to faculty and students. Spafford encouraged faculty to adopt one new WatSEE action each year to shift University culture. Senators asked how the program will roll out and foster uptake, and how to get this into most departments and schools. Spafford agreed that it will be important to encourage colleagues and students to use the toolbox and that the Student Experience Survey will monitor use, but overall satisfaction is hard to tie to a single intervention. Rush thanked Spafford for her work as Special Advisor to the Provost. More information can be found online at uwaterloo.ca/provost/watsee.

5. Annual Report of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) Academic Colleague

COU Academic Colleague Scott Kline provided an overview of the past year's Academic Colleague meetings. He emphasized that Senators are encouraged to bring forward any issues they would like raised at the Council of Ontario Universities (COU). Over the past year, discussions have focused in particular on the potential impacts of U.S. policies on Ontario universities and researchers. One senator suggested that COU and OCUFA (Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations) have priorities in alignment, noting a potential opportunity for coordinated messaging to the provincial government. Kline added that there is also alignment with student groups on many issues. Goel reinforced the importance of consistent messaging across all stakeholder bodies.

6. Report of Senate Graduate & Research Council

6.1 Senate Graduate and Research Council: Graduate Certificate in Work-Integrated Learning

Woudsma introduced the proposed graduate certificate in work-integrated learning and gave a brief overview of the collaborative effort between the GSPA, CEE and the Faculties. The graduate calendar language was also enhanced to accompany the proposed program. A motion was heard to approve the proposed graduate certificate in work-integrated learning, with related amendments to the graduate calendar, as described in the report and effective September 1, 2025. Woudsma and Wandel. Carried.

7. Report of Senate Undergraduate Council

7.1 Honours Bachelor of Medical Sciences (BMSci)

DeVidi provided an overview of the program proposal in partnership with St. George's University in Grenada, noting that this pathway would allow students to gain both a bachelor's and medical degree in six years, instead of the traditional eight. The program is a cost-recovery program with no provincial funding and is expected to be fully viable. To meet a targeted launch date of September 2026, the proposal followed an expedited approval pathway while ensuring that all approval bodies had ample time to review the proposal and provide feedback. Dean Houser spoke to the medical sciences program providing an alternative source of family physicians that would encourage graduates to return to the province, while increasing course offerings in the Faculty of Science.

Senators discussed the proposed tuition fee, with some expressing concern about the cost during the first two years of the program. In response to the high demand for medical school seats, Dean Houser noted that similar pathway programs exist at other universities. Senator Woo and Chancellor Bachher added that, from a global perspective, the proposed tuition is competitive and comparable to the Optometry program's international student fees. Dean Houser and Laura Bruno, Vice-President of Student Recruitment at St. George's University (SGU), emphasized that the SGU seats are guaranteed and the program structure offers students an "off-ramp" should they decide to pursue other academic opportunities. They also highlighted the program's rigorous admissions process, designed to ensure strong alignment between students and the program. Dr. Mark Clunes, Senior Associate Dean of Basic Sciences at SGU, noted that a joint curriculum committee already exists between SGU and its UK partner, Northumbria University. The proposal outlines that the University of Waterloo would also be represented on this committee.

In response to questions about the program implementation cost, Anca Constantinescu, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Integrated Planning in the Dean of Science Office, added that a comprehensive financial viability analysis had been conducted. She reported that initial program costs are modest, leveraging existing anatomy lab space. If enrollment exceeds 32 students, the program is projected to generate enough revenue to fund additional lab facilities independently.

A motion was heard that Senate approve the Honours Bachelor of Medical Sciences (BMSci) program, in partnership with St. George's University (SGU) in Grenada, including new courses that will deliver SGU course content, and proposed regulation changes, effective September 1, 2026, as presented. DeVidi and Houser. Carried.

8. Report of Senate Executive Committee

8.1 Elections to Senate Committees and Councils

Goel gave an overview of the proposed slate, as it is the responsibility of SEC to present a list of nominations for the committees and councils of Senate at the last Senate meeting each year. It is customary at the last Senate meeting of the governance year to call for any further nominations from the floor.

University Secretary Gen Gauthier-Chalifour highlighted a new step in the process this year to survey senators for their committee preferences. The Secretariat will look to codify the process for the next election cycle. Goel opened the floor for nominations. The Faculty Senator seat for Environment on the Senate Undergraduate Council was discussed as a nomination from the floor was received for Helena Shilomboleni. Senator James Nugent elected to remove his name from the Council, allowing Shilomboleni to be acclaimed to the Faculty of Environment seat. Nugent then nominated himself from the floor to the Senate Executive Committee, prompting an electronic vote to be called for the Faculty of Environment seat. The Secretariat will hold an election following the meeting.

Goel noted that every year there are a few vacancies that require filling following the last Senate meeting and it has been past practice to recommend that Senate delegate those approvals to SEC as a practical way to fill the slate.

A motion was heard that Senate approve the membership of Senate committees and councils for 2025-26, as presented on the list of nominees, and, that Senate delegate approval for any remaining or subsequent vacancies to the Senate Executive Committee. Lynes Murray and Seasons. Carried.

8.2 Amendments to Bylaw 2

Goel spoke to the second and final reading of the Bylaw 2 changes related to the approval of the new Senate Planning & Finance Committee, Senate Graduate Council, and Senate Research and Innovation Council. The first reading occurred at the May 5, 2025 Senate meeting. The new councils and committee

terms of reference will stand alone outside of bylaw 2. A motion was heard that Senate give second and final reading to the amendments to Senate Bylaw 2 as presented in this report and effective September 1, 2025. Skidmore and Porreca. Carried.

A question was raised by a Senator with respect to the process for approving the new councils and committees, relative to the Senate bylaws. Gauthier-Chalifour clarified that Senate had approved the establishment of the new councils and committees at its previous meeting, and the bylaw changes were required to remove reference to the previous committees to align with this approval.

8.3 Senate Executive Committee, Meeting of May 26, 2025

Gauthier-Chalifour gave an update on the request for staff representation on Senate. The Secretariat will consult staff groups in the coming months. A motion will come forward in the fall for a working group of Senate, to be composed of senators with support of the Secretariat to identify issues and make recommendations for Senate consideration and prospective adoption. The Secretariat is also working to update the registration process for non-senator visitors to Senate meetings, along with expanded access to Senate meetings via livestream that is currently being piloted.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

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

- 9.1 Senate Work Plan**
- 9.2 Senate Graduate & Research Council**
- 9.3 Senate Long Range Planning Committee**
- 9.4 Academic Quality Enhancement Committee**
- 9.5 University Appointments Review Committee**
- 9.6 Report of the Provost: Faculty Appointments, Leaves**
- 9.7 Graduate Work-integrated Learning (GradWIL) Initiative: Final Report**
- 9.8 Report - Vice President, Research and International: Awards, Distinctions, Grants, Waterloo International Engagements**

10. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

No items were removed from the consent agenda.

11. Other Business

11.1 Discussion Item: Making Use of Existing Senate Committees for Review of Academic Programs

Nugent raised concerns that, even if the membership rationale of the Academic Innovation Working Group presented seem reasonable, deferring decisions to senior administration may undermine the Senate's statutory authority, especially since in his view biases and administrative framings are often embedded in proposals, and the composition of decision-making bodies is heavily skewed toward senior administration. A request was made to add senators and students to the Academic Innovation Working Group.

A senator added that while it's important to acknowledge that the administration is fulfilling its duties, the core issue is that in their view these matters fall under the Senate's jurisdiction, and as elected members, it is our responsibility to uphold that role which could be done through existing committees; meaningful involvement of teaching faculty is essential and cannot be replaced by consultation alone.

Goel noted that Senate will strike a working group in the fall [see item 8.3] to review Senate engagement and governance practices. Senators were encouraged to send feedback to the Secretariat to inform areas the working group could review.

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

CONFIDENTIAL SESSION
University of Waterloo
Senate
Minutes of the June 9, 2025 meeting
[in agenda order]

12. Approval of the Minutes

12.1 Minutes of the May 5, 2025 Meeting (confidential session)

The minutes were approved under item 2.3.

12.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising.

13. Report of the Vice-President, Advancement & External Relations

13.1 Annual Report of New Gifts and Pledges \$250,000+ received (May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025)

This item was received for information.

14. Annual Senate Self-Evaluation

14.1 Senate Effectiveness Survey 2024-25, Initial Observations and Next Steps (Senate)

This item was received for information. Goel observed that these findings will be helpful in the work of the Senate Engagement working group to be proposed in the Fall term.

15. Other Business

There was no other business.

16. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.