

*Regrets: None*

### **1. Co-Chair's Remarks**

- Shantz and Deakin welcomed members to the first meeting of the Senate Engagement Working Group and directed members to the Teams channel where materials are available for review.

### **2. Member Introductions and Orientation to Senate Engagement Working Group**

- Roundtable introductions were made. Shantz provided an overview of the scope and mandate of the Senate Engagement Working Group. The Terms of Reference and workplan for this working group were reviewed. Members considered different topics to explore and prioritize.
- Members discussed the timeline/deadlines for sending reports to the Senate Executive Committee and Senate. The goal is to present a framework at Senate in Spring 2026.
- Gauthier-Chalifour emphasized the importance of adhering to the mandate and responsibilities of this working group due to time limitation.

### **3. Governance Structure**

- Shantz recommended that members review information from the University of Waterloo Act and the Senate governance review report from 2022. Senate is responsible for academic matters. The focus of this working group is to make the existing structure of Senate work better.
- The University of Waterloo Act states that the President of the University is the Chair of Senate.
- Gauthier-Chalifour clarified that a review of nominations and elections will include Senate standing committees.
- There will be a review of the Senate Executive Committee and Senate Undergraduate Council, which will be conducted in parallel with the work done for this working group in 2025/26.

### **4. Senate Effectiveness Survey Data**

- Members reviewed the Senate Effectiveness Survey results. There were roundtable discussions about existing issues of Senate, ways Senate is functioning effectively, and where it falls short.
- Members were interested in reviewing the composition of the Senate committees, rules of order, and Senate meeting space and time (i.e., smaller meeting space and earlier start time).
- Mikhail noted that starting the Senate meetings earlier will be a problem for student senators who may have to skip classes to attend the Senate meetings. Pawelko emphasized the importance of reading the materials prior to each meeting and engaging with student groups.
- The consent agenda was identified as a positive addition that helped streamline Senate meetings.
- Members discussed how Senate can be a good forum for debate, especially on academic and institutional issues, but it's not ideal for every kind of debate. A better structure is needed to promote participation among Senators.
- Consultation with each Senator will enhance trust and allow everyone a chance to provide their feedback. Exit surveys should be conducted for those who have completed their term on Senate.
- Members are interested in hearing the perspective from the Secretariat staff about Senate.
- At the conclusion of this working group, success will look like: collegial governance; psychological safety; good engagement and communication; good understanding of what senate can do and should do; ensuring diverse voice are heard; and a consensus on a framework for Senate.

- ***Key discussion points - survey data:***
  - o Senators' role and responsibilities
  - o Promoting participation among women and student senators
  - o Time allocated for speaking and discussion

## 5. Next Steps

- Members to review information from the University of Waterloo Act and the Senate governance review report from 2022.
- Members to send any feedback about the Senate Engagement Working Group to the Secretariat.
- The next Senate Engagement Working Group meeting is scheduled on December 11 from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. in NH 3318.