

University of Waterloo
SENATE UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL
Minutes of the February 4, 2026 Meeting

Present: Katherine Acheson, Faisal Al-Faisal, Veronica Austen, Makenzie Campbell, Benoit Charbonneau, Victoria Chu, Laura Deakin, David DeVidi [Chair], Tanraj Dulai, Leanne Ferries, Jason Grove, Tony Ly [Secretary], Carol Ann MacGregor, Sean Meehan, Damian Mikhail, Samantha Pater, Cynthia Richard, Sharon Roberts, Helen Shilomboleni, Robert Stark, Steven Singh, Ian VanderBurgh, Johanna Wandel, William Wong, Richard Wikkerink

Resources/Guests: Nasser Abukhdeir, Melissa Benjamin, Angela Christelis, Jennifer Coghlin, Ashley Day, Samantha Harley, Emily Hudson, Danielle Jeanneault, Carrie MacKinnon Molson, Nadia Singh, Rebecca Wickens

Regrets: Tom Duever, Vivek Goel, Joshua Stainton

Organization of Meeting: David DeVidi took the chair and Tony Ly acted as secretary. The secretary advised that quorum was present.

1. Governance Resources

This item was provided for information only.

2. Approval of the Agenda

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

The Secretariat received a request from a council member to remove the DATSC 101 motion from item 3.3.8 and item 3.4 from the consent agenda.

2.1. Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2.2. Approval of the Agenda and Consent Items

Council approved the agenda as amended.

2.3. Business Arising from the Minutes

The Chair advised that the Senate Alternative Credentials Committee (SACC) proposal will be presented to SEC and Senate. Feedback provided from the Senate Graduate Council (SGC) and Senate Undergraduate Council (SUC) will be incorporated in the revised SACC proposal. Ian VanderBurgh will be Acting Chair for item 9, Senate Academic Innovation Committee (SAIC).

3. Consent Agenda

Council approved items 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5 on behalf of Senate and received for information item 3.4.

3.1. Minutes of December 9, 2025 Meeting

Council approved the minutes of the meeting as distributed.

3.2. Awards and Scholarships

Council received for information and approved all new awards and scholarships.

3.3 Curricular Submissions

Council received for information item 3.3.1 and approved items 3.3.2 – 3.3.12 on behalf of Senate.

3.4. Renewal of Agreement with Beijing Jiaotong University

Renewal of agreements are provided to Senate Undergraduate Council for information only.

3.5. New Agreement with Sault College

New agreements are only brought forward for approval should they contain impacts to curriculum or other major/minor modifications that would otherwise be under the mandate of SUC.

4. Regular Agenda

5. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed new members to the Senate Undergraduate Council. The Chair advised that there are many items on the agenda and asked members to keep their comments brief.

6. Curricular Submissions

6.1. Report from the SUC Curriculum Subcommittee

Council received a report from the SUC Curriculum Subcommittee for information only.

6.2. Faculty of Arts

Acheson provided an overview of the program changes from the departments and the regulation changes from the Faculty of Arts.

A motion was heard to recommend to SUC that Senate approve the major plan modifications for the Faculty of Arts School of Accounting and Finance, Department of Communication Arts, Department of Economics, Renison University College programs, and regulation changes, effective September 1, 2026, as presented. Acheson and Charbonneau. Carried.

6.3 – 6.5. Faculty of Engineering

Grove introduced the proposed major modifications from the Faculty of Engineering. Grove also presented information for the changes from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the Department of Systems Design Engineering. Additional consultation with the Faculty of Health, Faculty of Science, and Faculty of Mathematics was completed. The name for the Sports Engineering specialization was adjusted to be Biomechanical and Rehabilitation Engineering. The regulation changes include updated details to clarify outdated descriptions. Grove will work with the Office of the Registrar to address any further editorial changes.

A motion was heard to recommend to SUC that Senate approve the major plan modifications for the Faculty of Engineering Biomedical Imaging Technologies Specialization, Diploma in Business and Entrepreneurship programs, and regulation changes, effective September 1, 2026, as presented. Grove and Wikkerink. Carried.

A motion was heard to recommend that SUC approve the submitted new courses for the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, effective September 1, 2026, as presented. Grove and Wikkerink. Carried.

A motion was heard to recommend that SUC approve the submitted retired courses, new courses, course changes, and minor plan modifications for the Department of Systems Design Engineering, effective September 1, 2026, as presented. Grove and Wikkerink. Carried.

6.6. Faculty of Environment

Wandel provided a presentation about the changes for the specializations and regulations from the Faculty of Environment. A new Certificate in Geographic Information Systems was created.

A motion was heard to recommend to SUC that Senate approve the major plan modifications for the Faculty of Environment Geographic Information Systems Certificate, Environment, Society and Well-Being Specialization, Remote Sensing Specialization programs, and regulation changes, effective September 1, 2026, as presented. Wandel and Ferries. Carried.

6.7. Faculty of Mathematics

Charbonneau described the major modifications for the Data Science program and the changes for DATSC 101 that was removed from the consent agenda. All students will have access to DATSC 101. The motion for DATSC 101 is amended: the academic unit was changed to the Dean of Mathematics Office.

A motion was heard to recommend to SUC that Senate approve the major plan modifications for the Faculty of Mathematics Data Science program, effective September 1, 2026, as presented. Charbonneau and Deakin. Carried.

A motion was heard to recommend that SUC approve the changes for the DATSC 101 – Introduction to Data Science, effective September 1, 2026, as amended. Charbonneau and Deakin. Carried.

6.8. Faculty of Science

Deakin presented the major modifications from the Faculty of Science. The changes for the Advanced Physics Option will allow students to get a credential recognizing their accomplishments. The Aviation Minor was developed in consultation with the Faculty of Environment and will provide students with a different pathway. The regulation changes provided clarification about the process for students transferring out of the Bachelor of Medical Sciences program.

A motion was heard to recommend to SUC that Senate approve the major plan modifications for the Faculty of Science Advanced Physics Option, Aviation Minor, and regulation changes, effective September 1, 2026, as presented. Deakin and Ferries. Carried.

6.9. Office of the Registrar

VanderBurgh presented a summary of the new regulations and changes from the Office of the Registrar.

A motion was heard to recommend to SUC that Senate approve the Office of the Registrar new regulation and regulation changes, effective September 1, 2026, as presented. VanderBurgh and Acheson. Carried.

7. Faculty of Environment – Joint Education Institutes

The Chair noted that this item is being provided for discussion and consultation only. Wickens presented an overview of the new joint education model with international institutions that differ from traditional agreements. The program will be delivered at the partnered institution. Students would be admitted to the University of Waterloo and a partner institution in China. This model has been implemented in the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. The policy framework, business terms, and operational considerations are currently being reviewed. Discussion from council members focused on the process for curriculum changes, intellectual property, governance oversight, risk management, and strategic priorities. Wickens will provide council members with a list of institutions with similar agreements. Council members were invited to send Wickens their questions and feedback.

8. Policy 70 Consultation

Singh provided a presentation about changes to Policy 70. Initial work to revise Policy 70 began in 2017. Council members raised questions about membership, decision-making authority, and specific language used in sections 6 and 8. Members were invited to send additional comments to Singh.

9. Senate Academic Innovation Committee

The Acting Chair, Ian VanderBurgh, noted he would be chairing this portion of the meeting. Abukhdeir presented a proposal for the Senate Academic Innovation Committee (SAIC). This proposal was inspired by the work of the Academic Innovation Working Group (AIWG) and is intended to provide a long-term governance structure for academic innovation at the University of Waterloo. The proposed committee would focus on reviewing and advising on academic innovation initiatives, alternative credentials, and would operate with oversight from the Senate Undergraduate Council (SUC) and Senate Graduate Council (SGC). Abukhdeir emphasized that SAIC would not

develop initiatives, but would receive proposals for information, address governance gaps, and ensure initiatives are appropriately reviewed through Senate processes.

Discussion followed and council members raised the following concerns: 1) unclear definition and scope of academic innovation; 2) duplication of work — similar work is already completed at the Faculty level, Teaching Innovation Incubator, and existing governing bodies such as SUC and SGC; 3) overlapping activities with current curriculum development and academic program approval processes; 4) the approval process of alternative credentials; 5) the resource and funding implications; 6) need clearer definitions within the Terms of Reference; and 7) to explicitly distinguish the role of SAIC from existing governance processes.

10. Senate Undergraduate Council Mandate Review

The Chair provided an introduction for the Senate Undergraduate Council mandate review. Ly highlighted findings from an environmental scan of the U15. Key discussion points included: amendments to Senate Bylaw 2, opportunities for enhancing curriculum processes, improving communication to campus stakeholders, subcommittee membership, and student involvement. Members were invited to submit additional feedback to the Secretariat.

11. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

The Chair invited Charbonneau to speak about item 3.4, Renewal of Agreement with Beijing Jiaotong University. Charbonneau requested additional information about the agreement. Deakin mentioned that this is a renewal with a partnered institution in China. Concerns were raised if this agreement is not renewed because students have already been admitted to the program. Members discussed whether renewal of agreements should be approved at the Senate Undergraduate Council.

The Secretariat is currently working with internal stakeholders to provide clear and transparent guidelines on how new and revised agreements should be listed on the Senate Undergraduate Council, Senate Graduate Council, and Senate agendas. The vote for the last renewal will be noted for the record.

A motion was heard to recommend that SUC approve the Renewal of Agreement with Beijing Jiaotong University, as presented. Deakin and Mikhail. Carried. There were 10 noted abstentions and 1 voted to oppose the motion.

12. Other Business

No other items of business were identified.

13. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of the Senate Undergraduate Council will be held on April 7, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.