Senate

Open & Confidential Session

March 2, 2026

3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Needles Hall

NH 3407

Waterloo Campus

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UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO | Senate

2026 03 02 Senate Meeting Book

AGENDA

1. Governance Resources

    1.1. Link to Governance Resources

2. OPEN SESSION

Time	Item	Type	Page
3:30 p.m.	3. Territorial Acknowledgement [Dean]	Information	
3:35 p.m.	4. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes [Goel]		
	4.1 Conflict of Interest	Information	4
	4.3 Minutes of the January 26, 2026 Meeting	Decision	5
	4.2 Approval of the Agenda and Consent Items	Decision	
	4.4 Business Arising from the Minutes	Information	
3:40 p.m.	5. Report of the President [Goel]		
	5.1 General Update	Information	11
3:55 p.m.	6. Report of the Senate Executive Committee [Goel]		
	6.1 Academic Freedom of Academic Administrators	Information	12
	6.2 Senate Alternative Credentials Committee Proposal	Decision	18
4:15 p.m.	7. Report of the Senate Graduate Council [Wan]		
	7.1 Faculty of Arts	Decision	24
	7.2 Faculty of Environment	Decision	27
	7.3 Office of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs	Decision	30
4:25 p.m.	8. Report of the Senate Undergraduate Council [DeVidi]		
	8.1 Faculty of Arts	Decision	34
	8.2 Faculty of Engineering	Decision	40
	8.3 Faculty of Environment	Decision	47
	8.4 Faculty of Mathematics	Decision	51
	8.5 Faculty of Science	Decision	55
	8.6 Office of the Registrar	Decision	60
4:45 p.m.	9. Report of the Senate Research and Innovation Council [Dean]		
	9.1 Report of the Senate Research and Innovation Council	Information	69
4:50 p.m.	10. Report of the Ombudsperson [Barrett]		
	10.1 Annual Report of the Ombudsperson	Information	73
5:05 p.m.	11. Report of the Associations [Porreca, Sadek, Mikhail]		
	11.1 Annual Report of the Associations (FAUW, GSA, WUSA)	Information	99
	12. Consent Agenda		
	12.1 Senate Work Plan 2025-26	Information	100
	12.2 2026-2027 Senate Election Results	Information	101
	12.3 Report of the Senate AQUE Committee	Information	104
	12.4 Report of the Senate Executive Committee	Information	112

5:30 p.m.   13. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

14. Other Business (Open Session)

15. CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

5:35 p.m.   16. Report of the Honorary Degrees Committee [Goel]

17. Confidential Consent Agenda

18. Other Business (Confidential Session)

19. Adjournment
The next meeting of Senate will take place on April 6, 2026 from 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. in NH 3407.

To:	Senate
From:	Gen Gauthier-Chalifour University Secretary
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**4. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes**

4.1 Conflict of Interest

Senators are invited to declare any conflicts related to the open session agenda at this time. Should a conflict of interest arise during discussion, senators are asked to declare a conflict of interest as it arises.

The Secretariat can provide guidance regarding potential conflicts of interest in advance of or during the Senate meeting.

4.2 Approval of the Agenda and Consent Items

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented/amended, and to approve or receive for information the items on the consent agenda, listed as items 12.1-12.8 of the Senate agenda.

Senators wishing to have an item removed from consent to the regular agenda are asked to contact the University Secretary in advance of the meeting. Senators may also request to have items moved to the regular agenda immediately prior to the approval of the agenda. Items removed from the consent agenda will be considered under item 13.

4.3 Minutes of the January 26, 2026 Meeting

Motion: To approve the open and confidential minutes of the January 26, 2026 meeting, as distributed.

Documentation Provided:
- Open Minutes of the January 26, 2026 meeting (item 4.3)
- Confidential Minutes of the January 26, 2026 meeting (item 17.1)

4.4 Business Arising from the Minutes

There is no business arising from the minutes.

University of Waterloo
SENATE
Minutes of the January 26, 2026 Meeting

Present: John Abraham, Nasser Abukhdeir, Yasmeen Almomani, Veronica Austen, Michael Barnett-Cowan, Aubrey Basdeo, Jordan Bauman, Andrew Chang, Helen Chen, David Clausi, Martin Cooke, Cecilia Cotton, Hans De Sterck, Laura Deakin, Charmaine Dean, David DeVidi, Michael Drescher, Thomas Duever, Andrea Edginton, Mark Ferro, Paul Fieguth, Teresa Fortney, Bruce Frayne, Gen Gauthier-Chalifour (Secretary), Vivek Goel (Chair), Rob Gorbet, Vikas Gupta, Peter Hall, Kevin Hare, Chris Houser, Nadine Ibrahim, Marc Jerry, Misha Khan, Scott Kline, Sachin Kotecha, Christiane Lemieux, John Lewis, Ondrej Lhotak, Christopher Lim, Jun Liu, Lili Liu, Brad Lushman, Shana MacDonald, Carol Ann MacGregor, Blake Madill, Pendar Mahmoudi, Heather Mair, Colleen Maxwell, Peter Meehan, Sushanta Mitra, Carter Neal, Christopher Nielsen, James Nugent, Alex Pawelko, Nicholas Pellegrino, David Porreca, Neil Randall, Jacinda Reitsma, Jessica Rindlisbacher, Sharon Roberts, Meray Sadek, Beth Sandore Namachchivaya, Rida Sayed, Mark Seasons, Marcus Shantz, James Skidmore, Karen Sunabacka, Su-Yin Tan, Christopher Taylor, Alexie Tcheuyap, Sharon Tucker, Ian VanderBurgh, Diana Vangelisti, Bojana Videkanic, Justin Wan, Johanna Wandel, Jeffrey Wilson, Stan Woo, Clarence Woudsma, En-Hui Yang

Regrets: Laith Alkhawaldeh, Raouf Boutaba, Murray Gamble, Acey Kaspar, Achim Kempf, Jochen Koenemann, Damian Mikhail, Richard Myers, Arya Razmjoo, Jagdeep Singh Bachher, Katie Traynor, Mary Wells

Guests/Resources: Amy Bender, Heather Bolton, Benoit Charbonneau, Tanya Daniels, Ashley Day, Nenone Donaldson, Melanie Figueiredo, Jennifer Gillies, Diana Goncalves, Sarah Hadley, Tony Ly, Nick Manning, Christine McWebb, Kirsten Muller, Mike Pereira, Mat Thiessen, Caitlin Vaux, Tim Weber-Kraljevski, Katy Wong-Francq

Organization of Meeting: Vivek Goel took the chair and Gen Gauthier-Chalifour acted as secretary. The secretary advised that a quorum was present. The meeting took place fully online due to a weather-related closure of the campus.

1. Governance Resources
This item was provided for information only.

2. OPEN SESSION
The Chair welcomed two new ex-officio members of Senate, Ian VanderBurgh, Interim University Registrar, and John Lewis, Interim Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Relations. A new Registrar was recently announced, Ray Darling, who will begin on March 30, 2026.

The Chair reminded Senators that the current Senate elections are underway. Faculty and graduate student senator nominations will close on January 28, 2026. Voting will begin on February 3 and will close February 10. Any questions can be sent directly to the Secretariat.

The Chair thanked those who were able to attend the January 21, 2026
Operating Budget Development Education Session. A second joint session with the Board of Governors is planned for March 24th, where the 26/27 Operating Budget will be previewed.

3. Territorial Acknowledgement
The territorial acknowledgement was given by Charmaine Dean, Vice-President, Research & International.

4. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

4.1 Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4.2 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 11.1-11.7 of the Senate agenda. Porreca and Skidmore. Carried.

4.3 Minutes of the November 24, 2025 Meeting

Minor editorial amendments were received by the Secretariat. Additional comments from a Senator related to the minutes will be addressed under business arising.

A motion was heard to approve the open and confidential minutes of the November 24, 2025 meeting, as amended. Jerry and De Sterck. Carried.

4.4 Business Arising from the Minutes

The Chair noted that the Guidelines for Collective Bodies have been posted online since the last Senate meeting. The Secretariat has received additional comments from Faculty of Mathematics Senator, Hans De Sterck, related to this item including addition of footnotes which were not included in the version initially posted, and the addition of the vote count to the November 24, 2025 Senate meeting minutes, which will be amended.

With respect to the Statement and Procedures on Institutional Partnerships, the Chair affirmed that the ad hoc working group contemplated in the procedures will be responsible for determining whether a partnership should be reviewed and also carry out the review (to pause, end, or continue the partnership).

5. Report of the President

5.1 General Update

The President and Chair of Senate, Vivek Goel, noted the significant global unrest, and that many community members are affected by these events. Access to support is available for members of our community and the Registrar's Office is working closely with impacted current and prospective students.

Last week there was an event to launch Global Futures, featuring presentations from several first-round funded initiatives. Through shared resources and services coordinated by the Global Futures Office, we are streamlining efforts while seeding internal and external collaborations designed to unlock new opportunities for philanthropy, corporate partnerships, and large-scale grants.

Members were reminded of the President's Forum taking place tomorrow, January 27th where updates on our three-year plan to return to a balanced operating budget, benchmarking data informing some of our changes, progress on our functional reviews and a look ahead to what we can expect for this year, will be discussed.

On December 9, 2025, the federal government launched the Canada Impact + Research Chairs program to attract world-leading international researchers addressing national and global challenges. A complementary Canada Impact + Emerging Leaders competition was also launched to support early-career researchers in Canada's strategic priority areas. While most federal departments are facing a 15% expense reduction, granting councils and key research agencies were exempt, reinforcing the government's view of research as critical to national security and sovereignty.

In December, the Government of Ontario allocated Provincial Attestation Letters (PALs) for undergraduate international students. With master's and PhD students exempt from reductions, Waterloo's overall PAL allocation for undergraduate students remains similar to

last year. The need to improve PAL utilization was noted, following approximately 100 PALs issued to students who did not enroll last year. A data review is underway, and UWaterloo remains committed to using PALs efficiently.

Members may have noticed recent significant attention in the media to funding advocacy with many news publications calling for the tuition freeze to end. COU's pre-budget submission strategy hopes to draw greater public attention to the financial challenges faced by universities and the critical role we play in society and the economy and calling for increased base operating funding. The most important advocacy will come from our community partners, and people outside the sector vocalizing to the government why our work is so important.

A member inquired about potential projects, partnerships or research related to defense or weapons development. Goel responded that we are not restricting the areas in which faculty choose to work in. Broader scale discussions on dual use technologies are happening with various government agencies. Many faculty members participate in the Innovation for Defence Excellence and Security (IDEaS) Program through the Government of Canada. Goel noted that the Senate Research and Innovation Council (SRIC) would be an avenue for these discussions in the future. Dean, as Chair of SRIC, will report to a future Senate on considerations regarding this area.

6. Report of the Senate Planning and Finance Committee
6.1 2025-26 Mid-Year Budget Update
Tom Duever, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, spoke to the impacts from grant and tuition constraints due to the lack of inflation increases in grant funding, and the freeze on domestic tuition fees. Since 2019, a number of efficiency and deficit mitigation responses have been implemented. The internal operating budget reductions respond to a series of environmental factors and pressures such as the effects of Bill 124 being overturned, PAL constraints, multi-year tuition freezes, and budget erosion due to inflation.

Duever spoke to the operating budget as of November 2025 and the multi-year plan to return to a balanced budget. It was noted that changes to the 25/26 operating budget between April and November 2025 were due to a corridor re-alignment (STEM Funding) and an increase in domestic undergraduate intake, partially offset by lower international student numbers.

Jacinda Reitsma, Vice-President, Administration and Finance, spoke to the status of ongoing employee group agreements, including the timing and process for negotiations across each employee group. Reitsma noted that salary and benefits represent a significant portion of the operating budget and remain a key consideration in planning. The expense drivers that are currently being reviewed are the cost of benefits changes, annual salary increases and headcount changes, and strategic areas of new budget investment.

There were no questions.

6.2 Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions and Enrolment Update
Ian VanderBurgh, Associate Vice-President, Strategic Enrolment Management and Interim University Registrar, provided a high-level overview of the materials as presented in the meeting package. The overview included a summary of the enrolment funnel, differences in admissions for graduate and undergraduate programs, geopolitical challenges for international students, and the outlook for 2026/2027.

There were no questions.

6.3 Campus Plan

Goel provided an overview of the governance pathway to date for the Campus Plan, including a presentation at Senate in October 2025 and the Senate Planning and Finance Committee who on January 22, 2026, recommended its endorsement to Senate. The Campus Plan will be presented to the Board of Governors on February 3, 2026, for final approval in principle. It was noted that the motion before Senate is specific to endorsement in principle of the vision, principles and design framework of the Campus Plan.

Reitsma noted that the plan and framework will be used for key decision making and planning. Reitsma, in response to questions, clarified that the plan is not speculative, but dependent on funding, planning and growth models and that there is uncertainty on timing and implementation as it is highly reliant on funding opportunities.

Members discussed the details of the plan, such as the use of flex buildings and plans for student housing, the relationship between the operating budget and the capital plan, and the involvement of plant operations during consultations.

A motion was heard that Senate endorse in principle the University of Waterloo Campus Plan's vision, principles and design frameworks. Vangelisti and Sunabacka. Carried.

7. Report of the Senate Executive Committee
7.1 Appointment of Chancellor Review Committee

Goel spoke to the long-standing practice that the Senate Executive Committee traditionally serves as the Chancellor Nominating/Review Committee. Current Chancellor Jagdeep Singh Bachher's first term concludes on June 30, 2027 and he is eligible to serve a second term. The motion is being brought forward to Senate now so the review may take place with ample time to reappoint Bachher, should the committee nominate him for a second term.

A motion was heard that Senate appoint the Senate Executive Committee to serve as the Chancellor Review Committee. Gupta and Woo. Carried.

7.2 Senate Engagement Working Group Update

Laura Deakin, Co-Chair of the Senate Engagement Working Group, and Faculty of Science Senator, provided an overview of the mandate and discussions of the working group during its first three meetings. The working group has reviewed an environmental scan of comparator Senate's in the U15, past Senate effectiveness survey results, and is consulting with stakeholders in key areas, including the Office of Indigenous Relations, and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism (EDI-R).

Marcus Shantz, Co-Chair of the Senate Engagement Working Group, and President of Conrad Grebel University College, spoke to the areas of focus of the working group including roles and responsibilities, and rules of order. Initial discussions have indicated that Senate would benefit from having these types of guidelines, without hindering participation.

Members discussed the ex-officio membership on Senate, as described in the University Act, who are appointed under Class A policies. In response to a query regarding ex officio members it was noted that all academic administrator appointees maintain the protection of academic freedom as tenured faculty members. A member requested written follow-up and confirmation of such on this matter.

The co-chairs acknowledged that the timeline for the working group is aspirational and it may not be able to address everything, but the goal is to accomplish as much as possible by June and provide a roadmap for any longer-term recommendations.

8. Report of the Senate Graduate Council
8.1 Faculty of Engineering
Justin Wan, Chair of the Senate Graduate Council, spoke to the materials provided in the meeting package. The major modifications include adding three new graduate specializations in Control and Autonomy, Sustainable Energy and Materials, and Machine Learning.

A motion was heard that Senate approve the major modifications to the Master of Engineering (MEng) in Chemical Engineering and the Master of Engineering (MEng) in Electrical and Computer Engineering programs, effective May 1, 2026, as presented. Wan and Neilson. Carried.

8.2 Faculty of Health
Wan spoke to the materials provided in the meeting package. The major modification includes changing the name of the coursework study option from Master of Arts (MA) in Recreation and Leisure Studies to Master of Arts (MA) in Sport and Recreation Leadership.

A motion was heard that Senate approve the major modifications to the Master of Arts (MA) in Recreation and Leisure Studies program, effective May 1, 2026, as presented. Wan and Liu. Carried.

9. Report from the Faculties
9.1 Faculty of Mathematics Constitution Amendments
Cecilia Cotton, Associate Professor and Faculty of Mathematics Senator, presented the Faculty of Mathematics Constitution Amendments as presented in the meeting materials and recently passed at the Mathematics Faculty Council on January 8, 2026. The amendments aim to bring the constitution into alignment with changes to policy 76 and 77, and update committee memberships to reflect current roles and tiles.

Members discussed the raising of quorum from 25 to 35 and the reduction of graduate student members in response to the creation of the Math Graduate Student Association. It was noted that the total number of graduate student representatives was unchanged.

A motion was heard that Senate approve the amended Constitution for the Faculty of Mathematics at the University of Waterloo, as presented. Cotton and Maxwell. Carried.

10. Report from the Senate Research and Innovation Council
10.1 Annual Report of the Vice-President Research and International
In the interest of time, Dean did not provide a fulsome presentation. Dean thanked those that participated in recent engagement sessions for their time and questions. The planned presentation material would be circulated to Senators in the coming weeks.

11. Consent Agenda
The following items were approved / received for information as part of the consent agenda motion for approval under item 4.2.

11.1. Senate Work Plan 2025-26
11.2. Committee Appointments – Teaching Awards
11.3. Report of the Senate AQUE Committee
11.4. Report of the Senate Executive Committee
11.5. Report of the Senate Graduate Council
11.6. Report of the Senate Undergraduate Council
11.7. Report of the Vice President, Academic and Provost

12. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda
There were no items removed from the consent agenda.

13. Other Business
With no other business identified for the open session, Senate proceeded into the confidential session.

January 30, 2025

Ashley Day
Associate University Secretary

![University of Waterloo Senate logo]

For Information   **Open Session**

To: Senate

From: Vivek Goel
                     President and Vice-Chancellor

Date of Meeting: March 2, 2026

Agenda Item: **5.1 General Update**

Summary

Dr. Vivek Goel, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of Senate, will provide an update on matters of interest to Senate.

For Information   **Open Session**

To:	Senate
From:	Senate Executive Committee
Presenter:	Vivek Goel, President and Vice-Chancellor Senate Executive Committee Chair
Agenda Item:	**6. Academic Freedom of Academic Administrators**

Summary

At the February 17, 2026 meeting of the Senate Executive Committee (SEC), two memos were received for information.

A memo from the Chair, 6.1.1 Academic Freedom of Academic Administrators, is interpretive and was drafted in response to a question raised by a senator at the January 26, 2026 Senate meeting, concerning whether academic freedom applies to academic administrators who hold faculty appointments but are not members of the Faculty Association (FAUW).

Subsequently, a memorandum was submitted to the SEC through the Secretariat on February 6, 2026 by Senator Nasser Mohieddin Abukhdeir, 6.1.2 Academic Freedom of Faculty Members not Subject to the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA).

The SEC agreed both documents be provided to Senate for information.

Documentation provided:

- 6.1.1 Academic Freedom of Academic Administrators
- 6.1.2 Academic Freedom of Faculty Members not Subject to the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA)

For Information   **Open Session**

To:	Senate
From:	Vivek Goel President and Vice Chancellor Senate Executive Committee Chair
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**6.1.1 Academic Freedom of Academic Administrators**

Summary and Purpose

Academic freedom results from faculty status and tenure/permanence, not from membership in FAUW. Accordingly, all tenured or permanent faculty members, including those serving in academic administrative roles and those who are not Members of the faculty association, enjoy the protections and bear the responsibilities of academic freedom when acting in their academic capacity.[1]

This interpretation is grounded in University policy, institutional practice, widely accepted Canadian norms including guidance from the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), and case law.

Policy Framework

Article 3 of the *University of Waterloo Act, 1972* (the Act) states that "The objects of the University are the pursuit of learning through scholarship, teaching and research within a spirit of free enquiry and expression."

University of Waterloo Policy 77 – Tenure and Promotion of Faculty Members, affirms the academic freedom is provided and supported through tenure and permanence:

> *"Tenure and Permanence are meant to provide institutional support for academic freedom (see the Article on Academic Freedom in the Memorandum of Agreement between the University and the Faculty Association). The pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and the attainment of understanding through scholarship and teaching, which are essential functions of a university, occur best in an atmosphere in which free inquiry and discussion are fostered. Free inquiry and dissemination of knowledge may at times bring a faculty member into conflict with society, governments or the University itself. Tenure and permanence provide security of employment against pressures that might arise from such conflicts, in the belief that the University and society at large benefit*

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[1] It is noted that the Memorandum of Agreement between the University and FAUW distinguishes between "Members" (faculty who have opted to join FAUW) and "members" (faculty members represented by FAUW, a group that comprises all FAUW members and also includes those who have not opted to join FAUW but who are represented by it with respect to their terms and conditions of employment. The phrase "including those who are not Members of FAUW" is included to clarify that all members of FAUW have academic freedom and not just "Members" of FAUW.

from honest judgments and independent criticisms rendered by scholars who are free from fear of possible consequences that might arise from giving offense to powerful individuals or groups.

Tenure and Permanence provide stability for both individual faculty members and the University. Tenure and Permanence provide a faculty member with an environment conducive to long-term scholarly work and development as an educator. The University, for its part, is assured of a continuing group of teachers and scholars committed to the University, around which it can plan and from whom it can draw its academic leadership."

Notwithstanding the reference to the memorandum of agreement between the University and the Faculty Association, the policy clearly lays out what is meant by academic freedom. It is widely accepted in Canadian academic scholarship and legal perspectives that while the scope of academic freedom may be articulated in collective or framework/faculty agreements and written policies, it is the policy of tenure/permanence that preserves academic freedom.[2]

Policy 77 does not condition academic freedom on membership in the faculty association, or the absence of administrative responsibilities. The policy operates within the University's broader framework of faculty appointments, including provisions related to tenure and permanence, which establish the institutional conditions that support academic freedom.

Tenure and permanence provide security of appointment for eligible faculty members, reinforcing the ability to exercise academic freedom related to scholarly and teaching activities without fear of institutional reprisal. Faculty members who hold tenure or permanent status do not lose that status, or the associated protections and responsibilities of academic freedom, by virtue of assuming academic administrative duties.

The Canadian Supreme Court and Ontario Court of Appeal have observed that academic freedom is provided through tenure as follows:

The policy of tenure in university faculties is fundamental to the preservation of academic freedom. It involves a vigorous assessment by one's peers of academic performance after a probationary period of up to five years. Once tenure is granted, it provides a truly free and innovative learning and research environment. Faculty members can take unpopular positions without fear of loss of employment. It provides stability of employment, because once an academic is found worthy of tenure by his or her peers, he or she can be assured of keeping that position until death, or the normal age of retirement, unless there is termination for cause following a properly conducted hearing before one's peers.[3]

Academic Administrators with Faculty Appointments

Academic administrators (including chairs, directors, deans, and other academic leaders) who hold faculty appointments remain faculty members. As such:

- They retain academic freedom when engaged in teaching, research, scholarship, and academic service.

- They are simultaneously subject to additional obligations of office when acting in an administrative capacity, including duties of institutional stewardship, procedural fairness, and policy compliance.

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[2] Shanahan, Nilson, Broshko, "Handbook of Canadian Higher Education Law", 173
[3] *McKinney v. Univeristy of Guelph* (1986), aff'd [1990] 3 SCR 229

This dual role does not negate academic freedom; rather, it requires careful distinction between exercising academic freedom and administrative decision-making.

This understanding is consistent with the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) Policy Statement on Academic Freedom For Academic Administrators, which affirms that academic administrators do not surrender academic freedom upon assuming administrative roles, while acknowledging that the exercise of that freedom may be contextually constrained when acting as institutional decision-makers. While not bound by the CAUT policy statement, institutional practice at the University of Waterloo supports the principles underlying the policy statement. The following excerpts are of note:

> "1. All post-secondary institutions' administrators who continue as members of the academic staff of their institutions while fulfilling administrative roles enjoy the full protection of academic freedom in the fulfillment of their academic duties as described in CAUT's "Policy Statement on Academic Freedom" and related CAUT policies. This protection extends to all academic administrative staff, irrespective of rank, up to and including the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of post-secondary institutions. It extends to all academic staff excluded from the academic staff bargaining unit by virtue of administrative office. [...]
>
> 5. Academic staff who are members of their institution's governing body shall retain their academic freedom while serving in that capacity. [...]
>
> 6. Tenure constitutes a primary procedural safeguard of academic freedom. It is essential that new academic administrators know whether their administrative appointments incorporate continuing tenure in an academic department that would apply should they lose their administrative appointments for any reason." [4]

Taken together, the above affirm that membership in a faculty association is not determinative of academic freedom under University policy. Academic freedom arises from faculty status, the nature of academic work, and the University's commitment to scholarly independence.

Accordingly, faculty members who are excluded from faculty association membership by virtue of their administrative roles, or who may elect not to join the faculty association, nonetheless retain academic freedom protections under Policy 77.

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[4] https://www.caut.ca/policy-statements/academic-freedom-for-academic-administrators/ (February 2026)

For Information   Open Session

To:	Senate Executive Committee
From:	Nasser Mohieddin Abukhdeir Faculty Senator
Date of Meeting:	February 17, 2026
Agenda Item:	6.1.2 **Academic Freedom of Faculty Members not Subject to the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA)**

Summary

In Ontario, academic freedom is legally recognized as an important value but not an explicit right[1]. Instead, academic freedom is a *negotiated right* for university faculty and staff, differing for each university and formalized through collective agreements. Consequently, it is litigated before labor arbitrators as a negotiated or bargained labor law right[1].

During the January 26, 2026 Senate session an issue was raised by a senator regarding voting status of the majority of Ex-Officio (unelected) members of Senate who were claimed to lack academic freedom[2], in that they are not subject to or a party to the MoA. The Senate Chair and Associate Vice-President Academic (AVPA) made counter-claims that these members of Senate have academic freedom, regardless of being subject to the MoA, based on the following:

1) Employment contracts including explicit mention of academic freedom being a condition of employment.

2) The existence language within Policy 77[3] granting all faculty academic freedom, as defined in the MoA.

The employment contract template[4] for faculty members not subject to the MoA that are available from the Associate Vice-President (Faculty and Academic Life) website include no mention of academic freedom, in apparent *contradiction* of the Senate Chair's claim.

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[1]Taken from "Academic Freedom and the Law in Canada: Are Negotiated Labour Rights the Path Forward?" by Prof. Michael Lynk, presented to the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations in March 2025

[2]Defined in Article 6 of the *Memorandum of Agreement between the Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo and the University of Waterloo*

[3]https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-77

[4]https://uwaterloo.ca/faculty-academic-life/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/employment-agreement-not-subject-to-moa-july-29-2025-final.docx

The only mention of academic freedom in policy Policy 77 is in Article 1 as follows,

"Tenure and Permanence are meant to provide institutional support for academic freedom (see the Article on Academic Freedom in the Memorandum of Agreement between the University and the Faculty Association)."

which clearly states that tenure and permanence are intended to **support** academic freedom, as defined in the MoA (for faculty subject to the MoA), and does not implicitly or explicitly state that academic freedom is a condition of employment for all faculty members. This is an apparent *contradiction* to AVPA's claim.

Proposal/Justification

Per the MoA, the University recognizes that the provision of academic freedom is particularly vital to those whose approaches to teaching, scholarship, and research result in criticism of and challenge to established, conventional beliefs and practices. Senate is the highest decision-making body within the University, per the University of Waterloo Act[5], and is responsible for all academic and educational matters. Senate also is responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Governors with respect to any matter relative to the operation of the University.

Two of the most senior university administrators have made claims that faculty not subject to the MoA have a negotiated right of academic freedom, but evidence to support these claims has not yet been provided.

Academic freedom of all voting/decision-making members of Senate is of the utmost importance to the operation of the University. The lack of clarity on this issue is contrary to good governance and it is proposed the following corrective actions be taken in the next Senate meeting:

1) A legal opinion from an appropriately qualified legal expert be presented regarding academic freedom of (i) faculty not subject to the MoA and (ii) staff. This opinion should take into account all relevant university policy and agreements, including the MoA.

2) If a negative legal opinion is presented, a motion be put forward by the Provost or delegate to Senate supporting academic freedom for all faculty, regardless of being subject to the MoA, and staff. This would be consistent with Article 6.3 of the MoA which states,

"The academic freedom of any person shall not be infringed upon or abridged in any manner. As academic freedom will wither and die unless the university community as a whole is committed to it, the University and the Association agree to support and defend academic freedom at the University of Waterloo."

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[5]https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/university-waterloo-act#Senate

For Approval   **Open Session**

To:	Senate
From:	Vivek Goel President and Vice Chancellor Chair of the Senate Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**6.2 Senate Alternative Credentials Committee Proposal**

Recommendation/Motion

That Senate approve the creation of a Senate Alternative Credentials Committee, as presented, effective May 1, 2026.

Summary

In 2024, a proposal to establish a Senate Alternative Credentials Committee was presented to Deans' Council, Senate Graduate and Research Council, and Senate Undergraduate Council for initial consultation and discussion. The proposal was subsequently revised to incorporate feedback from all three councils.

In Fall 2025, the revised proposal was presented to the Senate Executive Committee for information, prior to being forwarded to the Senate Graduate Council and Senate Undergraduate Council for final consultation and recommendation to Senate. Following this review, the proposal was further revised to reflect feedback from both councils. Both councils have recommended that the proposal be approved by Senate. Key amendments made in response to feedback include:

- Addition of undergraduate and graduate student members
- Addition of AFIW member
  Addition of alumni member
- Provision to ensure the chairs of the Senate Graduate Council and Undergraduate Council will be responsible to ensure issues of interest are raised with the respective bodies, as appropriate

The proposal is now being brought forward to the Senate for approval on the recommendation of the Senate Executive Committee (February 23, 2026). If approved, the new committee will assume the responsibilities of the existing Alternative Credentials Approval Committee as of May 1, 2026.

History

In response to the recommendations of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, *Connecting Imagination with Impact*, and in particular the objectives and recommendations under the

theme of Developing Talent for a Complex Future, in December 2022 the University established the Credentials Framework Working Group which was tasked with developing a Credentials Framework to address the following objectives articulated in the Plan:

- Promoting quality and innovation in teaching and learning

- Removing barriers to collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and the integration of knowledge

- Increasing the flexibility of curricula

- Facilitating the development of academic programs that stimulate reflective, deep learning and developing competencies to address global challenges and opportunities

- Developing more flexible graduate-level academic programming

- Establishing a lifelong learning centre to enable and encourage our alumni and other professionals to reskill in a society that increasingly values lifelong learning

- Leveraging and optimizing government, industry and community partnerships that create lifelong learning opportunities

Co-chaired by the Associate Vice-President, Academic (AVPA) and the Registrar, and comprising faculty representatives and professional staff with relevant expertise, the working group consulted widely on campus with faculty, students and staff in 2023 and carried out substantial research. The working group synthesized its findings into a series of recommendations, which were then shared with experts on campus who helped identify any potential unintended consequences of the recommendations as drafted. The recommendations were then finalized in a Credentials Framework Report shared with the senior academic leadership of the University in Spring 2024 and as shared with Senate Undegraduate and Graduate and Research Committees shortly thereafter.

A key recommendation of the Credentials Framework Report is the creation of a new Senate committee to provide oversight and approvals for alternative (i.e., non-credit) credentials, which the working group proposes could be called the *Senate Alternative Credentials Committee (SACC).* The intention is to replace the existing Alternative Credentials Approval Committee (ACAC), which runs out of the AVPA Office. The new committee will create a closer and more formalized link between Senate and the alternative credential approval process, increasing substantially the Senate's academic involvement in, and oversight of, alternative credentials while preserving the virtues of the existing ACAC framework. The draft proposal of the committee's composition and responsibilities are included below.

Proposal/Rationale

In 2020-21, the University established WatSPEED as an ancillary unit to accelerate the development of non-credit academic programming aimed at mid-career professionals. A small working group led by the AVPA and including the AVP Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (GSPA), and advised by the previous AVPA, was tasked with considering governance questions for this programming. It quickly became clear that two considerations needed to be balanced:

i.   The University community wanted assurance that our offerings would have academic credibility and that the reputation of the University was safeguarded.

ii.   To be a viable player in this market, WatSPEED needs to be able to "move at the speed of business," so the approval pathway needs to be much more efficient than the pathways for for-credit offerings.

The solution devised by this working group was the creation of the Alternative Credentials Approval Committee (ACAC). ACAC replaced the former Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) chaired by the AVPA (as the Executive Committee member to whom the Centre for Extended Learning, then the unit responsible for Professional Development offerings, reported). Since at least 1973, Senate has not required approval of non-credit credentials via one of its established Councils. In 2003 Senate approved a recommendation regarding definitions and approvals of (what we can call for convenience) for-credit offerings and distinguishing them from other sorts of credentials. In 2005 it was specified that what is now CEL should have its non-credit offerings overseen by a council or committee that would establish a "policy" or standards for continuing education programming, headed by the position that is now the AVPA and including representation from the Faculties. There are no Senate records of the decisions or work of the PDAC since 2005.

ACAC carries out its work asynchronously and online. Voting members include faculty representatives from every Faculty appointed by the Dean, the AVPA (who serves as chair), and the AVP GSPA. ACAC also includes, as non-voting resources to the committee, delegates from several of the Academic Support Units on campus. Since 2021 it has approved approximately two dozen non-credit credentials. Most are developed in collaboration with WatSPEED but there have also been credentials developed without WatSPEED involvement, including those developed by the Centre for Teaching Excellence, Cooperative and Experiential Education, and the Sustainability Office.

There are two primary reasons for recommending that ACAC be replaced by an official Senate Committee and clarifying its remit:

1.   The lifelong learning offerings that are now the primary work of ACAC are generally of a different sort, and aimed at a different audience, than the offerings formerly approved by the PDAC. (Those were primarily the sort of "interest courses" that are the traditional subjects of continuing education offerings or the professional development courses that were the primary business of the PD unit of the Centre for Extended Learning.) The current credentials are generally aimed at mid-career professionals and are clearly "university level learning," sometimes at the graduate level. The rationale that presumably removed PDAC credentials from Senate oversight in 2005 do not apply in the same way to credentials of the sort ACAC has been approving.

2.   The existing Senate rationale legitimizing PDAC activities is somewhat vague, places constraints on what ACAC can legitimately approve, and is likely to prove unduly restrictive as the University's academic programming evolves to meet the needs of the future. For instance, the Senate materials from 2005 say that any "course" that "approximates the length and content of 0.5 unit on campus courses" requires approval from an official Senate Committee, a process that can take a significant amount of time (at least weeks and probably months, vs. the five-day turnaround typical for ACAC).

     [This proscription may rule out, for instance, the development of partnerships between WatSPEED and professional organizations seeking to offer programming related to maintenance of professional standing, where something that "approximates" a 12-week course may be exactly what is required, and the current wording suggests it would therefore need approval by Senate Undergraduate Council or Senate Graduate Council, where the approval pathways are too cumbersome for this sort of credential. In accordance with the recommendations of the Credentials

Framework Report, the proposed remit for SACC distinguishes credit from non-credit offerings in terms of the audience and whether a course can count towards a degree, instead of focusing on whether the offering "approximates a 0.5 credit course".]

The Credentials Framework Report includes as a subsidiary recommendation that:

i. The new SACC needs to maintain the nimbleness for which ACAC has been praised while providing an appropriate degree of academic oversight for the sorts of credentials on offer. That is, a credential certifying participation in a workshop of mastery of a particular practical skill does not require the level of detailed scrutiny required for a new degree program. We therefore recommend that SACC be much smaller than either SUC or SGC (as ACAC is currently);

ii. SACC continue to work primarily online and asynchronously;

iii. SACC's voting membership should include a representative from each Faculty in addition to the AVPA and AVP GSPA.

SACC's membership should also include "resource" members from relevant ASUs who can inform decision-making in a timely and effective manner.

Jurisdictional Information

Section 22 of the University of Waterloo Act, 1972 empowers Senate:

(m) to create councils and committees to exercise its powers

Governance Path

Deans Council: September 18, 2024

Senate Graduate and Research Council: October 21, 2024 (initial discussion)

Senate Undergraduate Council: November 19, 2024 (initial discussion)

Senate Executive Committee: November 10, 2025 (consultation)

Senate Graduate Council: November 17, 2025 (consultation and recommendation)

Senate Undergraduate Council: December 9, 2025 (consultation and recommendation)

Senate Executive Committee: February 23, 2026 (recommendation via e-vote)

Senate: March 2, 2026 (approval)

Documentation Provided

- Draft Terms of Reference

DRAFT PROPOSAL

Senate Alternative Credentials Committee

1. Terms of Reference

1.1   Mandate
A University of Waterloo degree is generally understood to require the completion of specified courses and milestones. Courses and milestones which count towards a degree shall be defined as those "for credit." Academic offerings that are not "for credit" are referred to as "alternative credentials".

The mandate of the Senate Alternative Credentials Committee shall be to consider and provide oversight for University of Waterloo alternative credentials, as outlined within.

1.2   Responsibilities
The Senate Alternative Credentials Committee shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

1. On behalf of Senate, to approve alternative credentials, including microcredentials.

2. On behalf of Senate, to establish rules and procedures for the development and approval of alternative credentials, which appropriately balance between ensuring the academic credibility of alternative credentials and the need for efficient and effective decision-making to meet the needs of learners who earn alternative credentials.

3. Reporting:

- The SACC will submit periodic reports for information to Senate on approved alternative credentials, and such credentials shall be reported to the Boad of Governors as part of the annual report of newly approved programs by the Senate Academic Quality Enhancement Committee.

- The Chair of SACC will have the responsibility to ensure that motions that are part of the remit of other Senate committees are transferred to those bodies for approval. As the Chairs of SUC and SGC are ex officio members of SACC, they will have the responsibility to ensure that issues of interest to those committees that arise at SACC, including those on the boundaries of the remit of the two various committees, are raised at those other bodies, and vice-versa.

- In cases where a program proposal is controversial within SACC, at the discretion of the SACC Chair, the proposal will be forwarded to Senate for discussion and, as appropriate, a vote.

4. To work collaboratively with Senate and its committees and councils with responsibility for the academic quality of undergraduate and graduate studies, and to confer with such committees and councils in situations where it is unclear whether the credentials under development are for credit or alternative credentials.

5. Review its terms of reference on an annual basis and make recommendations to Senate thereon. A comprehensive review shall be undertaken every five years.

1.3 Meetings

Generally, the work of the committee will proceed asynchronously and online.

Special synchronous meetings, either in person or online, may be called at the discretion of the chair.

1.4 Membership

Ex-officio:

- The Associate Vice-President, Academic, who shall chair this committee.
- The Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

Appointed by Senate:

- Six faculty members, one from each Faculty, on recommendation of the Dean. Normally this faculty member will be an Associate Dean with responsibility for lifelong learning for the Faculty.
- One undergraduate student member, recommended by the WUSA President, [student member may be drawn from any student senator or any student member of a Senate committee]
- One graduate student member, recommended by the GSA President, [student member may be drawn from any student senator or any student member of a Senate committee]
- One member from an Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW), appointed by the AFIW Dean's [this member will rotate between the AFIW represented at SUC, and the member will consult with representatives from other AFIW, as appropriate]
- One alumni member of Senate

Resources (non-voting):

- Registrar
- Director, WatSPEED, or designate
- Director, of the integrated teaching support unit, or designate
- Associate Provost, Cooperative and Experiential Education, or designate
- Associate Provost, Institutional Analysis and Planning, or designate
- University Secretary or designate

For Approval   **Open Session**

To:	Senate
From:	Senate Graduate Council
Presenter(s):	Justin Wan Interim Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**7.1 Report of the Senate Graduate Council: Faculty of Arts – Major Modifications**

Recommendation/Motion

That Senate approves the major modifications to the Master of Arts (MA) in Political Science; Master of Arts (MA) in Political Science - Co-operative Program (direct entry); and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Psychology, effective May 1, 2026, as presented.

Summary

Senate Graduate Council met on January 21, 2026 and agreed to forward the following item to Senate for approval as part of the regular agenda.

    a. Master of Arts (MA) in Political Science; Master of Arts (MA) in Political Science - Co-operative Program (direct entry); and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Psychology programs.

The full proposal can be found in the January 21, 2026 Senate Graduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 114.

Proposal/Rationale

Master of Arts (MA) in Political Science and Master of Arts (MA) in Political Science - Co-operative Programs:

Removing the Thesis study option. The Department would like to offer the Master's Research Paper (MRP) option only for the MA in Political Science programs. This will ensure greater predictability with respect to course enrolments (Winter), supervision (Winter, Spring), and scheduling (Winter, Spring). This change will also help to ensure timely completion of the MA degree (3 terms for the MRP option and 5 terms for the MRP with co-op option). MA students writing an MRP will continue to benefit from the same MA funding opportunities and doctoral prospects.

The program's learning outcomes remain the same. The MRP option is already the standard default option pursued by Political Science MA students. There are no changes being proposed to the course or milestone requirements for the MRP option.

<u>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Psychology Program</u>:

Updating the degree requirements to include a new Graduate Specialization called "Applied Data Science". There is increasing demand for training in the psychological and behavioural sciences that centers data science skills. This reflects both the scientific field evolving to require its practitioners to have command over increasingly sophisticated data analytic methods and opportunities outside of academia to apply one's training in the psychological and behavioural sciences in the context of occupations that require those same data analytic skills. The graduate specialization will provide UW Psychology graduate students the opportunity to further develop their data science related skills (e.g., data analysis, visualization, coding, wrangling) and receive a credential to acknowledge and highlight this aspect of their training (note that a PhD in Psychology, particularly at UW, has always involved the development of advanced data science related skills. However, this fact might not be appreciated outside of Psychology departments). Relatedly, a need for more offerings of data science/statistics courses has been a theme that emerged in our last self-study and also our current one. Meeting these needs for students could also help us further differentiate our programs from others, improving recruitment. As further evidence of demand we conducted an informal survey of existing students and 89% responded yes (70%)/maybe (19%) that they would "… be interested in completing this graduate specialization." We hope this cements UW Psychology as the best and most sought-after place to be a graduate student in Canada, and among the top destinations in the world. As noted above, data science skills have long been an important part of our program and as such there will be no change to the learning outcomes.

The requirements for the new specialization are outlined below:

The Graduate Specialization in Applied Data Science consists of a set of 4 graduate level courses (0.50 weight) and a teaching requirement. Specified courses are those that are prescribed as part of the Graduate Specialization. Students must have completed the departmental statistics requirement to receive the Graduate Specialization in Applied Data Science and courses taken to meet that requirement cannot be used to meet the requirements of the Graduate Specialization in Applied Data Science. The requirements for the Graduate Specialization are described below.

Complete 4 of the following (or approved alternatives):

- PSYCH 634 Data Management, Visualization, and Analysis
- PSYCH 640 Special Topics in Psychology (on an approved topic related to Applied Data Science)
- PSYCH 800 Psychometric Theory & Structural Equation Modeling
- PSYCH 801 Advanced Structural Equation Modeling
- PSYCH 803 Meta-Analysis
- PSYCH 804 Multi-Level Modeling Applications in Psychology
- PSYCH 810 Directed Studies (on an approved topic related to Applied Data Science)

The teaching requirement can be completed by teaching as instructor-of-record or being a teaching assistant in a course related to applied data science in the following courses:

- PSYCH 292 Basic Data Analysis

- PSYCH 391 Advance Data Analysis

- PSYCH 492 Psychological Measurement: Foundations of Research and Practice

- PSYCH 630 ANOVA

- PSYCH 632 Regression

- PSYCH 634 Data Management, Visualization, and Analysis

- PSYCH 640 Special Topics in Psychology (on an approved topic related to Applied Data Science)

- PSYCH 800 Psychometric Theory & Structural Equation Modeling

- PSYCH 801 Advanced Structural Equation Modeling

- PSYCH 803 Meta-Analysis

- PSYCH 804 Multi-Level Modeling Applications in Psychology

- PSYCH 810 Directed Studies (on an approved topic related to Applied Data Science)

Meeting the teaching requirement through teaching as instructor-of-record or being a teaching assistant in a course related to applied data science that is not listed or meeting the requirement via alternative means requires approval of the Graduate Officer.

Jurisdictional Information

As outlined in the council's Terms and Reference, Senate Graduate Council is empowered to make approvals on behalf of Senate for a variety of matters:

- Consider, study and review all proposals for new graduate programs, the deletion of graduate programs, and/or major modifications to existing graduate programs, and make recommendations to Senate thereon.

Governance Path

Faculty of Arts: September 26, 2025

Senate Graduate Council: January 21, 2026

Senate: March 2, 2026

Documentation Provided

Appendix A: Proposed Changes – Faculty of Arts

The full proposal can be found in the January 21, 2026 Senate Graduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 114.

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO | Senate

For Approval   **Open Session**

To:	Senate
From:	Senate Graduate Council
Presenter(s):	Justin Wan Interim Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**7.2 Report of the Senate Graduate Council: Faculty of Environment – Major Modifications**

Recommendation/Motion

That Senate approve the major modifications to the Master of Environmental Studies (MES) in Geography, effective May 1, 2026, as presented.

Summary

Senate Graduate Council met on January 21, 2026 and agreed to forward the following item to Senate for approval as part of the regular agenda.

   a. Master of Environmental Studies (MES) in Geography program.

The full proposal can be found in the January 21, 2026 Senate Graduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 158.

Proposal/Rationale

Master of Environmental Studies (MES) in Geography:

This change aims to provide students with flexibility for completing a Masters degree while maintaining learning outcomes through a capstone project course. This also addresses suggestions from the last program cyclical review around the creation of "fall-back" options for research students who may require alternative pathways for program completion and the recommendation to take advantage of new opportunities with partners inside and outside the Faculty and University. The proposed coursework study option provides more flexibility for students to complete graduate studies in the program as a supervisor is not required. The proposed specializations are built around the Department's teaching and research strengths in environmental management and land cover change (particularly through application of geospatial data science) while remaining distinct from the existing Masters of Climate Change program. These specializations also strengthen links to other units in the Faculty by including cross-listed courses in the elective lists and with other Faculties (Recreation and Leisure Studies in Health) through the Tourism and Environmental Change specialization. These units have been consulted throughout the development of the

specializations and are supportive of the proposal. The tuition rate for the coursework study option will be the same as the current thesis/MRP tuition rate.

The requirements for the new specializations are outlined below:

To receive the Graduate Specialization in Land-Use Change, students must successfully complete the following courses:

- GEMCC630 Land Use Change and the Carbon Cycle
- GEOG700A Geographic Scholarship and Practice 1 - Master's (0.25)
- GEOG700B Geographic Scholarship and Practice 2 - Master's (0.25)
- Complete 1 of the following:
  - GEMCC 699 Graduate Capstone Project
  - GEOG 699 Graduate Capstone Project
  - Another (0.50 unit weight) graduate-level project course as approved by the Graduate Officer
- Complete 3 of the following:
  - GEMCC 610 Climate Prediction, Modeling and Scenarios
  - GEMCC 622 Climate Change, Natural Hazards and Disaster Risk Reduction
  - GEOG 603 Remote Sensing and Earth System Science
  - GEOG 646 Hydrology
  - GEOG 654 Applied Biogeochemistry
  - GEOG 656 Eutrophication
  - GEOG 662 Transforming Canadian Resource Management
  - GEOG 666 Ecosystem Approach to Park Planning
- Complete 1 of the following:
  - GEOG 604 Spatial Statistics
  - GEOG 617 Applied Statistics in Ecology and Environment
  - GEOG 620 Foundations in Human Geography
  - GEOG 625 Qualitative Methods in Geography
  - GEOG 640 Contextualizing Research in Earth System Science
- Any 1 other GEOG or GEMCC graduate level course (0.50 unit weight). Students may elect to take elective courses outside of GEOG or GEMCC with approval of the Graduate Officer.

To receive the Graduate Specialization in Tourism and Environmental Change, students must successfully complete the following courses:

- GEOG 638 Sustainable Tourism
- GEOG 700A Geographic Scholarship and Practice 1 - Master's (0.25)
- GEOG 700B Geographic Scholarship and Practice 2 - Master's (0.25)
- Complete 1 of the following:
  - GEMCC 699 Graduate Capstone Project
  - GEOG 699 Graduate Capstone Project
  - Another (0.50 unit weight) graduate-level project course as approved by the Graduate Officer
- Complete 3 of the following:
  - ENBUS 632 Sustainability Reporting
  - GEMCC 605 Climate Change and Society
  - GEMCC 622 Climate Change, Natural Hazards and Disaster Risk Reduction
  - GEMCC 652 Climate Change and Community Planning
  - GEOG 635 International Development: Theories and Practice
  - GEOG 666 Ecosystem Approach to Park Planning
  - REC 611 Leading Organizations

- o REC 620 Program Evaluation in Recreation and Sport
  - o REC 631 Issues in Leisure, Place and Space
  - o REC 641 Community Relations and Stakeholder Engagement
- Complete 1 of the following:
  - o GEOG 604 Spatial Statistics
  - o GEOG 617 Applied Statistics in Ecology and Environment
  - o GEOG 620 Foundations in Human Geography
  - o GEOG 625 Qualitative Methods in Geography
  - o GEOG 640 Contextualizing Research in Earth System Science
- Any 1 other GEOG or GEMCC graduate level course (0.50 unit weight). Students may elect to take elective courses outside of GEOG or GEMCC with approval of the Graduate Officer.

Jurisdictional Information

As outlined in the council's Terms and Reference, Senate Graduate Council is empowered to make approvals on behalf of Senate for a variety of matters:

- Consider, study and review all proposals for new graduate programs, the deletion of graduate programs, and/or major modifications to existing graduate programs, and make recommendations to Senate thereon.

Governance Path

Faculty of Environment: October 31, 2025

Senate Graduate Council: January 21, 2026

Senate: March 2, 2026

Documentation Provided

Appendix A: Proposed Changes – Faculty of Environment

The full proposal can be found in the January 21, 2026 Senate Graduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 158.

For Approval   **Open Session**

To:	Senate
From:	Senate Graduate Council
Presenter(s):	Justin Wan
	Interim Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral
	Affairs
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**7.3 Report of the Senate Graduate Council: Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs – Major Modifications**

Recommendation/Motion

That Senate approve the major modifications to the 2026 Graduate Studies Academic Calendar, effective May 1, 2026, as presented.

Summary

Senate Graduate Council met on January 21, 2026 and agreed to forward the following item to Senate for approval as part of the regular agenda.

    a. New regulations on Graduate Course Assessments: Tests and Final Examinations and Graduate Course Assessments: Scheduling.

The full proposal can be found in the January 21, 2026 Senate Graduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 168.

Proposal/Rationale

Spring 2026 Graduate Studies Academic Calendar:

On behalf of all faculties, bringing forward a collection of regulation submissions for inclusion in the Spring 2026 Graduate Studies Academic Calendar.

13.2.1 Graduate Couse Assessments: Tests and Final Examinations

Rationale:
- Aligns graduate assessment practices with undergraduate standards for consistency.
- Provides clear guidance for emergency scenarios and accommodations.
- Addresses operational needs for online and external exam administration.

Key Components:

Held-With Courses
- Undergraduate and graduate courses may be taught together ("held-with").
- Scheduling and administration of tests/exams follow undergraduate regulations; grading remains under graduate regulations.

Final Examination Period
- Occurs after the formal lecture period; dates published in the Important Dates site.
- Exams normally ≤ 2.5 hours; exceptions for some graduate exams.
- No additional assignments during the exam period for courses with final exams.
- Courses without exams may have equivalent assessments due during this period.

Scheduling & Availability
- Exam schedule posted by the Office of the Registrar after the Add Period.
- Students must be available any day of the exam period, including emergency days.
- Instructors must attend their exams or appoint qualified substitutes.

Online & External Exams
- Students with any in-person exams must write them on campus.
- Students with no on-campus courses may write externally:
    o Must arrange and pay for proctoring.
    o Must meet deadlines and follow AccessAbility accommodation procedures.

Emergency Rescheduling
- Decisions made by the President (or delegate) with Registrar.
- Rescheduled exams occur on the next available day, including Sundays.
- Instructors may reschedule earlier by mutual agreement, but official alternative dates remain available.

Rules for Test & Exam Conduct
- Eligibility: Only enrolled students may write.
- ID: Student ID required; alternatives allowed if approved.
- Permitted Items: Writing tools, approved calculators, electronics off and stored.
- Dress: Hats/hoods removed (except religious headgear).
- Breaks: Supervised only; pockets checked.
- End of Session: Cease writing when instructed; remain seated until dismissed.
- Violations: Procedures for suspected misconduct include evidence collection and reporting.

Additional Exam Rules
- First Hour: Students must stay for at least one hour; late arrivals may be barred.
- Food & Drink: Only water in clear bottles allowed; nutrition breaks require proctor supervision.
- Illness: Notify proctor and instructor; documentation required within 48 hours.
- Irregularities: Covers emergencies (evacuation, outages, etc.); time extensions capped at 20 minutes.

13.2.2 Graduate Course Assessments: Scheduling

Rationale:
This section outlines proposed additions to the Graduate Studies Academic Calendar, specifically section 13.2.2 Graduate Course Assessments: Scheduling. It sets parameters for scheduling assessments in graduate courses.

Key Components:

Scheduled Pauses in the Academic Term
- Includes study days, reading weeks, and public holidays.
- No compulsory academic events (classes, labs, tutorials, exams) or assignment deadlines during these pauses.
- Applies to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Study Days and Reading Weeks
- Study Days: 1–2 days each term between the end of lectures and start of exams.
- Reading Weeks: Occur in fall and winter terms, aligned with Thanksgiving and Family Day holidays.

Formal Lecture Period
- Teaching day runs from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday–Friday. Exceptions noted for programs with delivery outside of this time.
- Assignments and tests can be scheduled anytime during this period.
- Major term tests (worth >25% of final grade) cannot be held in the last five teaching days unless approved by the unit head/program director and Associate Dean (Graduate Studies).
  Faculty of Science Exception
- Laboratory courses may hold final exams during the latter part of the lecture period due to facility needs.

Guidelines for Scheduling Tests
- Preferably during regular class times.
- If outside normal class time, conflicts must be resolved with alternative arrangements.
- Test dates must be in the course outline; changes only in extreme circumstances with unanimous class consent.
- Material for tests should be introduced at least two working days before the test.
- Tests normally scheduled Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–10:00 p.m.
- Exceptions require Associate Dean approval and must be announced in the first week of classes.
- Avoid scheduling during co-op interviews; attendance at interviews is not a valid excuse for missing a test.

Final Examination Regulations and Guidelines

An official document, which will be available on the Registrar Resources website (authenticated for employees only), outlining final examination regulations, guidelines, and operational matters for instructors, proctors, and Presiding Officers. A previous iteration, last revised and approved by Senate in 2015 (Final Exams and Related Matters), was outdated, and did not include all of the existing practices that were housed in other manuals. This updated document incorporates all the information final examination personnel need to know, from how to determine if a final examination is needed, to exam day processes, and everything in between. Consultation with faculty associate deans - undergraduate and graduate - was undertaken.

Jurisdictional Information

As outlined in the council's Terms and Reference, Senate Graduate Council is empowered to make approvals on behalf of Senate for a variety of matters:

- Consider, study and review all proposals for new graduate programs, the deletion of graduate programs, and/or major modifications to existing graduate programs, and make recommendations to Senate thereon.

Governance Path

Senate Graduate Council: January 21, 2026

Senate: March 2, 2026

Documentation Provided

Appendix A: Proposed Changes – Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

The full proposal can be found in the January 21, 2026 Senate Graduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 168.

For Approval   **Open Session**

To:	Senate
From:	Senate Undergraduate Council
Presenter(s):	David DeVidi Associate Vice-President, Academic
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**8.1 Report of the Senate Undergraduate Council: Faculty of Arts – Major Modifications**

Recommendation/Motion

That Senate approve the major plan modifications and retirements 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.

Summary

Senate Undergraduate Council met on February 4, 2026 and agreed to forward the following item to Senate for approval as part of the regular agenda.

  a. The retirement of the Sustainability Specialization in the School of Accounting and Finance; Applied Language Studies Minor and Diploma in Applied Language Studies programs at Renison University College.

  b. The major modifications of the Media Studies Specialization, Performance and Production Specialization, Performance Studies Specialization, Production and Design Specialization, Public Advocacy Specialization, Strategic Communication Specialization, and Theatre and Performance Studies Specialization in the Department of Communication Arts.

  c. The major modifications of the Business Economics Minor, Econometrics and Data Analysis Minor, and Economic Policy Minor in the Department of Economics.

  d. The regulation changes for Petitions, Averages and Academic Standings.

The full proposal can be found in the February 4, 2026 Senate Undergraduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 3254.

Proposal/Rationale

Sustainability Specialization

The Sustainability specialization was created in 2015 to offer sustainability topics within the Accounting and Financial Management Program. It was created with the foresight of the need for sustainability topics while the Sustainability and Financial Management program was being developed; it is now operative. Further, we are integrating necessary sustainability topics into existing degree-required Accounting and Financial Management courses and offering a redesigned Enterprise Performance and Risk Specialization. The latter is already moving through the calendar approval process. Accordingly, there is no longer a need for a separate Sustainability Specialization and the number of specializations available to Bachelor of Accounting and Financial Management students will now be five.

Environment was notified of our intention to retire the Sustainability Specialization by professors Adam Vitalis and Sasan Saiy in meetings with the Environment faculty. We can confirm that consultation was carried out.

Applied Language Studies Minor and Diploma in Applied Language Studies

On March 7, 2025, Renison's Academic Council approved to make all APPLS courses and related credentials (Applied Language Studies Minor and Diploma) redundant, effective Fall 2026, due to low enrollment. Furthermore, there are no tenure-track members employed at Renison to continue the discipline. The number of Applied Language Studies diplomas conferred has steadily decreased since 2014; since the 2021-2022 fiscal year, no students have received the Applied Language Studies diploma. Similarly, the number of Applied Language Studies minors conferred has also steadily declined since 2014, with an average of four minors awarded per year since the 2022-2023 fiscal year. On September 5, 2025, Renison's Academic Council approved the retirement of the courses and related credentials.

Media Studies Specialization

This specialization will address the specific pedagogical, social, and professional advantages of a degree in communication studies focused on consideration of the social and cultural dimensions of mediated communication, recruit new students interested in developing capacities to work in media organizations and industries, and help graduating students articulate the purpose and significance of the courses in their communication studies major. Media Studies is a widely recognized sub-field in communication studies, and this specialization can leverage the growing popularity of that sub-field and sharpen the end goals of an undergraduate degree in the broader field of communication.

Performance and Production Specialization

The Performance and Production specialization addresses a critical enrolment and educational need by foregrounding the craft of acting and performance skills that initially attract a significant number of students to our program. Research consistently shows that prospective students are drawn to theatre programs through their passion for performing, and this specialization provides a clear pathway for those interested in developing advanced acting techniques, character development, voice and movement training, and performance creation. This focus on performance craft is strategically essential for maintaining and growing our enrollment, as it speaks directly to the aspirations of incoming students while

providing the transcript designation that signals performance training to future employers and graduate programs.

The specialization's structure recognizes that while students often enter the program with performance ambitions, their interests frequently evolve and diversify throughout their undergraduate years. By integrating production knowledge alongside performance training, we prepare students who can work fluidly across multiple roles in contemporary theatre practice - actors who understand technical production, performers who can stage manage, and artists who grasp the collaborative nature of theatre-making from multiple perspectives. This flexibility allows students to pursue their initial performance passion while developing the broader skill set that many naturally gravitate toward in upper years.

Students in this specialization develop the ability to articulate the social and ethical dimensions of their creative work through integrated coursework that connects performance practice with critical theory at every level. When learning acting techniques, students simultaneously examine how theatrical representation can resist or perpetuate systems of oppression, enabling them to make informed artistic choices about characterization, casting, and storytelling that reflect their values. When working in production roles, they apply this critical lens to understand how design choices, production hierarchies, and collaborative processes impact the meaning and accessibility of their work. This combination of embodied practice and critical reflection produces graduates who are not only technically proficient performers and production artists, but also thoughtful practitioners who can advocate for equitable, accessible, and socially engaged theatre in any professional context.

The specialization's four-year progressive structure - moving from foundational skills through development and advancement to focused expertise - ensures students graduate with both the practical competencies and intellectual frameworks needed to succeed in diverse theatre careers, from regional theatres and touring companies to educational settings and community-based performance work.

Performance Studies Specialization

This specialization will address the specific pedagogical, social, and professional advantages of a degree in communication studies focused on performance. Performance Studies is a recognized sub-field of Communication Studies. This specialization will help recruit students interested in embodied approaches to creative expression and critical inquiry, and help graduating students articulate the distinctive value of performance studies courses within communication studies.

Production and Design Specialization

The Production and Design specialization addresses growing industry demand for theatre artists with advanced technical skills, design expertise, and production management capabilities. While many students initially enter our program with performance interests, a significant portion discover their passion for the behind-the-scenes craft of theatre-making - scenic design, lighting, costumes, sound, technical direction, and stage management. This specialization provides a dedicated pathway for these students, offering the transcript designation that clearly signals specialized training to employers, graduate programs, and professional theatres.

The specialization prepares students who can move fluidly between design specialties and understand how all technical elements work together to realize a theatrical vision. By integrating stagecraft alongside design training, we develop graduates who possess both

creative design skills and practical execution knowledge - designers who understand technical constraints, stage managers who grasp design principles, and production leaders who can effectively communicate across departments.

Students develop the ability to articulate the social and ethical dimensions of their creative work through integrated coursework connecting design practice with critical theory. When learning design techniques, students examine how choices communicate meaning and can either reinforce or challenge cultural assumptions about race, gender, class, and accessibility. In production management contexts, they analyze how hierarchies, resource allocation, and collaborative processes impact equity and inclusion. This combination produces graduates who are both skilled technicians and thoughtful practitioners advocating for sustainable, accessible, and socially responsible production practices.

The four-year progressive structure ensures students graduate with the technical competencies and intellectual frameworks needed for diverse career paths in regional and commercial theatres, film and television production, event design, arts administration, technical direction, and education

Public Advocacy Specialization

This specialization will help clarify the specific social, pedagogical, and professional advantages of a degree in communication studies focused on a broad interest in public advocacy. It will help to recruit new students interested in developing capacities to integrate their values in their professional lives and help graduating students articulate the purpose and significance of the courses in their communication studies major. Public advocacy is a specialization that is a particular strength of Communication Arts at the University of Waterloo, and this specialization can help students to integrate their communication skills with the value for innovation fostered at this university.

Strategic Communication Specialization

This specialization will help clarify the specific pedagogical, social, and professional advantages of a degree in communication studies focused on purposeful work in organizational settings, recruit new students interested in professional and organizational success, and help graduating students articulate the purpose and significance of the courses in their communication studies major. Strategic communication is now a widely recognized sub-field in communication studies, and this specialization can leverage the growing popularity of that sub-field and sharpen the end goals of an undergraduate degree in the broader field of communication.

Theatre and Performance Studies Specialization

The Theatre and Performance Studies specialization addresses the needs of students who seek to integrate performance practice with rigorous scholarly inquiry, critical theory, and dramaturgy. While some students enter our program focused on acting or technical work, many discover their passion lies in understanding theatre's cultural, historical, and social dimensions - pursuing questions about how performance creates meaning, how theatre intersects with politics and identity, and how dramatic literature shapes and reflects society. This specialization provides a dedicated pathway for students interested in dramaturgy, directing, theatre criticism, education, and graduate study, offering a transcript designation that signals comprehensive training in both performance and scholarship.

The specialization prepares students who can move fluidly between embodied practice and critical analysis, understanding theatre as both an art form and a subject of academic inquiry. By integrating acting, devising, and performance creation with theatre history, dramatic theory, and cultural studies, we develop graduates who possess both practical theatre-making skills and the analytical frameworks to contextualize their work.

Students develop sophisticated abilities to articulate the social and ethical dimensions of theatrical work through engagement with critical theory applied to practice. They examine how theatrical representation constructs identity, how performance can function as activism, and how theatre histories have been shaped by colonization and power structures. In practical contexts, they apply these frameworks to create socially engaged work, develop educational programming and outreach, and advocate for inclusive, anti-oppressive theatre practices. This combination produces graduates prepared for diverse career paths including graduate school, arts education, dramaturgy, arts journalism, cultural programming, and community-based performance work.

The four-year progressive structure ensures students graduate with both the practical competencies and theoretical sophistication needed to succeed as scholar-practitioners who bridge academic and professional theatre contexts.

Business Economics Minor and Economic Policy Minor

1. The current minor in Economics does not serve student needs as well as we would like. Economics is a very broad field, and the minor consequently lacks learning outcomes to which students can translate to acquired or transferable skills when seeking employment. We believe that minors with well-defined learning objectives better serve students' goals and learning experience, and make advising more efficient. This minor will serve students whose main interests are in economic analysis and initiatives within the business world.

2. We will maintain the current minor in Economics until we are able to measure the success of the minors proposed in this agenda.

3. This new minor, along with the proposed minor in Economic Policy, will serve as a means through which students who are not able to succeed in the Economics major (usually because they struggle with courses that require advanced math) will be able to obtain salient expertise in important fields of Economics. In order to ensure that this group of students has a fair chance at success in this minor, the average for the purposes of Academic Progression and graduation will include only courses taken toward the credential, and not all of the ECON courses they have taken.

In addition to the students described above, we believe that many students with majors in any faculty may benefit from taking this minor, as the learning outcomes and requirements do not require expertise in math above what they have had in secondary school.

Econometrics and Data Analysis Minor

1. There is high demand from students and employers for capacity in data analysis.

2. At present, the only credential we offer in econometrics is a specialization only open to Economics majors. This minor will offer a means for students outside the Economics major to attain skills in econometrics (the use of statistical methods to analyze economic data) and data analysis related to economic theory, forecasting, and modelling.

3. Because of the broad applicability of these capacities, we believe the minor will be attractive to students across the University.

4. The courses that are required for the minor are regularly offered, and there is typically room for additional enrolments in them.

<u>Petitions, Averages and Academic Standings Regulation Changes</u>

The Examinations and Standings Committee still encourages petitions to be submitted as close to the term in question as possible, within three years.

We are removing the statement about having to provide explanation as to why there would be a delay in their submission. This adjustment adheres to considerations of the Human Rights Code (protected grounds) and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) and makes the statements more succinct.

Students who continually overload on non-Arts courses risk jeopardizing academic progression. The changes to the Academic Standings section reflect the expectation that students are progressing toward their Bachelor of Arts degree requirements. Academic progression for these students is reviewed by the Arts Undergraduate Office. The other changes are intended to clarify average requirements and procedures of standings.

A section for the combined Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Social Development Studies (SDS) and Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) is being added since the progression rules don't fall into the typically Bachelor of Arts progression. This addition is a result of the new SDS and BSW double degree.

Jurisdictional Information

As provided for in Senate Bylaw 2, section 5.03, council is empowered to make approvals on behalf of Senate for a variety of operational matters:

  b. Make recommendations to Senate with respect to new undergraduate programs/plans, the deletion of undergraduate programs/plans, and major changes to undergraduate programs/plans.

Governance Path

Renison Academic Council: March 7, 2025

Faculty of Arts: April 21, 2025; May 26, 2025; June 25, 2025; September 5, 2025

Senate Undergraduate Council Curriculum Subcommittee – January 26, 2026

Senate Undergraduate Council: February 4, 2026

Senate: March 2, 2026

Documentation Provided

Appendix A: Proposed Changes – Faculty of Arts

The full proposal can be found in the February 4, 2026 Senate Undergraduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 3254.

For Approval   **Open Session**

To:	Senate
From:	Senate Undergraduate Council
Presenter(s):	David DeVidi Associate Vice-President, Academic
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**8.2 Report of the Senate Undergraduate Council: Faculty of Engineering – Major Modifications**

Recommendation/Motion

That Senate approve the major plan modifications for the Faculty of Engineering Biomedical Imaging Technologies Specialization, Diploma in Business and Entrepreneurship programs, and retired regulations, effective September 1, 2026, as presented.

Summary

Senate Undergraduate Council met on February 4, 2026 and agreed to forward the following item to Senate for approval as part of the regular agenda.

a. Biomedical Imaging Technologies Specialization from the Department of Systems Design Engineering.

b. Diploma in Business and Entrepreneurship from the Conrad School of Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology.

c. The following retired regulations: Absences, Bachelor of Architectural Studies Regulations, Bachelor of Applied Science and Bachelor of Software Engineering Regulations, Joint Honours Plans, and Second Degrees.

The full proposal can be found in the February 4, 2026 Senate Undergraduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 3348.

Proposal/Rationale

Biomedical Imaging Technologies Specialization

The Biomedical Imaging Technologies specialization was created to provide a suite of courses that align with the skills and knowledge necessary to work in this area of BME. Up until now, Imaging Technologies was lumped within medical devices specialization making it difficult to address the needs for required skills/knowledge for medical devices versus technologies used for diagnosis.

The specialization was designed by a subgroup of the BME undergraduate program committee with expertise in the area of the specialization.

Diploma in Business and Entrepreneurship

Student Consultation Process

The development of this diploma emerged directly from student demand and engagement across the University of Waterloo community. The Conrad School has received numerous inquiries from post-graduates and current students seeking opportunities in accessing entrepreneurship and business education credentials. These inquiries came from diverse sources, including alumni who wished to enhance their entrepreneurial skills after graduation and students and Directors from programs with limited elective capacity, such as those programs within Engineering and the Global Business and Digital Arts (GBDA) program.

While the Conrad School currently offers a Minor in Entrepreneurship (requiring 8 courses) and an Option in Entrepreneurship for Engineering students (requiring 6 courses), both programs are only available to current UW students and present significant course load challenges for students with limited elective capacity. The feedback we received indicated a strong need for a more accessible alternative that could serve a broader audience, including post-graduates and students who cannot accommodate the extensive course requirements of existing programs.

To systematically assess this interest, we conducted a comprehensive survey of 96 students representing multiple faculties across the university. The results demonstrated substantial demand: 20% expressed interest in a Diploma in Business and Entrepreneurship (4 courses), 19% indicated interest in a Certificate program (3 courses), and remarkably, 52% expressed willingness to pursue both credentials. When asked about career relevance, 88% of respondents rated the diploma as helpful to extremely helpful for their career development, with over 50% categorizing it as very helpful. While we were not able to survey non-UW students and post-graduates, the numerous inquiries we have received from these populations suggest there is significant interest beyond our current student body. This data provides compelling evidence of student demand and perceived value.

Program Review Process

The diploma underwent an internal review process within the Conrad School. On April 15, 2025, the idea of a Diploma or Certificate was reviewed by the Conrad Undergraduate Committee. Following this committee discussion, the decision was made to launch the student survey to validate the program concept and assess demand.

After the survey data was collected and analyzed, the complete program proposal, including the survey results demonstrating strong student interest, was presented to Conrad Council. This presentation included all Conrad faculty members except one, and all staff were present, ensuring comprehensive department review and input. The diploma proposal was welcomed by Conrad Council, indicating strong internal support for the program.

Strategic Alignment

The Diploma in Entrepreneurship and Business directly supports the University of Waterloo's strategic objectives by:

- *Enhancing academic excellence* - Strengthens Waterloo's reputation as a leader in entrepreneurship through flexible, cross-faculty accessibility

- *Preparing students for the modern economy* - Develops entrepreneurial skills increasingly valuable across all sectors and professions

- *Supporting Conrad's mission* - Advances the Conrad School's mandate as a campus-wide resource while extending reach to post-graduates and non-degree students

- *Promoting accessibility* - Removes barriers for students with limited elective capacity allowing them access to entrepreneurship education while earning a credential

This alignment ensures the Diploma contributes to broader university goals while addressing previously unmet student needs.

Implementation costs for the Diploma are minimal, with the Conrad School's existing administrative infrastructure capable of supporting the program. The School's Associate Director of Undergraduate and Non-Degree Programs, will oversee student inquiries and graduation approvals, leveraging existing marketing resources used for our Minor and Option. There will be additional costs related to marketing to non-UW students. Conrad will leverage our current marketing resources for our MBET program for this.

Regulation for Absences

This information is all captured in other areas of the UG calendar or on our website. Failure to Register & Voluntary Withdrawals should follow UW Absence from Studies regulation. Returning after an absence should follow Readmission process, and common advising practices. We no longer allow a student gone for 6 years to continue under the same requirement term.

Students encounter situations that may interfere with their ability to complete a regularly scheduled term of study. In such cases, students may either not register for a given term or consider a voluntary withdrawal. If the absence exceeds one year, students should refer to the Request to Complete Degree Requirements Following an Absence below.

Failure to Register

Students who do not enrol in courses for the term in which they would normally be expected to return and who do not submit an Undergraduate Notice of Withdrawal Form or otherwise obtain the permission of the department, prior to the final registration date as defined in the Tuition and Other Fees section of this Calendar, will be deemed to have withdrawn from the Bachelor of Architectural Studies (BAS), Bachelor of Applied Science (BASc), or Bachelor of Software Engineering (BSE) program. Permission to return to classes is considered according to the following rule: If the absence has not exceeded one year and the student has an acceptable standing (Excellent, Good, Satisfactory), then that student is permitted to return to study at a time appropriate to their plan. If students have a negative standing decision (such as Required to Repeat), then the date of return is subject to the constraints associated with that standing.

Voluntary Withdrawals

Students may withdraw from a term or from their plan depending on the time of the term and depending on any extenuating circumstances. In all cases, students must submit an Undergraduate Notice of Withdrawal Form. The following describes the criteria and constraints for each of these alternatives.

- Students may withdraw from the (entire) term, without academic penalty, at any time prior to the start of the Drop with WD Period. Students must notify their academic advisor and complete the appropriate forms.

- The courses taken by students who withdraw from a term during the Drop with WD Period remain on the transcript and are recorded as WD (Withdrew after the drop deadline). The term decision is recorded as Not Applicable. Students may request to return to their studies one year after the start of the term withdrawn from.

- The courses taken by students who withdraw from a term during the Drop with WF Period remain on the transcript and are recorded as WF (Withdrew Failure). The term decision is Required to Withdraw. Students may apply for readmission one year after the start of the term withdrawn from.

Students who voluntarily withdraw from a term are expected to return to their plan of study within one year from the beginning of the term from which they withdrew. After this period, if students have not enrolled in their plan, they will be deemed to have withdrawn from the Bachelor of Architectural Studies (BAS), Bachelor of Applied Science (BASc), or Bachelor of Software Engineering (BSE).

Students who withdraw from their degree (BAS, BASc, or BSE), or are deemed to have done so, will be required to apply for readmission in order to be considered for continuation of their plan of study.

See the Important Dates & Deadlines and the Tuition and Other Fees section of this Calendar with respect to eligibility for refund of fees paid for the term.

For students in the 1A term, additional leniency may be permitted depending on the circumstances leading to the decision to withdraw.

Request to Complete Degree Requirements Following an Absence

The requirements and expectations for students wishing to return to their degree after a period away are described below. These requirements are for students who left their degree in good standing. Good standing refers to situations where students were permitted to return to their degree during their last academic term. It specifically does not include students that are required to withdraw from engineering. **Note**: These requirements apply to all previously enrolled students in the Faculty of Engineering.

1. If students have not registered in classes for a period of less than one year, the promotion rules associated with that degree describe the return requirements (see Voluntary Withdrawals above).

2. If students have been away from study in their plan for a period of one year or more, their return is to be governed by the following alternatives:

   o Students who have been away for a period of less than six years can apply to complete the degree requirements that were in place at the time they left their degree. However, as plans evolve some courses may have changed and there may be a need to modify the exact sequence of the material but not to increase the normal load required to complete the degree. (It may be to a student's advantage to repeat some material prior to starting new material.)

   o Students who have been away for a period of six years or more and were no more than 1.5 units (weight) from completing their original degree requirements can apply to complete the degree requirements that were in place at the time they left their degree. Due to the evolution of our plans, there may be a need to modify exactly which courses are required to complete the degree.

- Students who have been away for a period of six years or more and have more than 1.5 units (weight) to complete their degree are required to complete the degree requirements in effect at the time of their readmission.

Bachelor of Architectural Studies Regulations

Final Exam information is out of date, LOP information is on Courses & Classes page, Transfer Credit information is related to Admissions.

Final Examinations

1. Failure to write an examination is ordinarily considered a failure to pass (a grade of 32). A student who defaults a final examination, except for a properly certified reason, shall have no make-up examination privileges and may be required to repeat the work in class. If a student fails to write for medical reasons, a doctor's certificate covering the precise period of absence must be filed in the Office of the Registrar within one week of the set examination date.

2. A student will be eligible for deferred examinations only when failure to pass is attributable to extraordinary circumstances. In addition, students:

   - must have attended a reasonable number of lectures in the course in which they propose to write, and must have satisfied all course work requirements;

   - must have secured the permission of the professor concerned.

Letter of Permission

Students may request to take a course(s) at other universities for credit towards a University of Waterloo degree by Letter of Permission. A Letter of Permission is granted only to students who have successfully completed a minimum of four University of Waterloo courses and who are in good standing; that is, they have satisfied the minimum cumulative average requirements for their current program. A maximum total of three courses may be taken on a Letter of Permission or by Cross-Registration with Wilfrid Laurier University or by enrolling in a Laurier course that appears on the University of Waterloo Schedule of Classes.

Courses taken on a Letter of Permission must be approved in advance by the Associate Director, Undergraduate Studies and recorded by the Office of the Registrar. Such courses must be taken at a degree granting university. Credit for courses taken on a Letter of Permission will be granted only when the assigned grade is equivalent to at least 60% on the University of Waterloo grade scale.

Normally, courses considered by the Faculty of Engineering to be core or degree term requirements may not be taken on a Letter of Permission.

Wherever possible, courses taken on a Letter of Permission will be recorded as the equivalent University of Waterloo course and graded as per policy for the Faculty of Engineering.

Transfer Credit

Transfer credit may be given for courses in which a grade of 70% or better was obtained. Such courses must have been taken at a degree granting university. Application must be made to the Associate Director, Undergraduate Studies where transfer credits are desired as an exemption from required core courses.

As the Bachelor of Architectural Studies, Honours Architecture academic program is included in the accreditation review of the professional Master of Architecture program by the Canadian Architectural Certification Board, absolute equivalency of courses for transfer credit must be determined. It is the student's responsibility to submit transcripts and full course outlines for assessment.

Bachelor of Applied Science and Bachelor of Software Engineering Regulations

This practice is no longer used in the Faculty of Engineering. Course substitutions and exemptions are more appropriate.

Challenge for Credit

In unusual circumstances, a student may have received formal training, typically from an institution similar to the University of Waterloo, in material that they would normally be required to take as a course in their plan. In such cases, they may show evidence as to why they should be excused from taking the course. If the evidence is acceptable to the student's department, the student may be permitted to demonstrate competence in the material in a manner acceptable to the department offering the course. This process is known as Challenge for Credit. A Challenge for Credit cannot be used to recover from a failed course. Additional information may be obtained from the student's department. Where a Challenge for Credit is successful, the student is still expected to carry a full course load for the corresponding term; Challenge for Credit cannot be used to reduce the course load from the normal course load for any term. Challenge for Credit is available only for courses taught by the Faculty of Engineering.

Joint Honours Plans Regulations

The information is not about how other students can pursue Engineering joint honours, if students want to pursue a joint honours they should be looking on the other faculty pages. Very few students pursue joint honours, so we do not feel promoting through the calendar is necessary.

Engineering does not offer joint honours academic plans to non-engineering students. However, Bachelor of Architectural Studies (BAS), Bachelor of Applied Science (BASc), and Bachelor of Software Engineering (BSE) students may undertake a joint honours academic plan with non-engineering academic units.

A joint honours academic plan requires meeting all requirements of both plans. Students who choose a joint honours academic plan may require extra courses. However, courses required by the other plan can often be used to satisfy some of the requirements of the technical electives or complementary studies course groups in the BASc or BSE program.

Regulation for Second Degrees

The information is not about how other students can pursue Engineering degrees, the advice for students is captured on the Arts: Second Degrees page. Very few students pursue second degrees, so we do not feel promoting through the calendar is necessary.

Students may take advantage of other opportunities including a concurrent Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree. A concurrent BA degree will require extra courses as well as agreement by both faculties of Arts and Engineering; interested students should consult their undergraduate academic advisor.

Jurisdictional Information

As provided for in Senate Bylaw 2, section 5.03, council is empowered to make approvals on behalf of Senate for a variety of operational matters:

    b. Make recommendations to Senate with respect to new undergraduate programs/plans, the deletion of undergraduate programs/plans, and major changes to undergraduate programs/plans.

Governance Path

Faculty of Engineering: April 15, 2025; October 24, 2025

Senate Undergraduate Council Curriculum Subcommittee – January 26, 2026

Senate Undergraduate Council: February 4, 2026

Senate: March 2, 2026

Documentation Provided

Appendix A: Proposed Changes – Faculty of Engineering

The full proposal can be found in the February 4, 2026 Senate Undergraduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 3348.

For Approval   **Open Session**

To:	Senate
From:	Senate Undergraduate Council
Presenter(s):	David DeVidi Associate Vice-President, Academic
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**8.3 Report of the Senate Undergraduate Council: Faculty of Environment – Major Modifications**

Recommendation/Motion

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.

Summary

Senate Undergraduate Council met on February 4, 2026 and agreed to forward the following item to Senate for approval as part of the regular agenda.

a. Certificate in Geographic Information Systems from the Faculty of Environment.

b. Remote Sensing Specialization and Environment, Society and Well-Being Specialization from the Department of Geography and Environmental Management.

c. Regulation changes for courses and classes.

The full proposal can be found in the February 4, 2026 Senate Undergraduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 3547.

Proposal/Rationale

Certificate in Geographic Information Systems

These three courses are skills-based courses which, collectively, lead to mastery in using Geographic/Geospatial Information Systems. Applied GIS skills are helpful in urban planning, most environmental management and natural resource sectors, public health, emergency management, agriculture and many others. All three of these courses are offered both in person and online, and all have experiential components through required labs.

GEOG181, GEOG381, and GEOG381 will be changed to the new subject code GDS181, GDS281, and GDS381 upon approval.

This certificate will be able to be completed on-line (asynchronous) as of Fall 2026.

Environment, Society and Well-Being Specialization,

After an extensive curriculum review, including departmental and student consultation, we are making changes to all our specializations to:

1. Reduce the number of required units to make them more achievable for students and align with the specialization unit requirements in other units in our faculty.

2. Avoid overlap in course requirements with other specializations.

3. Ensure all courses align with the learning objectives of the specializations.

For the economy and society specialization, there was consensus that students could focus on either economy/development themes or well-being themes. Hence it was decided to split the specializations into two separate streams (one for economy and development and a new specialization for well-being).

Remote Sensing Specialization

After an extensive curriculum review, including departmental and student consultation, we are making changes to all our departmental specializations to:

1. Reduce the number of required units to make them more achievable for students and align with the specialization unit requirements in other units in our faculty.

2. Avoid overlap in course requirements with other specializations.

3. Ensure all courses align with the learning objectives of the specializations.

For the Geomatics specialization, there was consensus that students can focus on developing their skillset in either GIS or remote sensing, and so the specialization is being divided into two separate credentials (one for GIS and one for remote sensing). Previously, the specialization included both course streams.

Further this revision ensures student skillsets, as presented on their degree, will offer greater clarity. The term 'Geomatics' is often associated with surveying, so the change to reference 'remote sensing' is clearer.

GEOG371, GEOG387, GEOG471, and GEOG270 will be changed to the new subject code GDS371, GDS387, GDS471, and GDS270 upon approval.

Courses and Classes

Students are increasingly attempting more than 2.5 units per term. While there are valid reasons for doing so including an attempt to make up a course in order to graduate on time, this has become increasingly common. In 24-25, just over 6% of full-time Environment students carried 3 or more units after the drop date, and this figure does not include those who purposely overload only to drop the sixth course they like least. This can result in poor

allocation of TA resources, as these are assigned based on preliminary course enrollment. In some cases, overload has been approved for students in conditional standing. Moving the decision on overload to the Faculty Manager of Undergraduate Operations will allow advisors to be advocates for students, as negative decisions are made at a different level, introduce greater consistency into these decisions.

Effective Fall 2026, GEM will begin assigning unique grades to GEOG490A/B, after the completion of term, no longer using IP. Therefore, the section about IP grades needs to remove GEOG490A/B as an example and add A/B courses (ENVS403A/B) in which the same grade for both portions is assigned, and IP is used after the A portion is completed.

Grading

Students should also familiarize themselves with grade definitions.

In Progress (IP) grade: May be assigned to the first half of a course that is listed as two courses normally taken over two terms (e.g., ENVS403A and ENVS403B). The grade indicates that the course is in progress and that when completed a final grade will be assigned to both the A and B halves of the course (normally the same grade). When the second (B) half of such a course is dropped, a Petition for Exception to Academic Regulations must be submitted to have the first (A) half dropped.

Audit (AUD) grade: Students may request to register for audit status in a course if the faculty administering the course allows audits. Students interested in an audit must consult with the course instructor at the beginning of the course to ascertain what conditions are attached to the granting of an AUD grade. Audits must be approved by the course instructor and the student's academic advisor during the published add period. Failure to satisfy the conditions of an audit will result in the course receiving a grade of WD (voluntary withdrawal).

Course Load

Normally no more than 2.5 units may be taken during a term. Plan academic advisors can approve up to 2.75 units. The Faculty Manager of Undergraduate Operations may approve an increase course load to a maximum of 3.25 units for an academic term if exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated. Students wishing to take a maximum of 3.5 units in a term must submit a Petition for Exception to Academic Regulations. Requests to complete more than 3.5 units in a term will not be considered.

Repeating Courses

Normally, special permission, beyond course requisites, is not required to repeat a failed course.

Students must submit a Petition for Exception to Academic Regulations to repeat a course they have already passed and for which they have achieved credit. If approval to repeat a passed course is granted, only one of the two attempts will count towards an academic credential(s).

All course attempts will be calculated in plan averages.

Undergraduate Students Taking Graduate Courses

In some instances, graduate courses may be counted towards an undergraduate degree in the Faculty of Environment. Students must speak with their academic advisor to approve enrolment in a graduate course. Students must achieve a minimum of 60.0% to pass a graduate course. Normally, graduate courses counted towards an undergraduate degree cannot be double counted to satisfy graduate degree requirements.

Jurisdictional Information

As provided for in Senate Bylaw 2, section 5.03, council is empowered to make approvals on behalf of Senate for a variety of operational matters:

> b. Make recommendations to Senate with respect to new undergraduate programs/plans, the deletion of undergraduate programs/plans, and major changes to undergraduate programs/plans.

Governance Path

Faculty of Environment: September 24, 2025

Senate Undergraduate Council Curriculum Subcommittee – December 1, 2025

Senate Undergraduate Council: February 4, 2026

Senate: March 2, 2026

Documentation Provided

Appendix A: Proposed Changes – Faculty of Environment

The full proposal can be found in the February 4, 2026 Senate Undergraduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 3547.

For Approval   **Open Session**

To:	Senate
From:	Senate Undergraduate Council
Presenter(s):	David DeVidi Associate Vice-President, Academic
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**8.4 Report of the Senate Undergraduate Council: Faculty of Mathematics – Major Modifications**

Recommendation/Motion

That Senate approve the major plan modifications for the Faculty of Mathematics Data Science program, effective September 1, 2026, as presented.

Summary

Senate Undergraduate Council met on February 4, 2026 and agreed to forward the following item to Senate for approval as part of the regular agenda.

      a. Data Science (BMath - Honours) in the Faculty of Mathematics.

The full proposal can be found in the February 4, 2026 Senate Undergraduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 3600.

Proposal/Rationale

Data Science (Bachelor of Mathematics - Honours)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The current BMATH Data Science program was created in 2017 by modifying an existing Statistics-Computer Science joint major [1]. The program's curriculum therefore (broadly) consists of a collection of STAT and CS courses, with special permission granted to these students to enrol in CS "major" courses. Due to this reliance on restricted CS courses, as well as the resource constraints of the School of Computer Science, the program's growth has been intentionally limited with a mandate to enrol 50 students per academic year.

To ensure this quota is not exceeded, admissions are competitive and done on a termly basis. Any BMATH student who has completed or is enrolled in CS136 (and meets minimum entry requirements) may apply. Due to the large interest in the program, admissions are highly selective, with many strong students being turned away simply because of the capacity constraints. In the past four academic years (2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24,

2024/25) 1,139 students (829 of whom met the minimum entry requirements) have applied to the program and only 191 students have been enrolled.

RATIONALE FOR PROGRAM MODIFICATION

Data Science as a vocation has experienced an explosion of growth in the last 10-15 years with the *data scientist* being dubbed the sexiest job of the 21st century [Davenport & Patil, 2012] and the field expected to see more growth than almost any other between now and 2029 [Davenport & Patil, 2022]. This growth is only compounded by the recent excitement surrounding AI in business, industry, healthcare, education, and government [Anaconda, 2024]. Figure 1 compares the popularity of Google search terms over time. Although an imperfect metric, this corroborates the growing interest in data science and the stagnating interest in the related fields of statistics, mathematics, and computer science.

The growth of the data science field has coincided with increased interest in data science as an academic field of study and hence a proliferation of undergraduate and graduate data science degree programs. Unfortunately, the BMATH in Data Science program does not adequately meet the demand our students have for it. The restrictive nature of the program means that hundreds of existing students are turned away each year. And, even more problematic, the University of Waterloo loses out on an uncountable number of high school students who choose *not* to attend our institution because there exists no guaranteed path to study data science. As such, it is the aim of the proposed curriculum modification to make the program more accessible to students in the Faculty of Mathematics, thereby alleviating capacity constraints and permitting an unrestricted number of students. Doing so would increase the prominence of data science within the University of Waterloo and therefore the prominence of the University of Waterloo in the broader field of data science.
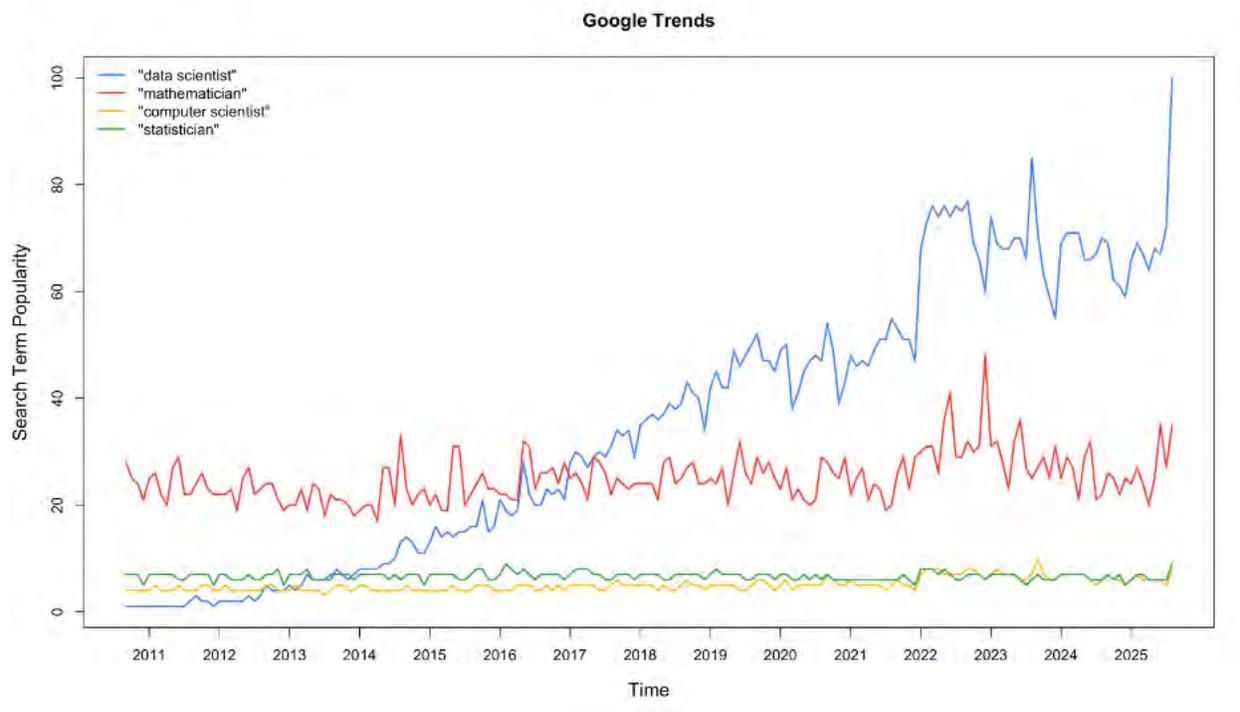

Figure 1: Worldwide interest in *data scientist*, *mathematician*, *computer scientist*, and *statistician* vocations, as capture by Google Trends (https://trends.google.com/trends/) over the period September 2010 – August 2025.

PREPARATION FOR GRADUATE STUDIES

The proposed curriculum continues to provide the technical foundation necessary for graduate study in data science. For instance, graduates of the proposed program would still meet the technical requirements for UW's MMATH in Data Science (a research-based program) and MDSAI (a course-based program).

PREPARATION FOR THE JOB MARKET

The proposed changes increase the chances of a student getting a job in data science. The core topics that exist in the current version of the program remain, so it stands to reason that the current employment outcomes will still be attainable. The introduction of the capstone course (DATASC 401), however, will provide students with practical exposure to data science topics and practice which, alumni of the program agree, would improve student portfolios and hence vocational outcomes.

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGES

The proposed curriculum modifications are intended to increase the accessibility of the program in three important ways:

1. Remove all CS "major" courses from the degree requirements and instead rely on CS courses open to all Faculty of Mathematics students [2].

2. Draw on the strengths of other units (beyond Computer Science and Statistics & Actuarial Science) and incorporate data science courses from e.g., Applied Mathematics and Combinatorics & Optimization, thereby leveraging the Faculty of Mathematics' unique capability of offering an interdisciplinary degree in data science.

3. Offer alternative pathways through the degree requirements to alleviate bottlenecks. This has the added benefit of providing students the flexibility to focus on topics of greater interest to them.

[1] There also exists a BCS Data Science program administered by the Cheriton School of Computer Science that is nearly identical to the current BMATH in Data Science program. This program is to be left as is, with modifications applied only to the BMATH in Data Science program.

[2] Eliminating CS "major" courses will necessarily dilute the computer science component of the proposed BMATH in Data Science program. However, this is an agreeable tradeoff considering the continued existence of the BCS in Data Science program which will continue to provide a CS-concentrated treatment of data science.

Motion to move Data Science (BMath) to the cross-faculty governance model (updated 26 November 2025):

On 25 November 2025, Math Faculty Council moved BMATH Data Science, previously owned by the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science, under the cross-faculty governance model adopted on 28 May 2024, with owner units being Applied Mathematics, Combinatorics and Optimization, Computer Science, Statistics and Actuarial Science.

Background and Rationale: The Faculty of Mathematics has adopted on 28 May 2024 a governance model for interdisciplinary credentials (minors, options, majors) within the Faculty of Mathematics that do not reside into a single unit. Some credentials have been created under this framework (the Quantum Information Minor) and others have been moved under that framework (MDSI and MMath Data Science).

The current BMATH Data Science and BCS Data Science programs have been respectively owned by SAS and CS but they have shared a common intellectual direction since their inceptions. A steering committee formed of representatives of the four proposed owner units has been working on many changes to the BMATH version of the program that would decouple the two programs, and currently the responsibility to move these changes to UAC rests with SAS. Given the intellectual direction the program is moving, it would be preferable for all four units to co-own the program, hence the proposal.

Jurisdictional Information

As provided for in Senate Bylaw 2, section 5.03, council is empowered to make approvals on behalf of Senate for a variety of operational matters:

> b. Make recommendations to Senate with respect to new undergraduate programs/plans, the deletion of undergraduate programs/plans, and major changes to undergraduate programs/plans.

Governance Path

Faculty of Mathematics: September 19, 2025; November 25, 2025

Senate Undergraduate Council Curriculum Subcommittee – January 26, 2026

Senate Undergraduate Council: February 4, 2026

Senate: March 2, 2026

Documentation Provided

Appendix A: Proposed Changes – Faculty of Mathematics

The full proposal can be found in the February 4, 2026 Senate Undergraduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 3600.

For Approval   **Open Session**

To:	Senate
From:	Senate Undergraduate Council
Presenter(s):	David DeVidi Associate Vice-President, Academic
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**8.5 Report of the Senate Undergraduate Council: Faculty of Science – Major Modifications**

Recommendation/Motion

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.

Summary

Senate Undergraduate Council met on February 4, 2026 and agreed to forward the following item to Senate for approval as part of the regular agenda.

     a. Advanced Physics Option in the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

     b. Aviation Minor in the Faculty of Science.

     c. New regulations for the Bachelor of Medical Sciences.

The full proposal can be found in the February 4, 2026 Senate Undergraduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 3612.

Proposal/Rationale

<u>Advanced Physics Option</u>

For students in physics plans, this option allows strong students to get a credential recognizing that their accomplishments and course choices provided an education level well above that demonstrated by the normal honours degrees offered by the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

Unlike other options in science which require a certain option average, to include only the courses listed in the option, the Advanced Physics option will require a PHYS average of 60.0%, as there needs to be a strong background in physics courses to be able to apply the Advanced Physics option.

Although there are numerous prerequisites required to carry out the courses within this option, it is not limited to physics plans within science, and may be of interest to students in other plans particularly Honours science where there is more course choice for the prerequisites. This option can't be combined with a Physics Minor.

Aviation Minor

An Aviation Minor versus an Option:

- An option will add depth to the students' knowledge, but they can only access it if they are in a particular Faculty whereas a minor will add breadth to the students' program and can be accessed by students in other Faculties, traditionally not able to access the AVIA courses.

- Fills a broad interest in Aviation and Aeronautics from the student body.

This minor will:

- Support students deflected from aviation programs at the time of admission.

- Support students interested in completing some aviation courses and having them recognized as part of their degree.

- Support students who voluntarily move out of the Science and Aviation or Geography and Aviation plans.

- Support students who are required to move out of the Science and Aviation or Geography and Aviation plans because they are unable to hold a Category 1 Medical to participate in or continue with the in-flight training, or are unable to meet the progression requirements but want to recognize the aviation courses completed and/or to complete the aviation courses required by this minor and have them recognized on their degree.

In the summer of 2024, a survey was distributed to all Science and Aviation students. The survey question: "I believe students who are deferred from or unable to continue in Science and Aviation would benefit from having an Aviation specialization on their transcript" garnered a significantly favourable response with 89 per cent when combining the categories *strongly agree* and *agree*

New Regulations for the Bachelor of Medical Sciences Regulations

The Bachelor of Medical Sciences effective September 1, 2026, has it's own progression and standings regulations that will exist on this new regulation page.

Consultation with St. George University, the partner program school has been made for this page.

Academic Standings

Progression for the Medical Sciences program is assessed term by term in consultation with St. George's University. Students will not be permitted to start the courses for the following term until requirements from the previous term have been met.

May Not Proceed Standing

A May Not Proceed standing is assigned when a student fails to meet one or more of the progression requirements listed below. This standing must be cleared by repeating of courses, promotional requirements, or terms, as deemed appropriate, in order to permit enrolment into courses for the following term. Alternatively, students may choose to be consider for transfer to another program within or outside of the Faculty of Science.

1A to 2A Terms:

This standing applies if the student has:

- failed to meet the overall minimum term average of 77.0%.
- failed to achieve a minimum course grade of 60% in one or more courses.

2B Term:

This standing applies if the student has:

- failed to meet the overall minimum term average of 77.0%.
- failed to achieve a minimum average of 77.0% across all 2A and 2B courses.
- failed to achieve a minimum average of 73.0% across all 2A and 2B Science* courses.
- failed to achieve a minimum course grade of 60% in one or more courses.
- failed to achieve a minimum grade of 60% on each component of the preclinical comprehensive sciences examination.

*Excludes MEDSCI 200, 202 and 203.

3A to 4C Terms:

This standing applies if the student has:

- failed to achieve the minimum term average of 59.0% in the 3A block course.
- failed to achieve the minimum term average of 62.0% in the 3B block course.
- failed to achieve the minimum term average of 63.0% in each of the 4A, 4B and 4C block courses.

Clearing a May Not Proceed Standing

Repeating Courses (1A to 2B)

Students who receive a May Not Proceed standing on the basis of course grades or term averages must repeat the affected term at the next available opportunity.

- When a passed course is repeated, both the original and repeated grades are recorded on the transcript, but only the higher grade will count for credit, be included in the term averages, and be used for progression decisions.
- Courses with a grade below 60% (1A to 2B) must be repeated and can only be repeated once.
- Courses with a grade above 70% are not required to be repeated.

o   Examination and Promotion Committee may allow other courses to be selected for the repeated term.

Repeating Promotion Requirements (2B)

The preclinical comprehensive sciences examination, required for promotion from 2B to 3A, may be repeated if any one component of the examination does not achieve the minimum grade requirement.

- The preclinical comprehensive sciences examination can only be repeated once.

Repeating Terms (3A to 4C)

Students who receive a May Not Proceed standing based on term averages must repeat the affected term at the next available opportunity.

- Terms 3A through 4C are required to be repeated when the block course taken in each, fails to meet the minimum average requirement. Students have a maximum of three years to complete terms 3A to 4C. A term can only be repeated once.

Required to Withdraw Standing

A Required to Withdraw standing is assigned if the student has:

- failed to achieve a minimum average of 77.0% during a repeated term.

- failed any course during the repeated term.

- failed to pass the supplemental preclinical comprehensive sciences examination.

- received a May Not Proceed standing on a repeated term.

- enrolled in a required term at another institution (e.g., St. George's University-Grenada, Northumbria University-UK).

- not enrolled in the program without an approved leave of absence from the Examinations and Promotions Committee.

Readmission following a Required to Withdraw standing is not guaranteed. Students may be considered for transfer to another program within the Faculty of Science and would be informed about the requirement to satisfy Waterloo's residency requirement and 50% rule.

Course Withdrawal

Students must complete all required courses each term. Course withdrawals (WD or WF grades) will lead to a May Not Proceed standing.

Incomplete Courses

Incomplete courses (INC grades) must be resolved before students are permitted to progress to a future term. Failure to complete courses in a term, prior to the final enrolment date into courses for the future term, will result in a May Not Proceed standing.

Petition for Exception to Academic Regulations

Students may submit a petition in accordance with Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) during their 1A to 2B academic terms at the University of Waterloo.

If a petition is approved and results in a non-numeric grade being assigned in any one course, the student will be required to repeat the entire term.

Jurisdictional Information

As provided for in Senate Bylaw 2, section 5.03, council is empowered to make approvals on behalf of Senate for a variety of operational matters:

b. Make recommendations to Senate with respect to new undergraduate programs/plans, the deletion of undergraduate programs/plans, and major changes to undergraduate programs/plans.

Governance Path

Faculty of Science: June 11, 2025; June 26, 2025

Senate Undergraduate Council Curriculum Subcommittee – January 26, 2026

Senate Undergraduate Council: February 4, 2026

Senate: March 2, 2026

Documentation Provided

Appendix A: Proposed Changes – Faculty of Science

The full proposal can be found in the February 4, 2026 Senate Undergraduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 3612.

For Approval   **Open Session**

To: Senate

From: Senate Undergraduate Council

Presenter(s):   David DeVidi
                     Associate Vice-President, Academic

Date of Meeting: March 2, 2026

Agenda Item: **8.6 Report of the Senate Undergraduate Council: Office of the
                     Registrar − Major Modifications**

Recommendation/Motion

That Senate approve the Office of the Registrar new regulation and regulation changes,
effective September 1, 2026, as presented.

Summary

Senate Undergraduate Council met on February 4, 2026 and agreed to forward the
following item to Senate for approval as part of the regular agenda.

   a. New regulations on Enrolment Status and Access to a Course.

   b. The regulations changes for: Counting of Courses; Course Outlines;
       Determination of Level and Term of Study; Grading System and Processes; 50%
       Rule; Residency Requirement; Visiting Students; and Exam regulations.

The full proposal can be found in the February 4, 2026 Senate Undergraduate Council
Meeting Book, starting on page 3630.

Proposal/Rationale

Enrolment Status and Access to a Course

Requiring students to be officially enrolled in a course before accessing materials on LEARN
or submitting assessments ensures academic integrity, compliance with institutional
policies, and operational efficiency. This regulation is necessary for several reasons:

   1. Verification of student identity and eligibility: Official enrolment in Quest provides a
       reliable record that the student is authorized to participate in the course (i.e., has
       paid or intends to pay). This helps confirm that the individual accessing course
       content and submitting work is the same person registered for the class, which is
       critical for maintaining academic integrity and meeting identity verification standards
       in higher education.

2. Fairness and equity in assessment: Allowing only enrolled students to submit assignments and receive grades ensures that academic credit is awarded appropriately. This prevents situations where non-enrolled individuals gain unfair advantages for future enrolment into the course or disrupt grading processes.

3. Accurate academic records and resource allocation: Enrolment records in Quest serve as the official source for determining course participation, which is essential for transcript accuracy, degree audits, and institutional reporting. It also supports proper allocation of resources such as classroom space, instructor workload, and access to learning technologies.

4. Reduction of Unnecessary Instructor Workload: When students who are not officially enrolled attend classes or submit work, instructors face additional administrative burdens - such as tracking unofficial participants, managing extra grading, and resolving disputes about access or credit. This regulation prevents these inefficiencies, allowing instructors to focus on teaching and supporting enrolled students.

Counting of Courses

This revision updates the regulation to include certificates in the list of academic plans subject to course-counting limits, ensuring consistency across all credential types now that some certificates will require the completion of academic courses. The change maintains the principle that a course may be used toward a maximum of two credentials, preserving the academic integrity and distinctiveness of each credential. However, it introduces a necessary clarification: when a course is required in both a major (plan) and an "add-on" specialization (plan 20), it is considered a single use. This recognizes the inherent curricular overlap between majors and their specializations and prevents students from being penalized for fulfilling integrated requirements. By allowing such a course to be counted toward a third academic plan, the regulation supports flexibility in academic planning while maintaining appropriate limits on course reuse. This clarification helps students and advisors interpret the policy consistently and ensures fair application across diverse academic pathways.

A course used to meet the requirements of an academic plan (i.e., major, minor, option, specialization, diploma, and certificate) may be counted toward a maximum of two academic plans. However, when a course(s) is listed as a requirement in both the major plan and a specialization plan, it is considered a single use of the course and may be counted toward a third academic plan.

Course Outlines

The current timing is an artefact of the old paper distribution method. Instructors can generate electronic copies easily. In addition, adding clarity regarding when changes to course outlines are normally no longer permitted.

A course outline must be available to all students in an undergraduate course by the first day of the Formal Lecture Period. See the basic elements required in a course outline. Changes to course outlines are normally not permitted after the first week of classes.

Course outlines are to be filed in each academic unit or the central repository.

<u>Determination of Level and Term of Study</u>

Change #1 (Faculty of Science): The new Medical Sciences (Bachelor of) academic plan, effective 2026-27, is added to the list of programs that use a term-by-term progression as the basis of determining the level of study.
Note: The term-progression minimum units for the new Science and Financial Management (Bachelor of) academic plan, effective 2026-27, fits with the existing "Science Academic Plans" in the unit threshold table, thus, no changes to the page are required for this new Science plan.

Change #2 (Faculty of Arts): With the new Bachelor of Arts (Social Development Studies) and Bachelor of Social Work Double Degree academic plans effective 2026-27, the term-progrssions chart on this page needs to be updated to include the four-year academic plan (three-year general) and the five-year academic plans (four-year general and Honours). The first additional row addresses the 3G-Bachelor of Arts (SDS) and H-Bachelor of Social Work Double Degree and the second additional row addresses the 4G-Bachelor of Arts (SDS) and H-Bachelor of Social Work Double Degree and the H-Bachelor of Arts (SDS) and H-Bachelor of Social Work Double Degree.

<u>Grading System and Processes</u>

The change in "Incomplete Course" definition: Course requirements not complete. INC should can only be assigned when an instructor approves the completion of outstanding course element(s) after final grades have been submitted.

This revision strengthens the language in the definition of "Incomplete Course" by replacing "should only" with "can only," thereby clarifying that the assignment of an INC designation is not discretionary but conditional. The updated wording establishes a firm requirement: an INC may be assigned only when an instructor has approved the completion of outstanding course elements.

The change in INC Course Grade Process: All assessment components for a course are to be completed during the term in which the course is taken. In exceptional circumstances, an instructor may grant a student an extension for specific outstanding course element(s), provided credible documentation has been submitted and at some point during the term the student has demonstrated meaningful engagement. (If the circumstance is related to a documented disability, students are required to connect with AccessAbility Services.)

This revision clarifies the conditions under which an instructor can grant an INC grade. The updated wording introduces an important consideration: the student's level of engagement throughout the term. By including engagement as a factor, the regulation supports a more holistic and equitable approach to academic decision-making. It ensures that extensions are not granted solely on the basis of documentation, but also in recognition of the student's sustained effort and participation in the course. This change promotes fairness, encourages ongoing commitment to coursework, and aligns with the university's values of academic integrity and student support. Other existing wording has been strengthened and clarified.

<u>50% Rule</u>

This change updates the 50% rule to reflect a comprehensive and inclusive list of University of Waterloo credentials, now explicitly including diplomas and certificates alongside degrees, majors, minors, options, and specializations. Diplomas are available to students in degree

programs as well as those admitted to non-degree or post-degree studies. To uphold academic integrity and ensure that diplomas represent meaningful academic achievement, it is necessary that a minimum portion of the required course units contributing to the credential include numeric grades used in the calculation of an average. This prevents credentials from being awarded solely on the basis of transfer credits or other non-graded coursework.

Similarly, with the introduction of certificate programs that require academic coursework, it is important to apply the same standard to ensure consistency and academic rigor across all credentials. Requiring numeric grades for at least 50% of the course units ensures that certificates also reflect a measurable level of academic performance.

The revised wording of the regulation clarifies that the list of credentials is now all-inclusive and that the numeric grade requirement applies uniformly across all credential types.

Residency Requirement

This regulation revision clarifies the residency requirement for University of Waterloo credentials, specifically diplomas and certificates, which were not previously addressed in this regulation. The updated wording ensures that these credentials are only awarded when at least 50% of the required academic course units are completed through University of Waterloo courses. This maintains the integrity and distinctiveness of Waterloo credentials by ensuring that a substantial portion of the academic experience is delivered by the institution.

Additionally, the revised regulation distinguishes between course-based requirements and other non-course components (e.g., milestones, internships, volunteer work) that may be part of a credential. This clarification ensures that the residency requirement applies strictly to academic coursework, avoiding misinterpretation that could otherwise restrict students who fulfil non-course requirements through external or experiential means.

The regulation also addresses students who are readmitted to pursue an additional degree or diploma (students cannot be admitted to pursue only a certificate), ensuring that at least 50% of the academic requirements for the new degree or diploma are completed at Waterloo. This reinforces the principle that each credential awarded by the University reflects a meaningful and substantial engagement with its academic programs.

Visiting Students

The addition of the statement, "Students studying at the University of Waterloo through a formal exchange agreement are not permitted to complete University of Waterloo credentials (including diplomas and certificates)," serves to clarify the scope and limitations of exchange agreements. Exchange programs are designed to offer students international academic experiences while remaining enrolled at their home institutions. This update ensures alignment with the intent of these agreements, maintains the integrity of Waterloo's credentialing process, and prevents any misunderstanding regarding eligibility for formal qualifications. It also helps uphold consistent academic standards and administrative practices across all incoming exchange cohorts.

Letters of Permission (Incoming)

A Letter of Permission allows a student to take courses at another university that may be considered for credit towards their degree at their home university, subject to faculty or program approval and regulations.

Students from other Canadian universities intending to study at the University of Waterloo on a Letter of Permission must initiate the process through their home university's registrar's office. The visiting student Letter of Permission application must be completed by the deadlines for each term and the approved Letter of Permission should arrive to Waterloo no later than one month prior to the start of term. Class enrolment is always subject to space availability in the course(s) requested.

Current Waterloo students looking to go out on a Letter of Permission should review the Opportunities to Study at Other Institutions.

Student Exchange Programs (Incoming)

Students from around the world come to the University of Waterloo on exchange or study abroad. Find out more about opportunities to come to Waterloo.

Current Waterloo students looking to go out on exchange should review the opportunities to study at other institutions.

Students studying at the University of Waterloo through a formal exchange agreement are not permitted to complete University of Waterloo credentials (including diplomas and certificates).

Exam Regulations

Scheduling Parameters

Scheduled Pauses in the Academic Term

Scheduled pauses are study days, reading weeks, and public holidays recognized by the University.

Instructors are not permitted to administer, and students are not required to sit for final examinations, tests, or lectures during a scheduled pause. There are to be no compulsory academic events (e.g., classes, labs, tutorials, seminars, final examinations). Deadlines for assignments are not permitted during a scheduled pause.

While exceptions may exist (e.g., clinical rotations, field trips, Year Four Optometry and Pharmacy courses) the scheduled pauses apply to both undergraduate and graduate students.

Study Days and Reading Weeks

Study days and reading weeks are designated periods where normal class schedules and academic requirements are suspended for a specified period of time. The dates are published in the Important Dates & Deadlines.

Student services such as student advising support, Health Services, Counselling Services, the library, and residences continue to provide service.

Study Days

There are one or two study days each term, between the end of the Formal Lecture Period and the beginning of the Final Examination Period. No classes are to be held during study days, except where classes are rescheduled as the result of a campus-wide emergency closure.

Reading Week

Reading weeks occur in the fall and winter terms; they start with the Saturday before the public holidays of Thanksgiving Day and Family Day and end on the following Sunday.

The Formal Lecture Period

Each term, the formal period during which lectures take place is defined by the Important Dates & Deadlines (classes begin to classes end).

The normal teaching day at the University of Waterloo extends from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Student assignments and tests – assessments of knowledge, skills, and/or judgment – may be scheduled by instructors throughout the Formal Lecture Period except that major term tests may not be held in the last five teaching days of this period. Major term tests are those which account for more than 25 per cent of the final course grade. Exceptions must be approved in advance by the instructor's department Chair and the Associate Dean (Undergraduate) of the faculty concerned.

Faculty of Science Laboratory Courses

Faculty of Science is permitted to hold final examinations during the latter part of the Formal Lecture Period in laboratory courses which may require laboratory facilities.

Guidelines on Scheduling Tests During the Formal Lecture Period

Instructors are encouraged to hold tests during the regularly scheduled class times for their courses. If instructors hold a test outside of the normal course meeting times that creates a legitimate conflict for students, the regularly scheduled event takes precedence, and the instructors must provide an alternative, mutually agreeable time for the student to write the test.

The date and time of tests must be included in the course outline. This time and date cannot be subsequently changed unless there is an extreme circumstance and unanimous consent from the class.

Material included on a test should be introduced sufficiently in advance of the test date to allow students reasonable time to seek clarification or greater understanding of concepts. Normally, this period will be a minimum of two working days.

The parameters for scheduling tests are as follows:

1. Tests are held during the Formal Lecture Period from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, inclusive.

2. The faculties of Mathematics and Science may schedule Saturday tests for large, multiple-section courses in the fall and winter terms, if those tests are approved by the appropriate Associate Dean, scheduled using test slots, and announced to students during the first week of classes via published course outlines.

3. The School of Accounting and Finance may schedule Saturday or Sunday tests for large, multiple-section courses in the fall, winter, or spring terms, if those tests are approved by the appropriate Associate Dean, scheduled using test slots, and announced to students during the first week of classes via published course outlines.

Tests are not permitted outside of these parameters.

Instructors are encouraged to avoid requiring students to sit for tests during the time when co-operative work-term employment interviews are scheduled. Whenever possible, students

are encouraged to avoid scheduling co-operative work-term employment interviews that conflict with tests. Attendance at co-operative work-term employment interviews is not considered to be a valid reason to miss a test.

Tests and Final Examinations

The revisions to the regulation were undertaken to enhance clarity, consistency, and alignment with current practices and institutional priorities. For example:

- Adding information about the general timeline of when the final examination schedule is created and shared with students.

- Adding information about expectations of availability for students during the Final Examination Period, and about instructor attendance at the final examination session.

- Subdividing the Rules for Test Conduct section for readability.

The changes address operational concerns, accessibility, and academic integrity while ensuring fairness for students and instructors. Key considerations include:

1. Clarification of examination duration: The statement that final examinations "normally will be no longer than 2.5 hours" was added to reflect that centrally scheduled exams adhere to this limit. This ensures transparency without imposing unrealistic constraints on specialized programs.

2. Instructor availability and delegation: The requirement for instructors to attend their own final examinations was clarified, and delegation authority was restricted to academic unit heads rather than Associate Deans to align with governance structures and workload assignment protocols.

3. External writing arrangements for online students: The section on writing examinations externally was added to outline responsibilities, deadlines, and cost implications for students. This ensures clear expectations and equitable treatment for our remote learners.

4. Emergency rescheduling procedures: Language was added to clarify decision-making authority and rescheduling protocols during emergencies, including the use of designated "emergency days." This promotes consistency and minimizes disruption during unforeseen events.

5. Rules for test conduct and academic integrity: Updates include:

   o Clearer guidance on permitted items and electronic devices.

   o Removing the authority for proctors to request inspection of bags and electronics to uphold integrity.

6. Rationale for addition of "Final Examination Sessions Affected by Irregularities" section: This new section was introduced to address a gap in the previous regulation regarding procedures for handling unforeseen disruptions during final examinations. The addition ensures that both students and employees have clear, standardized guidance in rare but impactful situations.

Academic Considerations and Accommodations

- Updating references to the Verification of Illness Form (VIF) to the Verification of Condition (VOC) Form as the new form will be in circulation by publication time.

- Updating references to physician or nurse practitioner to health care practitioner (practitioner for short) for consistency with the language being used on the new FOC Form.

- Moving the content from another page to the new section titled "Academic Considerations Due to Test Schedule Conflicts".

- Subdividing existing content by creating a new section titled "Academic Considerations Due to Final Examination Scheduling Principles".

  - Adding the missing principle of granting relief to students who are scheduled to have more than 2 final examinations in one day.

- Adding regulations about the final examination make-up sessions the Office of the Registrar has been piloting for several years.

- Updating other references for clarity and consistency.

In addition, the short-term absence section was rewritten after another clause - regarding group projects and presentations - was being added and to provide enhanced transparency for students and instructors:

- The new version explicitly states that instructors determine how missed obligations are handled (e.g., deadline extensions, make-up activities).

- It clarifies that students may choose to complete some obligations during the absence, reducing confusion about whether participation is prohibited.

- It clarifies that block or condensed courses often cover the same learning outcomes as full-term courses but in a shorter timeframe. If a summative test equivalent to a final exam exists, it is often held outside the Final Examination Period, but the same rules should apply to these assessments.

- Presentations and symposia are integral to demonstrating communication skills, critical thinking, and subject mastery. They often involve coordination with peers and external participants, making them difficult to reschedule without compromising learning objectives.

- Collaborative work and peer feedback are essential components of many courses. These activities foster teamwork and evaluative skills, and their timing is critical to the progression of the project. Allowing flexibility here could disadvantage other group members or disrupt the peer review process.

Student Access to Final Examination Materials

- Adding the word "final" before examination for consistency with other references in the rewritten final examination regulations:

  - "Students may request an informal review of a final examination (both the questions and the examination responses) up to one year from the date that the final examination was written or until the date indicated in the course outline."

- Updating the name of the regulation to "materials" from "papers" as is it is more accurate, and making the applicable change in the content as well.

Jurisdictional Information

As provided for in Senate Bylaw 2, section 5.03, council is empowered to make approvals on behalf of Senate for a variety of operational matters:

> b. Make recommendations to Senate with respect to new undergraduate programs/plans, the deletion of undergraduate programs/plans, and major changes to undergraduate programs/plans.

Governance Path

Senate Undergraduate Council Curriculum Subcommittee – January 26, 2026

Senate Undergraduate Council: February 4, 2026

Senate: March 2, 2026

Documentation Provided

Appendix A: Proposed Changes – Office of the Registrar

The full proposal can be found in the February 4, 2026 Senate Undergraduate Council Meeting Book, starting on page 3630.

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO | Senate

For Information   **Open Session**

To: Senate

From: Senate Research & Innovation Council

Presenter(s):   Charmaine Dean
                     Vice President, Research and International

Date of Meeting: March 2, 2026

Agenda Item: **9.1 Report of the Senate Research & Innovation Council**

Summary

Senate Research and Innovation Council met on February 12, 2026 and agreed to forward the following items to Senate for information as part of the consent agenda. On behalf of Senate, the following items were received for information or approved:

1. Defence Research

    Council received for information and discussed an update on Defence Research.

2. Research Centres and Institutes

    Council approved an extension for renewal of the following Centres and Institutes: Games Institute (GI), Institute for Quantum Computing (IQC), Waterloo Climate Institute (WCI), Water Institute (WI), Waterloo Institute for Nanotechnology (WIN), Centre for Pavement Engineering and Transportation Technology (CPATT), IPR (Institute for Polymer Research), Waterloo Institute for Hellenistic Studies (WIHS), Southwestern Ontario Research Data Centre (SWORDC), Waterloo Centre for German Studies, Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Aeronautics (WISA).

3. Pan-African Initiative for Research

    Council received for information the proposal for the Pan-African Initiative for Research (PAIR).

4. Global Futures

    Council received for information and discussed an update from Global Futures.

Jurisdictional Information

As outlined in the council's Terms and Reference, Senate Research and Innovation Council is empowered to provide advice and guidance on behalf of Senate for a variety of matters:

- Provide advice and guidance to Senate on strategic matters relating to research at the University, including strategic research plans, annual report of the Vice-President Research and International, advancing institutional priorities related to research, and identifying emergent needs and areas for consideration related to university research.
- Review and make recommendations to Senate as appropriate, on institutional policy related to university research.
- Consider, study and review all proposals for new centres and institutes, and the closure of centres and institutes, and make recommendations to Senate thereon.

Governance Path

Senate Research and Innovation Council: February 12, 2026

Documentation

- SRIC Report: Defence Research at the University of Waterloo

SRIC Report: Defence Research at the University of Waterloo

Background

At the Senate meeting of January 26, 2026, discussion arose regarding whether the University of Waterloo should explicitly encourage or discourage defence-related research. The Chair of Senate requested that the Senate Research and Innovation Council (SRIC) undertake a more fulsome discussion and provide guidance to Senate on this matter.

Opening Remarks

SRIC received presentations from researchers who provided an overview of strategic, ethical, governance, and reputational considerations for conducting defence-related research.

Presenters emphasized that defence research is intrinsically tied to civilian research and that the distinction between the two is often difficult to draw. Many technologies originating in defence-funded programs, including the internet, GPS, and jet engines, have gone on to become significant civilian technologies. Conversely, research driven by civilian needs in areas such as spaceflight, propulsion, and advanced materials can also be directly applicable to defence. This dual-use character is a defining feature of much of the defence-related research carried out at the University of Waterloo.

The University of Waterloo's existing engagement (largely pre-dating the current moment) in this space is substantial and spans multiple departments/schools. Research areas with defence relevance include manufacturing and structural integrity, autonomous systems and robotics, quantum technologies and cybersecurity, and sensing, propulsion, and human factors.

Presenters also highlighted growing regional and national momentum around dual-use research. Small and medium enterprises in the Waterloo Region are increasingly pivoting toward defence and dual-use applications in alignment with federal strategy, particularly in advanced manufacturing, aerospace, and technology. The University is being looked to as a leading institution to support this transition. University of Waterloo-based startups working in areas such as quantum sensing and drone detection were cited as examples of how university research translates into practical capabilities for both national security and broader public benefit.

Council Discussion

Council members engaged in an extended and wide-ranging discussion that included the following key considerations:

• Defence-related research at the University of Waterloo spans multiple Faculties and involves dual-use technologies with both civilian and defence applications, including quantum computing.

• Cybersecurity risks and the requirement of secure research spaces present both challenges and opportunities.

• Questions of national sovereignty and compliance with evolving government restrictions on research partnerships must be addressed proactively.

• Members emphasized the need for a holistic approach, interdisciplinary engagement, and consideration of societal impact.

• A note that disengagement from defence-related research would not prevent such research from occurring elsewhere; the projects and activities would simply shift to other actors.

Council Position

That SRIC supports University of Waterloo researchers engaging in security, sovereignty, and defence-related research, and encourages the institution to continue its broad interdisciplinary efforts (e.g. encompassing technical work to global governance) to support researchers with clear guidance and support.

For Information   **Open Session**

To: Senate

From: Whitney Barrett
                     Ombudsperson

Date of Meeting: March 2, 2026

Agenda Item: **10.1   Annual Report for the Office of the Ombudsperson**

Summary

This memo introduces the inaugural Annual Report of the Office of the Ombudsperson. The report reflects the Office's first partial reporting cycle, which spans September 1 to August 31, and it summarizes activities and milestones from January to August 2025, the period following the Office's official opening. The report provides an overview of the early establishment phase and initial patterns in the concerns brought forward by students.

Rationale

This item is being brought forward to Senate as part of the Office of the Ombudsperson's reporting obligations under the tri party Memorandum of Understanding, which governs the Office's mandate and responsibilities. The purpose of bringing this report forward is to provide Senate with an overview of the Office's establishment and early operations following its January 2025 opening, and to highlight the key activities, service trends, and milestones from the inaugural reporting period. This supports transparency, accountability, and shared understanding of fairness related issues across the University.

Jurisdictional Information

This report is submitted in compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding, an agreement between the University of Waterloo, the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association, and the Graduate Student Association UW. The MOU serves as the jurisdictional authority for the Office and outlines the mandate, scope, and expectations under which the Office operates.

The MOU establishes that the Office of the Ombudsperson operates in accordance with the ACCUO Standards of Practice and functions independently from the institution and from student associations. It authorizes the Ombudsperson to review, investigate, and make recommendations to remedy unfairness in the situation of an individual student, and it sets out the conditions under which the Office is funded and expected to carry out its work.

Key Activities and Priorities

The attached report includes additional detail. The following high-level indicators summarize the early months of operation between January and August 2025:

- **55 student cases** were received.

- Students engaged with the Office an average of **8.28 times per case**.

- The most common areas of concern were supervision, academic progression, and accommodations.

- Key milestones included:

    o **January:** Office officially opened

    o **February and March:** Outreach to senior leadership and campus partners

    o **July:** Assistant Ombudsperson hired

    o **August:** Launch of expanded website resources and the monthly fairness blog

These activities demonstrate the early establishment of a trusted, independent resource for students and mark the foundation on which future systemic and educational work will continue to grow.

Beginning next year, annual reports will align fully with the standard September 1 to August 31 reporting cycle. As the Office continues to build on its foundation, priorities include:

- Strengthening systemic analysis and reporting.

- Continuing to develop fairness focused resources that support student understanding of policies and processes.

- Enhancing communication and outreach across academic and support units.

- Maintaining the independence and impartiality outlined in the MOU while contributing to institutional clarity and fairness.

Documentation Provided

2025 Annual Report for the Office of the Ombudsperson

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Office of the Ombudsperson at the University of Waterloo acknowledges that our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. Our office is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

As an office committed to fairness in practice, policy, and procedure, we recognize that fairness also requires reflection on the histories and ongoing impacts of colonization. We honour the relationships that Indigenous peoples have with this land and acknowledge our responsibility to contribute to reconciliation through respectful dialogue, learning, and action.

We are grateful to the Office of Indigenous Relations for guiding the University's efforts in reconciliation, and we commit to engaging with these efforts in ways that uphold relational, procedural, and substantive fairness.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"Our conversation was one of the most meaningful experiences I've had as a student navigating difficult academic circumstances."

"I appreciate the service that the Ombuds Office provides in building a more fair University of Waterloo for tomorrow."

"Having an ombudsperson as an undergraduate student feels like one of the best resources on campus one could ask for."

"I appreciated [their] advice tremendously and was immensely satisfied."

VISITOR FEEDBACK

1

FROM THE OMBUDSPERSON

To the University of Waterloo Community:

I am pleased to share the inaugural annual report of the Office of the Ombudsperson for the period January 1 to August 31, 2025. This report fulfills the commitment outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the University, WUSA, and GSA-UW, and reflects our shared dedication to fairness.

This year marked the opening of a new door at Waterloo -- a door to enhanced clarity and fairness. The creation of the Office was not a procedural decision, but a principled one, shaped by student advocacy and a recognition that navigating university systems can be complex and overwhelming.

I joined the University shortly before the Office officially launched, bringing with me over 15 years of experience in academia through various roles at Western University, culminating in my position as Acting Ombudsperson. That experience deepened my understanding of how fairness is practiced in higher education and the systemic challenges students face. At Waterloo, I have built on that foundation to establish an impartial, independent, and confidential resource for students, one that empowers them to navigate processes with confidence and clarity.

From building services and resources to fostering trust across campus, this first year was about laying a strong foundation to support fairness in practice, policy, and procedure. Through consultations, case reviews, and systemic observations, we learned that fairness depends on more than policies; it depends on clarity, communication, and respect. These insights will guide our work in the year ahead.

The Ombuds Office isn't the right or wrong door; it's simply a door to understanding. Behind that door is a commitment to impartiality, independence, and confidentiality. Our role is to listen without judgment, clarify policies and procedures, and help students explore options so they can make informed decisions. We do not advocate for individuals or the institution; we advocate for fairness as part of our collective practice, and through policy and procedure.

The door is open. Let's walk through it together.

Whitney Barrett

Whitney Barrett
Ombudsperson

ABOUT THE OFFICE

The Office of the Ombudsperson at the University of Waterloo was formally launched in January 2025, following years of sustained advocacy by student leaders from the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA), the Graduate Student Association (GSA-UW), and the Committee on Student Mental Health (CoSMH). These groups identified the absence of an ombudsperson as a significant gap in the University's fairness infrastructure and worked collaboratively to establish a resource that would be impartial, independent, and student-centered.

The Office was created through a Memorandum of Understanding between the University, WUSA, and GSA-UW. Administratively, the Office sits within the portfolio of the University Secretary, who reports to the Chair of the Board of Governors. The Office is jointly funded by the University and the student associations. This shared funding model supports the Office's operational and financial independence from all signatories. Located on the third floor of the Student Life Centre, the Office serves all students, undergraduate and graduate, by promoting fairness across academic and non academic areas.

The Office is led by **Whitney Barrett,** the inaugural **Ombudsperson**. Whitney joined the University of Waterloo in late 2024 to establish the Office and bring its mandate to life. With a background in higher education, conflict resolution, and policy analysis, Whitney brings a systems-focused lens to fairness and is committed to empowering students to navigate university processes with confidence and clarity.

In July 2025, the Office expanded to include **Sam Vandekerckhove, Assistant Ombudsperson**. Sam supports the day-to-day operations of the Office, including intake, case management, and student consultations. He also contributes to outreach, education, and data tracking—key functions that enable the Office to identify systemic trends and support institutional improvement.

Together, the Ombudsperson and Assistant Ombudsperson provide confidential, impartial guidance to students seeking to understand their rights, responsibilities, and options. The Office does not advocate for individuals or the institution, but rather advocates for fairness in practice, policy, and procedure.

3

HOW WE WORK

Every student who visits the Office of the Ombudsperson begins with a simple step: opening the door. What happens next is a process designed to provide clarity, empower decision-making, and uphold fairness.
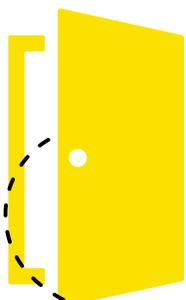
Step 1

Intake – Opening the Door
When a student reaches out, whether in person, virtually, or by email, the first priority is creating a confidential and impartial space. This is where we listen, without judgment, and begin to understand the concern.

Step 2

Consultation – Clarifying the Issue
Through conversation, we help students articulate their concern and identify the policies, procedures, or practices that may apply. This step is about understanding, not just what happened, but what matters most to the student.
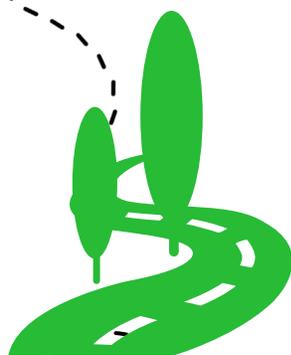
Step 3

Exploring Options – Finding the Path Forward
Once the issue is clear, we outline possible pathways. These may include informal resolution strategies, referrals to other campus resources, or guidance on formal processes. Our role is not to decide for students, but to equip them with the information and confidence to act.

Step 4

Closure or Referral – Moving Forward
Every interaction concludes with clarity. Whether the concern is resolved, referred, or escalated through formal channels, students leave knowing their options and next steps.
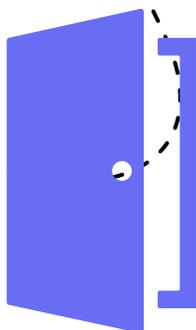
Looking Beyond the Door

While each case is unique, patterns matter. We track themes and trends to identify systemic issues where fairness may be faltering.

These insights inform recommendations for institutional improvement.

4

FAIRNESS: THREE DIMENSIONS, ONE TRIANGLE

Fairness is at the heart of every interaction and every recommendation we make. Ombuds practice across Canada is grounded in the Fairness Triangle, a framework that helps us assess whether decisions and processes meet three essential dimensions of fairness:

SUBSTANTIVE FAIRNESS

PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

RELATIONAL FAIRNESS
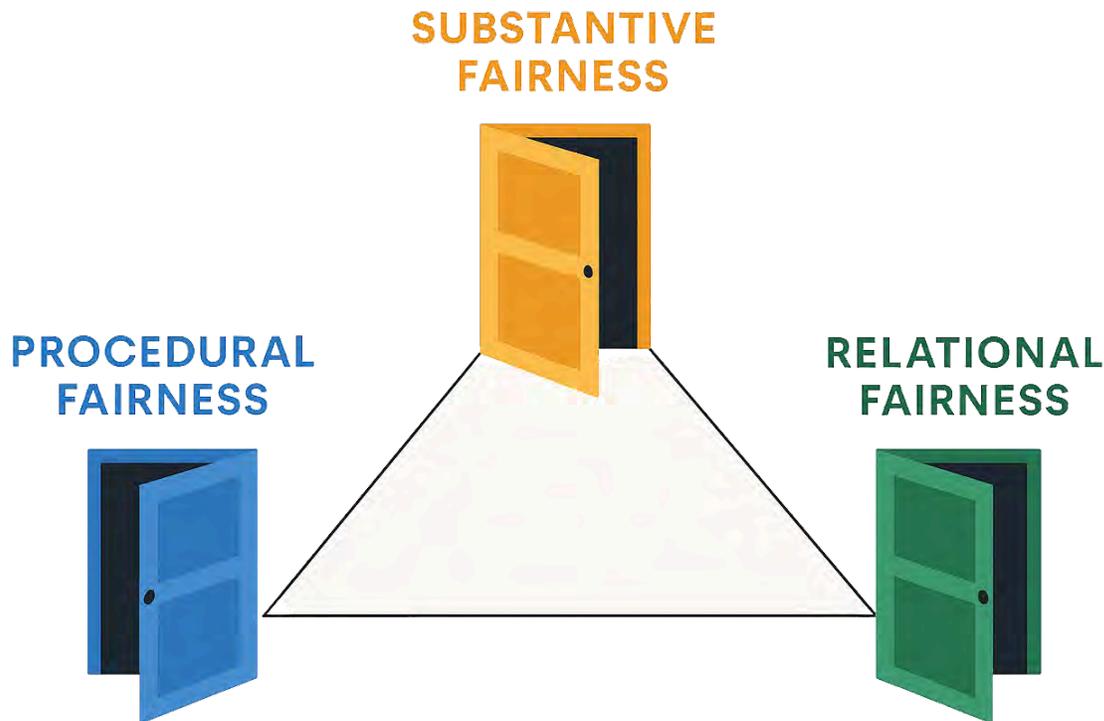
Procedural Fairness
How the decision was made. Were the steps clear, consistent, and transparent? Did the student have a meaningful opportunity to be heard?

Substantive Fairness
What decision was made. Was the outcome reasonable and based on relevant information? Does it align with policy and context?

Relational Fairness
How people were treated. Was the student treated with respect and dignity throughout the process? Was communication honest and timely?

These dimensions are interconnected, like the sides of a triangle, and together they form the foundation of fairness in university decision-making. When one side is missing, fairness falters.

5

COMMUNITY AND CONNECTIONS

Building trust and awareness was a priority in the first year. The Ombuds Office is most effective when students know it exists and understand its role. To that end, I focused on outreach that meets students where they are, both physically and virtually.

Campus Connections

The Office increased visibility through monthly visits to Stratford and Cambridge campuses, ensuring students at satellite locations had direct access to services. These visits were more than symbolic. They provided opportunities to understand unique challenges and build trust in person.

Early in the year, I conducted a leadership roadshow, meeting with senior academic and administrative leaders to introduce the Ombuds Office, clarify its mandate, and explain how it complements, not replaces, existing services. These conversations were essential for building institutional understanding and reinforcing the Office's impartial role.

The Office also connected with student-facing staff across campus through presentations and service guides, creating a shared understanding of the Ombuds role and ensuring students receive accurate information no matter where they seek help.

Collaborative Relationships

Collaboration is at the heart of building a fairness infrastructure. While the Ombuds Office does not participate in committees or working groups, I actively connect with offices across campus to strengthen clarity and coordination for students. These relationships include EDI-R, SVPRO, AccessAbility Services, WUSA Advocacy, and the Graduate Student Association. Connections ranged from supporting complex cases to sharing knowledge about mandates and exploring opportunities for outreach and education, all while maintaining impartiality.

These engagements were intentional and relationship-driven. For example, connecting with AccessAbility Services provided insight into accommodation processes, while discussions with SVPRO clarified pathways for students navigating sensitive concerns. Regular touchpoints with WUSA and GSA ensured student priorities remained visible and informed systemic observations.

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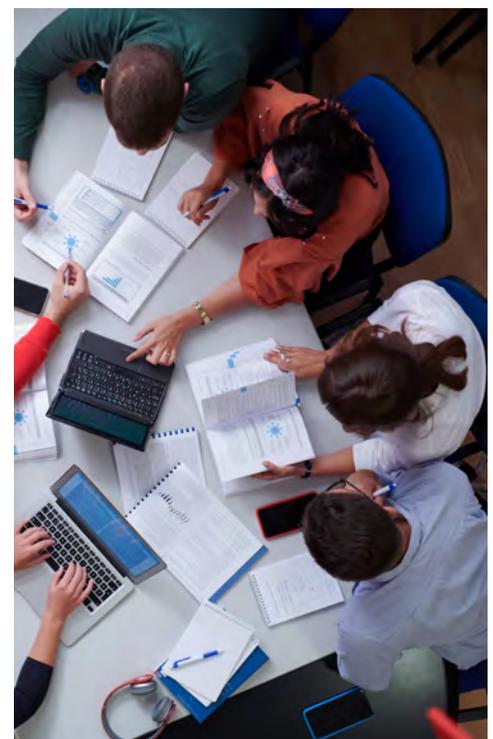
Policy Consultation

Fairness is shaped not only by how policies are applied but by how they are written. Throughout the year, parties preparing updates to existing policies, guidelines, and recommendations invited me to review proposed changes. These consultations were an opportunity to bring an impartial lens to policy development, ensuring clarity, accessibility, and fairness were considered from the outset.

My feedback focused on identifying areas where language or structure could create confusion for students, as well as highlighting potential limitations or unintended consequences. In some cases, I suggested actionable revisions to strengthen transparency and reduce ambiguity. In others, I raised questions about how proposed changes might intersect with existing processes or affect students navigating complex circumstances.

These engagements were collaborative and constructive. Feedback was welcomed and often incorporated, reinforcing the shared commitment to fairness across the institution. By contributing to these conversations, the Ombuds Office helped shape policies that not only meet procedural requirements but also support a student experience grounded in clarity and respect.

Digital Engagement

Digital engagement was a cornerstone of building awareness. The Office expanded its website with plain-language resources, including guides that break down complex policies into clear, actionable steps. A monthly blog series launched to share insights on fairness, systemic trends, and practical tips for navigating university processes.

To support staff and faculty, the Office developed digital resources guides and presentation materials, ensuring consistent messaging about the Ombuds role across campus.

These resources were complemented by targeted outreach through email to relevant stakeholders, reinforcing the message that fairness is accessible and impartial.
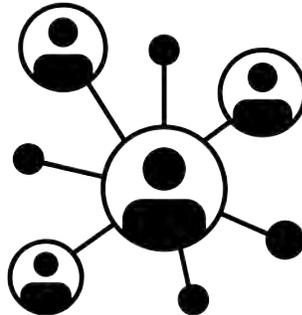
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AT A GLANCE

The data presented reflects activities during the inaugural reporting year (September 1 – August 31). As the Office opened in January, case-related data covers January through August 31.

55
CASES RECEIVED

From January to August, the Office handled **55 cases**, providing impartial guidance and support to students navigating complex challenges.

96%
STUDENT VISITORS

The vast majority of visitors were students, reflecting the Office's primary role in supporting the student experience.

8.28
AVERAGE CONNECTIONS PER CASE

On average, each case involved **8.28 interactions**, showing the level of engagement needed to address concerns.

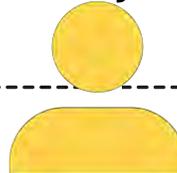## MILESTONES

January

Office opened

February - March

Connected with Senior Leadership across campus

July

Welcomed Assistant Ombudsperson

August

Website expansion and Monthly Blog launched

HOW WE CONNECTED

Email
80%

Virtual
13%

In Person
7%

TOP 3 CONCERNS

1. Supervision
2. Academic Progression
3. Accommodations

STORIES FROM THE THRESHOLD

Every student who walks through the Ombuds Office door brings a unique story, but beneath those individual experiences, common threads emerge. Over the past year, the Ombuds Office observed a recurring pattern in student concerns: fairness challenges often arise not from the absence of policy, but from the complexity of navigating it. These stories show what happens when processes intersect, expectations diverge, and communication falters and what we can learn from those moments.

Complexity Without Coordination

Fairness becomes hardest to achieve when complexity clouds the path. Some students arrive with concerns that span multiple academic terms, policies, and processes. Health challenges intersect with grading disputes, petitions collide with appeals, and informal agreements replace formal procedures. In these situations, fairness falters not because policies are absent, but because navigating them feels overwhelming.

One student's experience illustrates this vividly: after multiple health-related absences, they submitted documentation directly to instructors rather than through formal channels. Without an academic consideration plan or accommodations in place, decisions became fragmented and inconsistent. Informal agreements with senior administrators added further ambiguity. While the University acted within policy, the absence of coordinated procedures left the student feeling exhausted and uncertain.

This case reminds us that complex situations need structured navigation support. Informal pathways increase risk and erode trust.

9

Expectations vs. Reality

Fairness can feel distant when expectations and processes collide. Students sometimes expect advocacy or outcome changes, but the Ombuds role is different: it is about clarity, not intervention. When this distinction is not well understood, frustration may be directed at the process, even when the concern is really with the result.

For example, a student who failed a required course pursued multiple levels of appeal, alleging bias and a lack of transparency in academic decision-making. Each stage of the appeal followed established procedures, and the decision makers provided reasons that met procedural fairness standards. Despite this, the academic decision was upheld.

Several elements of the process were experienced by the student as unsatisfactory, including the use of virtual hearings, which the student felt limited their ability to communicate their perspective effectively. These concerns were raised as further evidence of unfairness. However, a review of the process confirmed that the procedures themselves were applied consistently and as intended.

As the matter progressed, it became apparent that the student's primary expectation was for the decision to be overturned. The student also believed the Ombudsperson could intervene to change the outcome. Clarifying the Ombuds mandate, particularly the Office's lack of authority to reverse academic decisions, was a key part of the engagement.

In this case, the student's frustration was rooted largely in disappointment with the outcome rather than procedural deficiencies. The student's perception of unfairness reflected a mismatch between expectations of advocacy and the Ombuds role of explaining process, scope, and available options.

Fairness is not a guarantee of agreement; it is a commitment to process, respect, and reasonableness. Helping students understand this distinction, particularly when outcomes are unfavorable, is a central part of the Office's work.

10

Shared Accountability

Challenges brought to the Ombuds Office are rarely one-sided. Students and institutions share responsibility for engaging academic processes in ways that support fair resolution. When timing, understanding, or access break down, the sense of fairness can be strained even when policies are applied appropriately.

In one case, a student petitioned to amend their academic record after graduation, citing cultural stigma as a barrier to seeking accommodations earlier in their program.

Although the University applied its policies correctly, the delayed engagement significantly limited the options available for remedy. By the time the concern was raised, institutional flexibility was constrained.

This case underscores the shared accountability at the heart of fairness. Students must engage formal processes in a timely way, and institutions must ensure those processes are clear and accessible. Fairness depends not only on policy compliance, but on raising concerns before options for resolution are exhausted.

Systemic Signals

These stories point to opportunities for improvement across the University's fairness infrastructure:

Navigation Support
Students managing multiple, overlapping challenges often struggle to identify the right process or resource. A coordinated approach for highly complex cases could reduce fragmentation and improve clarity.

Proactive Communication
Clear, timely updates about decisions and processes can prevent misunderstandings and reduce stress. Strengthening communication practices is key to relational fairness.

Cross-Unit Coordination
When health concerns, academic decisions, and policy requirements intersect, gaps in coordination can compound complexity. Building stronger connections between units can make processes more seamless for students.

Fairness is not about bending rules. It's about making them work for real people in real situations. These systemic signals remind us that behind every policy is a person, and behind every decision is a process that must be clear, consistent, and respectful.

11

OBSERVATIONS

Fairness rarely turns on a single decision. More often, it emerges from how students experience outcomes, timing, and the clarity of the processes surrounding them. In many cases this year, concerns arose not because procedures were flawed, but because outcomes did not change in the way students expected.

A recurring theme was misalignment between student expectations and institutional roles. Some students approached appeal or review processes (and the Ombuds Office) anticipating advocacy or intervention to overturn decisions. When outcomes were upheld despite procedurally sound processes, frustration was sometimes directed at the system itself. These cases highlighted how perceptions of unfairness are often shaped by expectations of outcome, rather than by deficiencies in process.

Timing also emerged as a critical fairness factor. Students who engaged formal processes late, whether due to uncertainty, stigma, or fear of disclosure, often encountered limited options for resolution. While students share responsibility for engaging processes in a timely way, institutions have a role in ensuring those processes are visible, understandable, and accessible early on. Across cases, fairness was most strained when expectations, timing, and clarity were out of alignment.


12
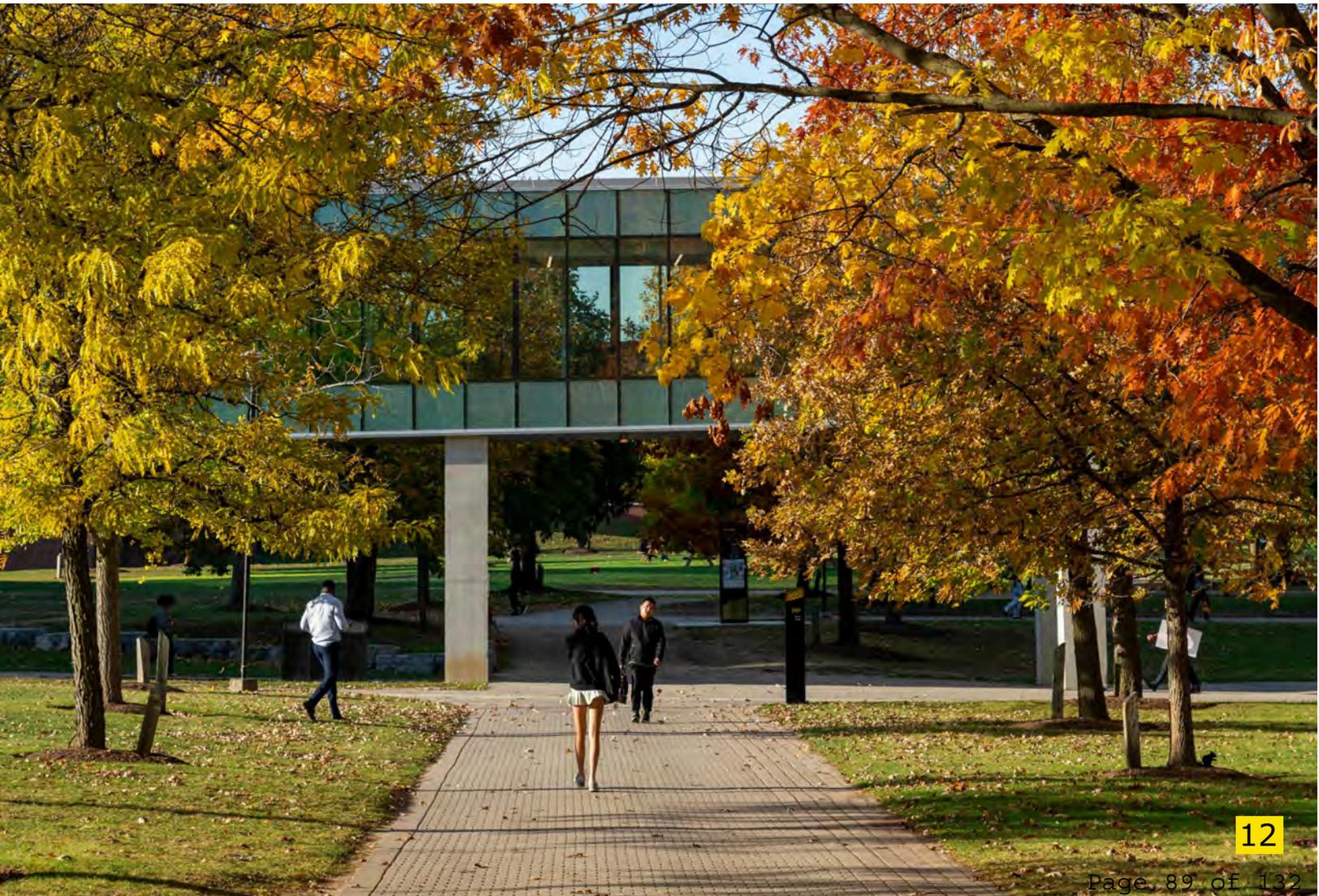
CONSIDERATIONS

While this inaugural report does not include formal recommendations, several considerations emerged from the cases reviewed and the patterns observed. These considerations are shared to support ongoing conversations about clarity, coordination, and fairness across the University:

Navigating Complexity: Students navigating formal academic processes often encounter multiple steps, timelines, and decision makers. When concerns evolve over time or span more than one process, identifying the appropriate pathway can be challenging. Several cases reflected how complexity itself, rather than the absence of policy, can shape perceptions of fairness and contribute to delayed or fragmented engagement.
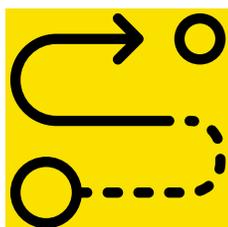
Setting Clear Expectations: In a number of cases, students entered formal processes expecting advocacy or outcome change, including from the Ombuds Office. When decisions were upheld following procedurally sound processes, frustration sometimes followed. These experiences underscore the importance of clear communication about roles, authority, and limits, particularly early in a process, to support shared understanding of what fairness does and does not entail.
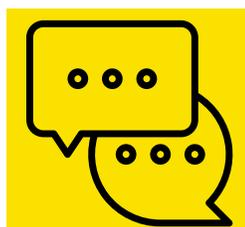
Improving Communication: The experience of fairness is closely tied to how decisions are communicated. Even when policies are applied appropriately, unclear explanations, delayed updates, or limited context can make outcomes feel impersonal or rigid. Consistent, plain language communication about reasoning, timelines, and next steps supports both procedural and relational fairness.
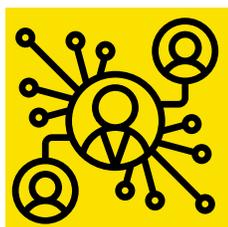
Coordinating Across Units: Cases involving intersecting academic, health, and accommodation considerations highlighted the importance of coordination across units. When guidance or messaging is inconsistent, students may delay engaging formal steps or misunderstand the implications of timing. Clear alignment across related processes helps ensure students receive coherent information and understand their responsibilities within shared systems.

LOOKING AHEAD

One consistent area of concern highlighted this year is the care and support for students navigating highly complex situations. These cases often involve multiple policies, decision-makers, and support units, creating a landscape that can feel fragmented and overwhelming. When coordination is unclear, students experience delays, inconsistent information, and added stress at a time when they are already vulnerable.

These cases reveal systemic gaps rather than isolated issues. They point to the need for stronger integration across academic and non-academic systems, clearer communication pathways, and proactive supports for students facing layered challenges.

In the coming year, I intend to explore this topic through a systemic review, with the goal of identifying structural improvements that enhance fairness and reduce barriers for students in the most challenging circumstances.

14

STATISTICS

This section provides a closer look at the case data collected during the first reporting year. Because the Office opened in January, the analysis reflects activity from January through August 31. The data is organized to show patterns by faculty, degree level, and category of concern, along with visitor demographics such as residency, gender, and indicators of academic risk. These insights help illustrate the types of issues students brought forward and highlight trends that will guide future priorities.

CASES
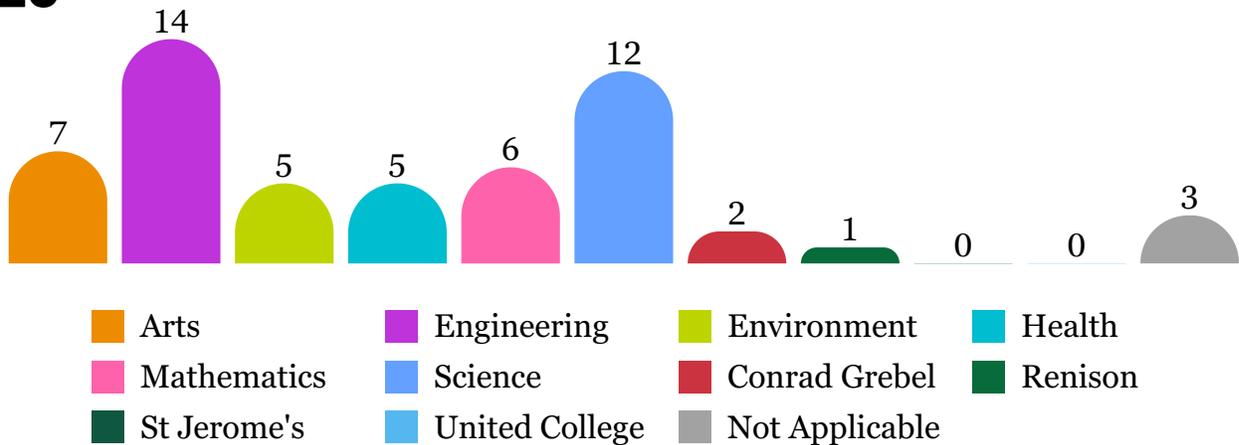
Engineering, Science, and Arts accounted for the highest number of visitors. The chart on the below illustrates the types of concerns raised: academic issues made up 57.2% of cases, non-academic concerns accounted for 35.5%, and a small proportion (3.8%) involved both institutional and outside jurisdiction matters.

CONCERNS

Academic concerns include issues such as supervision, progression, and accommodations; areas where students often navigate complex policies and decision-making processes. Non-academic concerns cover matters like ethical behavior, housing, and financial challenges, reflecting the broader student experience beyond academics. Cases involving both institutional and outside jurisdiction typically relate to situations where external factors intersect with university processes.

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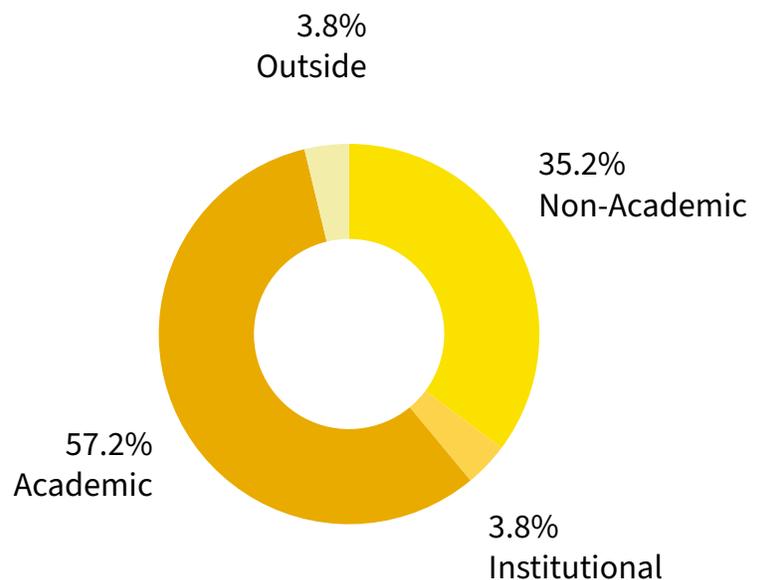
VISITORS

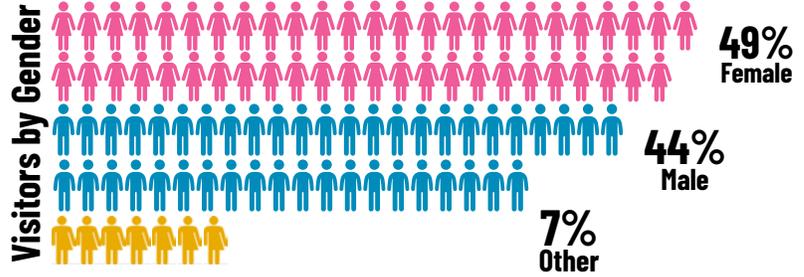This page highlights who accessed the Office and how they connected. Most visitors were domestic students, with international students representing a smaller proportion. Gender distribution was balanced, and indicators of risk appeared in a subset of cases.

Visitors by Visitor Type

1
6
28
20
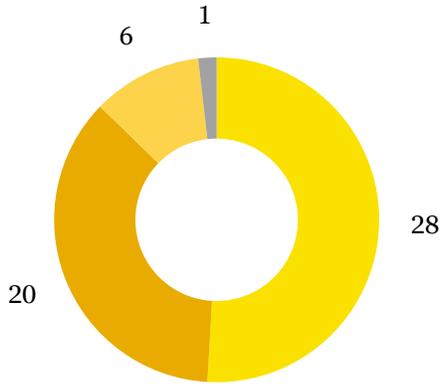
Undergraduate
Graduate
Other
Applicant

Visitors by Gender

49% Female
44% Male
7% Other

25% of visitors self-identified as being an international student.

34% of visitors shared they have a disability, experienced mental health concerns or trauma.

Average Connections by Visitor Type

Other — 9.5
Undergraduate — 7.7
Graduate — 6.7
Applicant — 2
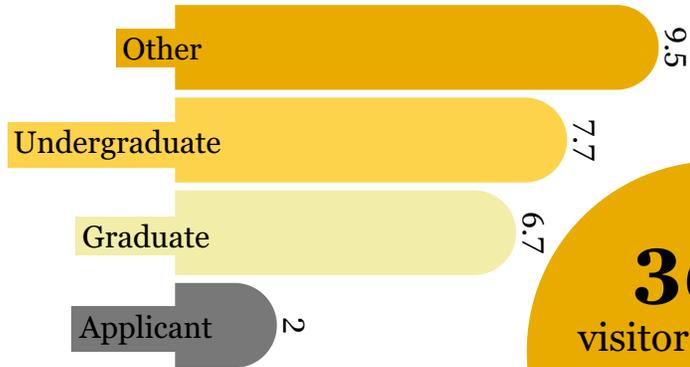
36% visitors referred by staff, faculty, or friends

CONNECTIONS

Communication patterns show email as the primary method of contact, followed by virtual and in-person meetings.

79% connection by email

Virtual
In Person
Phone
Drop In
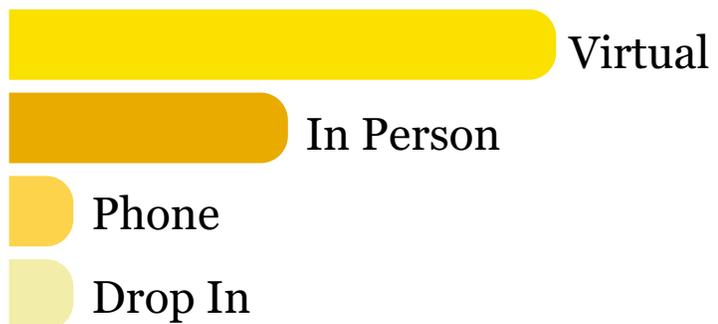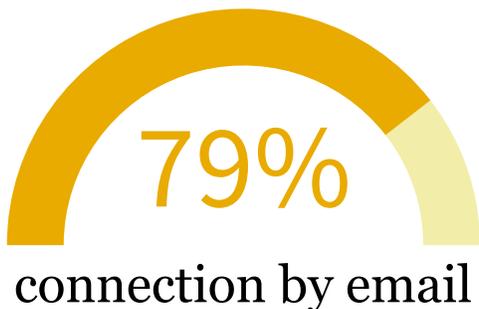
ACADEMIC CONCERNS

Academic concerns accounted for the majority of cases. The most common issues were supervision, progression, and accommodations, reflecting challenges in navigating program requirements and support systems.

Supervision concerns often involve the student-supervisor relationship and expectations for research or thesis work. Progression refers to issues with advancing through program milestones. Accommodations include requests or disputes related to disability or health-related supports.
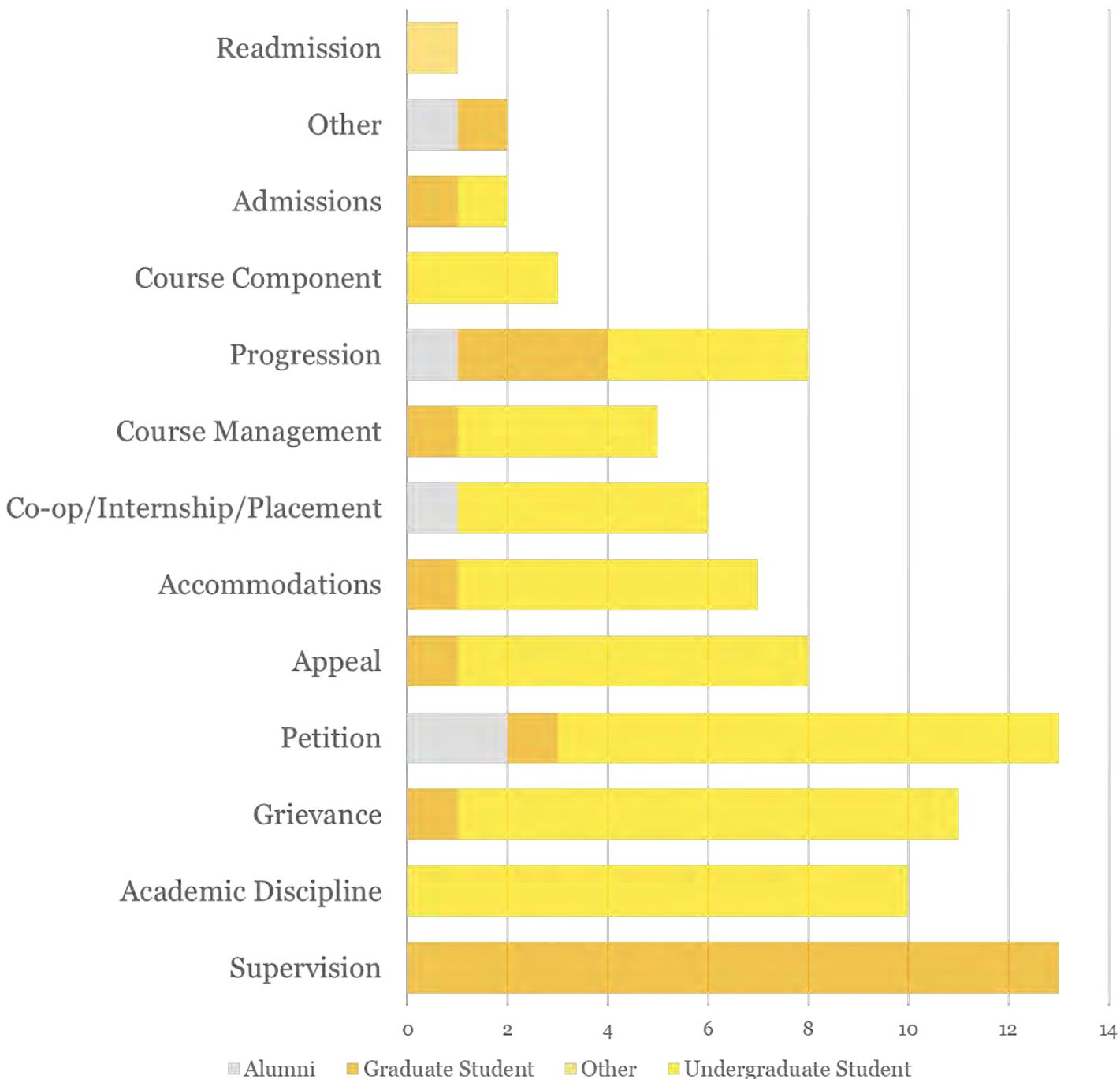
NON-ACADEMIC CONCERNS

Non-academic concerns represented a significant portion of cases, focusing on ethical behavior, housing, and financial matters. These issues highlight the broader student experience beyond academics.

Ethical behavior concerns include allegations of misconduct, harassment, discrimination, or other concerns that fall under the scope of Policy 33. Housing issues relate to campus accommodations, roommate challenges, or landlord disputes. Financial concerns include tuition, fees, and related financial pressures.

Legend: Alumni, Graduate Student, Other, Undergraduate Student
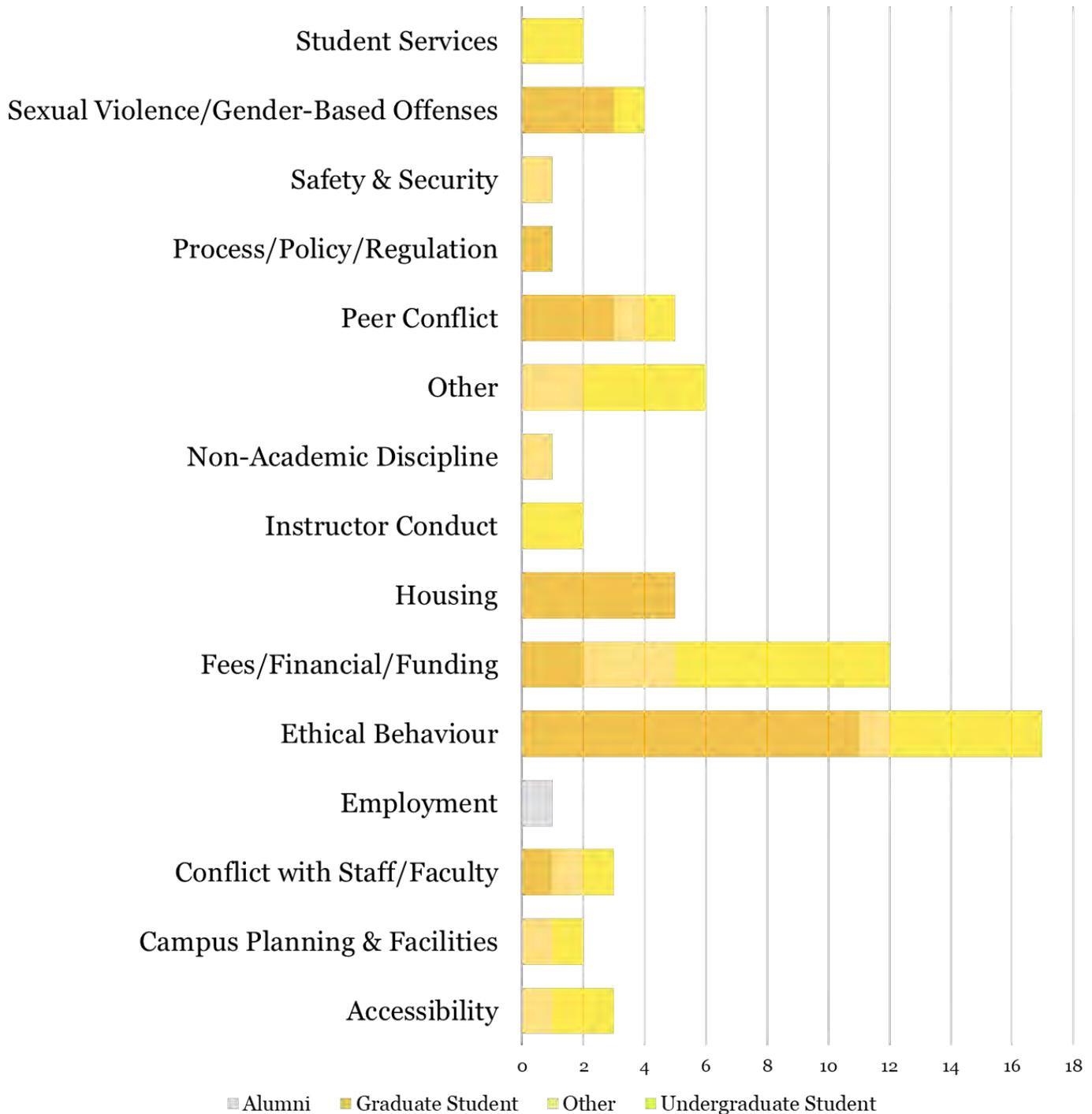
MOVING FORWARD

The first year was about building a foundation: creating a trusted, impartial resource and establishing systems that support fairness in practice, policy, and procedure. With that foundation in place, the next chapter focuses on deepening impact and strengthening the University's fairness infrastructure.

Reaching More Students

Fairness should be accessible no matter where a student studies. The Office will broaden its presence by visiting additional campuses, including Pharmacy and Optometry, and connecting with the Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW). These visits are about more than visibility, they create opportunities to understand unique challenges and ensure every student knows where to turn for impartial guidance.

Making Fairness Easier to Understand

Students have told me that clarity matters. The Office will continue building plain-language resources that break down complex policies into practical steps. The monthly blog will remain a space for sharing insights on fairness and systemic trends, helping students feel confident navigating university processes. Education isn't just about information, it's about empowerment.

Turning Data into Action

Behind every case is a story, and behind every story is a pattern. With case management and reporting systems now in place, the Office can move beyond counting cases to identifying themes. Reporting tools will support thematic reporting, helping uncover systemic issues and inform recommendations that strengthen fairness across the institution.

Building Stronger Connections

The Office will maintain regular engagement with academic support units, student leadership, and academic units, sharing observations and faculty summaries that support continuous improvement. These conversations ensure fairness is not only practiced but embedded in decision-making.

Every door tells a story with a variety of questions asked, challenges faced, and paths discovered. As the University evolves, new doors will appear, and some will need to be rebuilt. The Ombuds Office will keep opening those doors, making sure what's behind them is clear, fair, and accessible. Because fairness is more than understanding. It's being treated with respect, following procedures that are transparent and consistent, and ensuring decisions are reasonable and grounded in context.

This first year was just the beginning. The Ombuds Office will keep opening doors - doors to enhanced clarity, respect, and fairness for every student at Waterloo.

19

A NOTE OF THANKS

I want to thank the students, past and present, whose advocacy made the creation of this Office possible. Your voices opened the door to strengthening fairness at Waterloo.

To every student who has visited or connected with the Ombuds Office this year; Thank you for placing your trust in this resource. That trust is the foundation on which this work stands.

For Information   **Open Session**

To:	Senate
From:	Vivek Goel President and Vice-Chancellor
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**11.1 Report of the Associations**

Summary

The 2025-2026 Annual Report of the Associations will highlight key accomplishments, advocacy efforts, and emerging priorities across the associations. The annual update will be presented by:

- David Porreca, President, Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo

- Meray Sadek, President, Graduate Student Association

- Damian Mikhail, President, Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association

2025-2026 Senate Work Plan

Senate Agenda Items p = planned ✓ = completed	September 22, 2025	October 20, 2025	November 24, 2025	January 26, 2026	March 2, 2026	April 6, 2026	May 4, 2026	June 8, 2026
LEADERSHIP, FACUTLY, AND ASSOCIATION REPORTS								
Report of the President	✓	✓	✓	✓	p	p	p	p
• Faculty Tenure and Promotion Report (*consent*)			✓			p	p	p
Report of the Vice-President, Academic & Provost	✓	✓	✓	✓	p	p	p	p
• Reports from Faculties (e.g., appointments, administrative appointments, sabbaticals) (*consent*)	✓	✓	✓	✓	p	p	p	p
• Call for Nominations and Designation of University Professor	✓					p		
Report of the Vice-President, Research & International (*consent*)	✓	✓	✓	✓	p	p	p	p
• Annual Report of the Vice-President, Research & International				✓				
Faculty Presentations					p		p	p
Annual Association Reports: FAUW, WUSA, GSA					p			
Report of the COU Academic Colleague								p
COMMITTEE & COUNCIL REPORTS Each committee and council of Senate will provide a report to Senate after each meeting.								
Executive Committee, Academic Quality Enhancement Committee, Graduate Council, Honorary Degrees Committee, Planning and Finance Committee, Research and Innovation Council, Undergraduate Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	p	p	p	p
POLICIES & BY-LAWS Policy and By-Law amendments may also be brought forward based on review schedules or as required.								
Annual Report on Gift Acceptance (Policy 7) (*confidential*)								p
University Committee on Student Appeals Annual Report (Policy 72)						p		
University Appointment Review Committee Annual Report (Policy 76)						p		
Executive Appointments (Policy 48, 50, 68) (*confidential*)								
OPERATING BUDGET Under the Report of the Planning and Finance Committee.								
University Operating Budget Update		✓						
Joint Board/Senate Budget Education Sessions				✓	p			
Operating Budget (recommendation to Board)						p		
ADMISSIONS UPDATES, CONFERRING OF DEGREES, AND AWARDS								
Call for Nominations: Honorary Degree and Honorary Member	✓					p		
Academic Calendar Dates	✓							
Teaching Awards Committee: Appointment and Award Winners				✓			p	
Delegation and Reports of the Roster of Graduands	✓		✓			p		
Spring and Fall Convocation Reports	✓		✓					
Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions Update				✓				
SENATE MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE								
Senate Orientation	✓							
Call for Senate Nominations, Elections, and Appointments			✓	✓	p			p
Senate Effectiveness Survey					p			

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO | Senate

For Information   **Open Session - Consent**

To:	Senate
From:	Gen Gauthier-Chalifour University Secretary
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**12.2 2026-2027 Senate Election Results**

Summary

Elections for Faculty, Undergraduate and Graduate student Senators were held in February 2026. Elections for Faculty and Graduate students were conducted by the Secretariat, and elections for Undergraduate student Senators were conducted by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA). This report provides a summary of newly elected Senators and Senators with concluding terms. This report is being provided for information and to provide an official record of election results.

Newly Elected Senators

Elections that are noted as "acclaimed" received nominations that were equal to, or less than, the number of available vacancies in that contest.

All successful candidates are listed in alphabetical order by last name.

Faculty Elections

All Faculty Senator-elects will have three-year terms beginning September 1, 2026 and concluding August 31, 2029.

Faculty-at-Large (8 Vacancies):

1. Derek Armitage
2. Benoit Charbonneau
3. Jason Grove
4. Nadine Ibrahim
5. Marios Ioannidis
6. Jennifer Lynes Murray
7. Gerald Voorhees
8. Stan Woo

Faculty of Arts (2 Vacancies)

1. Shana MacDonald (2nd Term)
2. Marcel O'Gorman

Faculty of Engineering (1 Vacancy):

Christopher Nielsen, ACCLAIMED (2nd Term)

Faculty of Environment:

No Vacancies for 2026/2027

Faculty of Health (1 Vacancy):

Michael Barnett-Cowan (2nd Term)

Faculty of Math (1 Vacancy):

Martin Karsten, ACCLAIMED

Faculty of Science (1 Vacancy):

Chris Yakymchuk, ACCLAIMED

Graduate Students

All Graduate Senator-elects will have two-year terms beginning September 1, 2026 and concluding August 31, 2028. (2 Vacancies)

1. Dean Eaton
2. Geetam Saha

Undergraduate Students

All Undergraduate Senator-elects will have two-year terms beginning September 1, 2026 and concluding August 31, 2028. (7 Vacancies)

1. **Arts Senator** Andrew Chang (2nd Term)
2. **Engineering Senator** Muhammad Kanji
3. **Environment Senator** Katherine Wang *(acclaimed)*
4. **Math Senator** Alex Lavallee *(acclaimed)*
5. **Science Senator** Misha Khan (2nd Term)
6. **At-Large Senator** Kenzy Soror

   No nominations were received for the Undergraduate Student Health Faculty Senator were received. A by-election would be needed, conducted by WUSA, for this remaining vacancy.

Out-going Senators

All Senators listed below will conclude their Senate terms at the end of the current governance year, unless otherwise indicated:

Faculty

1. Arts: James Skidmore

2. Mathematics: Achim Kempf

3. Science: Colleen Maxwell

Faculty-at-large

1. Mark Ferro

2. Peter Hall

3. Kevin Hare

4. Christiane Lemieux

5. Blake Madill

6. James Nugent

Graduate Students

1. Nicholas Pellegrino

2. Jessica Rindlisbacher

Undergraduate Students

1. Andrew Chang – Arts (Re-elected)

2. Rida Sayed - Engineering

3. Katie Traynor - Environment

4. Christopher Lim - Health

5. Alex Pawelko - Math

6. Jordan Bauman - Science

7. Misha Khan – Student at Large (Re-elected as Science Senator)

Senate Elections to Board and Committee Assignments

Nominations for Senate elections for Faculty and Student positions on the Board of Governors open from March 30 to April 7. Candidates will be asked to submit a nomination form as well as a 100-word candidate statement. Additional communications with information regarding Senate elections to the Board of Governors will be sent directly to Senators and Senator-elects.

Conclusion

The University would like to thank all candidates who allowed their name to stand for election and would additionally like to thank all out-going Senators for their service to the University and their participation in university governance.

Jurisdictional Information

Elections were held in accordance with Senate Bylaw 3 – Selection of Members of Senate, and the *University of Waterloo Act*.

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO | Senate

For Information   **Open Session - Consent**

To: Senate

From: Senate Academic Quality Enhancement Committee

Presenter(s):   David DeVidi

                       Associate Vice-President, Academic

Date of Meeting: March 2, 2026

Agenda Item: **12.3   Report: Senate Academic Quality Enhancement
                       Committee**

Summary

Senate Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQuE) conducted an e-vote concluding on January 26, 2026 and agreed to forward the following items to Senate for information as part of the consent agenda. On behalf of Senate, the following items were received approved:

   a. Progress Report: Nanotechnology Engineering (BASc)
   b. Final Assessment Report: Health Studies/Sciences (BSc), Public Health (BPH, MPH), Public Health Sciences (MSc, PhD), Health Evaluation (MHE), Health Informatics (MHI), Gerontology (Minor, Diploma), Aging Studies (Option), Health Informatics (Option) Aging, Health and Well-Being Collaborative (PhD), Work and Health Collaborative (PhD)

Approved final assessment reports and cyclical program review progress reports can be viewed on the AQuE Committee Reporting page. There were no issues noted in the reports or concerns raised by the committee.

AQuE Report to the Board of Governors

Committee members received for information and provided feedback on the AQuE report to the Board of Governors.

Jurisdictional Information

As outlined in the committee's Terms and Reference, Senate Academic Quality Enhancement Committee is empowered to make approvals on behalf of Senate for a variety of operational matters:

   1. To consider, study, and review all matters pertaining to the University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), and make recommendations to Senate, thereon. In the case of editorial changes to the IQAP, consider and approve such changes on behalf of Senate, and report to Senate for information.

2. On behalf of Senate, consider and approve all Final Assessment Reports and Progress Reports within the University's IQAP, and provide Senate with a summary of the committee's deliberations in this regard. Any matter of controversy that might arise may be referred to Senate.

Governance Path

Senate Academic Quality Enhancement Committee approval date: January 26, 2026

Documentation Provided

Appendix A: AQuE Report to the Board of Governors

University of Waterloo
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
Report to the Board
Academic Quality Enhancement 2024-2025
February 3, 2026

Background

Cyclical Program Reviews

Established in 2010, the Ontario University Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council), which operates at arm's length from the Provincial Government and Ontario's Universities, oversees the quality of degree and diploma programs at Ontario universities. Each university develops an Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) in line with the Quality Council's Quality Assurance Framework (QAF).

The Vice-President Academic oversees the quality of the University's academic programming, delegating IQAP oversight to the Associate Vice-President, Academic (AVPA) and Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (AVPGSPA). The Academic Quality Enhancement (AQuE) Office comprises three FTE staff, housed in the AVPA Office, and supports the cyclical review process, new program approvals, and major modifications.

All degree and graduate diploma programs are required to undergo a review at least once every eight years. This involves a thorough evaluation of the program, including consultations with stakeholders, culminating in a self-study which lays out the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities for the program. The self-study also ensures curriculum elements align with degree level expectations. External experts review the self-study, conduct site visits, and provide a report with recommendations.

The IQAP ensures these recommendations are considered by requiring:

- A program response which includes an implementation plan detailing the actions to be taken, the person(s) responsible for implementation and a timeline. A rationale is required for any recommendations not selected for implementation.

- A Deans' response, which considers the program's plans, particularly those requiring resource commitments.

- A Final Assessment Report, which summarizes the program and Dean(s) responses, and is approved by the Senate Academic Quality Enhancement Committee.

- A progress report, also approved by the Senate Academic Quality Enhancement Committee, which provides updates on the implementation of the plans described in the FAR.

Annual reports on academic reviews are submitted to the Quality Council and the University's Board of Governors.

Approvals of New Programs

The approval process for new degree programs is complex and involves internal vetting for academic and societal value, alignment with the University's strategic priorities, financial viability, and external vetting by experts in the discipline. As with cyclical reviews, external experts conduct a site visit and make recommendations for the program to consider and implement with the support of the Faculty Dean(s). A progress report is required and is typically requested 1-2 years after first intake of students into the program.

Proposed programs must be supported and approved by departments, Faculties, Senate Undergraduate Council or Senate Graduate Council, and Senate. Proposed new programs must also be approved externally by the Quality Council and, if they will receive Ministry grant funding, by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

Annual reports on new program approvals are submitted to the Quality Council and the University's Board of Governors.

Approved Major Modifications

Major modifications are substantive changes to existing programs which do not rise to the level of constituting a new program and are distinguished from minor modifications by Quality Council criteria. The AQuE Office advises on the classification of changes. Annual reports on approved major modifications are also required by the Quality Council. Our annual report was submitted to the Quality Council in July 2025.

New programs

New program development:

Building on the momentum of the previous year, this has been an exceptionally active period for new program development. The year was marked by a steady progression in program design, with eight new degree programs moving forward into the formal proposal stage, comprising seven graduate programs and one undergraduate program, alongside two new graduate diplomas. Consistent with previous trends, these proposals continue to prioritize interdisciplinary frameworks and professional development opportunities that align with the latest advancements in their respective fields.

Looking ahead, the university is currently revising its institutional approval process to facilitate a more strategic assessment of new program ideas. A central component of this revision is the creation of a dedicated committee tasked with reviewing expressions of interest collectively, rather than as isolated submissions. By evaluating our program pipeline as a whole, the university can better ensure alignment with our long-term strategic goals and resource allocation. We anticipate that this refined process will yield significant efficiencies, reducing the time from inception to approval while ensuring that selected ideas receive a higher degree of focused attention as they move forward.

New approved programs

Biomedical Engineering (MASc, PhD)

The Biomedical Engineering PhD and MASc programs, which will be four and two years in duration, respectively, include new and existing courses that will engage students in the acquisition of high-level technical knowledge and methods. The program is research-focused in biomedical engineering, with complementary emphasis on professional engineering and design practice. In addition to an independent thesis, students will develop professional and transferable skills in modules for milestone-based activities in the proposed Professional Attributes and Competence Enhancement (PACE) Module. The program will include a strong model of engaged thesis advisers forming active interdisciplinary advisory and examination committees.

Cyclical program reviews

Improvements in cyclical program reviews:

The Academic Quality Enhancement Office continues to prioritize identifying and resolving the procedural obstacles to streamline their quality assurance processes. Following the focus on alumni surveying identified in the previous reporting period, they are pleased to report that the pilot for a centralized alumni survey proved highly successful. By consolidating the coordination previously shared between individual programs, Faculty Alumni Representatives, and Institutional Analysis and Planning (IAP), they have significantly reduced the administrative burden on units.

Building on the success of this pilot, this centralized model has been expanded to include surveys of current students. This integrated approach ensures greater consistency in data collection, higher quality in survey design, and a more synchronized schedule across the university. These improvements allow academic units to focus their efforts on interpreting results and implementing program enhancements rather than managing the technical logistics of survey administration.

Significant strides have also been made in addressing the historical delays associated with the review and approval of Final Assessment Reports (FARs) and Progress Reports. The Senate Academic Quality Enhancement (AQuE) Committee was established in December 2024 to centralize these reviews, effectively replacing the previous dual-track process involving the Senate Undergraduate Council (SUC) and Senate Graduate Council (SGC).

This dedicated structure has fundamentally transformed our institution's quality assurance oversight. Previously, reporting was often constrained by the crowded agendas of SUC and SGC, frequently resulting in limited discussion. In contrast, the specialized AQuE Committee provides a focused pathway that allows for greater engagement with the material. This increased rigor ensures a higher standard of quality assurance without sacrificing momentum.

The efficacy of this new model is clearly demonstrated by the substantial increase in the quantity of approved reports:

Reporting Period	Governing Body	Reports Approved	Timeline
2022–23	SUC and SGC	16	September – August
2023–24	SUC and SGC	21	September – August
2024–25	**AQuE Senate Committee**	**32**	**December – August**

Final Assessment Reports

The following are **Final Assessment Reports** that were received and approved by the Senate Academic Quality Enhancement Committee during the September 2024 – August 2025 reporting period:

- FAR - Accounting - Macc - GRAD
- FAR - Accounting and Financial Management - UG
- FAR - Accounting PhD - GRAD
- FAR - Applied Language Studies - UG
- FAR - Biology - Augmented
- FAR - Civil and Environmental Engineering - GRAD
- FAR - Cognitive Science - Augmented
- FAR - East Asian Studies - UG
- FAR - Electrical and Computer Engineering - Augmented
- FAR - Fine Arts- Augmented
- FAR - Gender and Social Justice - UG
- FAR - Geography (joint with WLU) - GRAD
- FAR - Geography and Environmental Management - Augmented
- FAR - Knowledge Integration - UG
- FAR - Management Sciences - Augmented
- FAR - Math Teaching/Mathematics for Teachers - Augmented
- FAR - Math/IT/Business/CPA/FARM - UG
- FAR - Math/Math Studies - UG
- FAR - Pharmacy - Augmented
- FAR - Planning - Augmented
- FAR - Political Science - Augmented
- FAR - Social Development Studies - UG
- FAR - Social Work - Augmented

Progress Reports

The following are the **Progress Reports** that were received and approved by the Senate Academic Quality Enhancement Committee during the September 2024 – August 2025 reporting period:

- PR - Civil, Enviro, Geological Engineering - UG
- PR - Computer Science - Augmented
- PR - German - Augmented

- [PR - Mechanical, Mechatronics Engineering - UG](#)
- [PR - Rec & Leisure Studies - Augmented](#)
- [PR - Theatre and Performance - UG](#)
- [PR - Water Collaborative - GRAD](#)

Non-credit Credentials

The University of Waterloo has a long history of offering "non-credit" credentials (i.e., learning opportunities that cannot be counted towards a traditional university credential like a degree). For most of the University's history, these offerings have primarily been traditional "extended education" courses, and they were normally offered through the Centre for Extended Learning (and its predecessors).

In recent years, the University has made a strategic decision to move more aggressively into offering learning opportunities to mid-career professionals, and to "credentialing" learning opportunities for degree seeking students that do not count as credits (or milestones) towards their degrees. These credentials differ from traditional continuing education by being more obviously aimed at university-level learners. These new sorts of credentials, which we call for convenience "non-credit credentials" are approved by the Alternative Credentials Approval Committee (ACAC). Because this is a growing area of University academic activity, last year we began including an update on the University's non-credit credentials in this report. Last year's report listed 11 WATSPEED and 7 non-WATSPEED credentials approved by ACAC between 2021 and August 2024.

Most non-credit credentials that are intended for learners who are not currently enrolled in degree programs are administered by WATSPEED, which offers non-credit professional education for industry professionals to stay ahead of emerging technologies and understand the impacts of those technologies on society. WATSPEED leverages the University's academic expertise by offering courses which are developed and delivered by faculty members. These programs extend the educational impact of the institution by providing valuable learning opportunities to people throughout their careers.

As can be seen below, other units are also increasingly becoming involved in non-credit credentials. Non-credit credentials are generally developed apart from WatSPEED when they do not fit with the WatSPEED mandate as described above, are aimed at different learners (e.g. those currently enrolled in degree programs), or when WatSPEED does not have capacity to support their development. Whether developed with WatSPEED or not, all such credentials receive similar scrutiny from ACAC to assure their academic quality.

The following non-credit credentials were approved by ACAC between September 2024 and August 2025:

WatSPEED credentials

Credential	Partner(s)	Notes
Back End 1: Frameworks and Architecture	School of Computer Science/Inflection Group	Certificate of Achievement
Back End 2: Security, Database Design and Concurrency	School of Computer Science/Inflection Group	Certificate of Achievement

Cloud Computing and Security Essentials	School of Computer Science	Certificate of Achievement
Cloud Computing and Security Fundamentals	School of Computer Science	Certificate of Achievement
Cybersecurity and Privacy	Cybersecurity and Privacy Institute	Certificate of Attendance
Managing AI Projects	Vector Institute	Certificate of Completion
Neural Networks	Faculty of Engineering	Certificate of Completion
Python 2	School of Computer Science	Certificate of Achievement

Non-Credit Credentials not involving WatSPEED

Credential	Whose is it?	Notes
Leveraging AI to Improve Healthcare in Canada	School of Public Health Faculty of Health	Certificate of Completion
Neural Networks	Faculty of Engineering	Certificate of Completion
AI Enabled Healthcare	School of Public Health, Faculty of Health	Certificate of Participation
Land Development Bootcamp	Future Cities Institute, Faculty of Environment	Certificate of Attendance/Participation
Future Cities Field School	Future Cities Institute	Certificate of Participation
Leadership Training Program in Entrepreneurship	Faculty of Engineering	Certificate of Completion
Global Sports Management Certificate: Leadership and Innovation	Faculty of Health, Recreation and Leisure Studies	Certificate of Attendance/Participation
Municipal Climate Adaptation Certificate	Faculty of Environment	Certificate of Completion
Systems and Platform Security	School of Computer Science	Assessment of Achievement

David DeVidi

Associate Vice-President, Academic

Justin Wan

Interim Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

For Information   **Open Session - Consent**

To:	Senate
From:	Senate Executive Committee
Presenter:	Vivek Goel, President and Vice-Chancellor Senate Executive Committee Chair
Agenda Item:	**12.4 Senate Executive Committee: Summary of the February 17, 2026 Meeting**

Summary

At the February 17, 2026 meeting of the committee, the following items were discussed:

1. **Chancellor Review Update**
   The committee discussed and provided feedback on the upcoming community consultations related to the Chancellor review. The community consultations will provide important insight into the role of the Chancellor.

2. **Senate Alternative Credentials Committee Proposal**
   The committee discussed the revised proposal for the Senate Alternative Credentials Committee, following review and recommendations from the Senate Undergraduate Council and Senate Graduate Council. The committee approved by e-vote on February 23, 2026 the motion to recommend that Senate approve the creation of the Senate Alternative Credentials Committee, effective May 1, 2026. (See item 6.2.)

3. **Draft Senate Meeting Agenda for January 26, 2026**
   Following review and feedback, the committee approved the March 2, 2026 Senate agenda.

4. **Other Business**
   The committee received a memo from the Chair in follow up to discussion at the January 26, 2026 Senate meeting on academic freedom for academic administrators. The committee also received a communication from a senator on this topic and agreed both be provided to Senate for information. (See item 6.1.)

Senate Executive Committee meeting agendas and minutes can be found on the committee webpage: https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/executive-committee-agenda-minutes

For Information   **Open Session - Consent**

To: Senate

From: Senate Graduate Council

Presenter(s):   Justin Wan
                     Interim Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral
                     Affairs

Date of Meeting: March 2, 2026

Agenda Item: **12.5**   **Report of the Senate Graduate Council**

Summary

Senate Graduate Council met on January 21, 2026 and agreed to forward the following items to Senate for information as part of the consent agenda. On behalf of Senate, the following items were approved:

1. New Scholarships and Awards

    Council approved the following awards: BMO Founder Award; Mrs. Samia Barakat and Dr. Soliman Abdelfattah Soliman Graduate Scholarship in Engineering; Robert Bowerman Engineering Graduate Scholarship; Bill Swirsky Graduate Scholarship in Innovation.

2. Curricular Submissions

    Council approved the following new courses, the deletion of courses, and proposed minor changes to existing courses and programs for:
    a. Faculty of Arts
    b. Faculty of Engineering
    c. Faculty of Environment
    d. Faculty of Mathematics

3. Accessible Education Project Updates

    Council received for information an update from the Accessible Education Project.

4. Joint Education Institutes

    Council received for information and discussed the Joint Education Institutes proposal from the Faculty of Environment.

5. Student Academic Disability Accommodations Policy

    Council received for information and discussed the Student Academic Disability Accommodations Policy.

6. Senate Academic Innovation Committee

   Council received for information and provided feedback for the Senate Academic Innovation Committee proposal.

Jurisdictional Information

As outlined in the council's [Terms and Reference](), Senate Graduate Council is empowered to make recommendation and approvals on behalf of Senate for a variety of matters:

- Receive for information and make recommendation to Senate as appropriate with respect to governance, regulations, polices, and matters relating to graduate education and Studies at the University.
- On behalf of Senate, consider and approve all new graduate courses, the deletion of graduate courses, and proposed minor modifications to existing graduate courses and programs, and provide Senate with a brief summary of Council's deliberations in this regard.
- On behalf of Senate, consider and approve all new graduate scholarships and awards, and proposed changes to existing graduate scholarships and awards. Any matter of controversy that might arise may be referred to Senate.

Governance Path

Senate Graduate Council: January 21, 2026

For Information   **Open Session - Consent**

To:	Senate
From:	Senate Undergraduate Council
Presenter(s):	David DeVidi Associate Vice-President, Academic

Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**12.6 Report of the Senate Undergraduate Council**

Summary

Senate Undergraduate Council met on February 4, 2026 and agreed to forward the following items to Senate for information as part of the consent agenda. On behalf of Senate, the following items were received for information or approved:

1. Undergraduate Scholarships and Awards

   Council received for information and approved the following awards: Alexander and Jelena Kolicich Entrance Award; Math '75 Co-op Entrance Scholarship; Rudderham Kennedy Family Foundation Scholarship; Rudderham Kennedy Family Foundation Scholarship for Women; Kenneth Shunk Entrance Award; BMO Founder Award; Frank Deeg International Experience Award; Fassnacht Engineering Scholarship for Water Resources; Brian Fisher Tax Excellence Award; Kevin Hesterman Memorial Award; Farhan Jiwani Memorial Innovation Award; Outstanding WEEF Director Award; J.L. Richards Reconciliation and Design Excellence Award; Sachania-Kyniski Future Leader in Pharmacy Award; Jack And Annie Scott Award for Excellence in Biological Research; WEEF Director Award; Copeland Family Men's Hockey Excellence Award; Lifelong Lane Swimming Excellence Award.

2. Curricular Submissions

   Council approved the following new courses, the deletion of courses, course changes, and proposed minor changes to existing courses and programs for:

   a. Co-operative and Experiential Education
   b. Faculty of Arts
   c. Faculty of Engineering
   d. Faculty of Engineering (ENVE)
   e. Faculty of Engineering (SYDE)
   f. Faculty of Environment
   g. Faculties of Environment and Science
   h. Faculty of Health

      i.   [Faculty of Mathematics](#)
      j.   [Faculties of Mathematics and Arts](#)
      k. [Faculties of Engineering and Mathematic](#)
      l.   [Faculty of Science](#)
     m. [Renison University College](#)

3. <u>Renewal of Agreement with Beijing Jiaotong University</u>

   Council received for information the renewal of agreement with Beijing Jiaotong University.

4. <u>New Agreement with Sault College</u>

   Council approved the admission requirements within the new agreement with Sault College. Note: 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. The Secretariat is currently working with internal stakeholders to provide clear and transparent guidelines on how new and revised agreements should be listed on SUC, SGC, and Senate agendas.

5. <u>Joint Education Institutes</u>

   Council received for information and discussed the Joint Education Institutes proposal from the Faculty of Environment.

6. <u>Policy 70 Consultation</u>

   Council received for information and discussed the updates for Policy 70.

7. <u>Senate Academic Innovation Committee</u>

   Council received for information and provided feedback for the Senate Academic Innovation Committee proposal.

Jurisdictional Information

As provided for in [Senate Bylaw 2](#), section 5.03, council is empowered to make recommendation and approvals on behalf of Senate for a variety of operational matters:

   a. Make recommendations to Senate with respect to rules and regulations for the governance, direction and management of undergraduate studies in the university.
   c. On behalf of Senate, consider and approve all new undergraduate courses, the deletion of undergraduate courses, and proposed changes to existing undergraduate courses and minor changes to programs and/or plans, and provide Senate with a summary of council's deliberations in this regard. Any matter of controversy that might arise may be referred to Senate.

Governance Path

SUC Curriculum Subcommittee – December 1, 2025; January 26, 2026

Senate Undergraduate Council – February 4, 2026

For Information   **Open Session - Consent**

To:	Senate
From:	Thomas Duever
	Interim Vice-President, Academic & Provost
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**12.7 Faculty Appointments and Leaves**

Summary

The Faculty Reports for Senators' information regarding the variety of appointments, reappointments, special appointments, leaves, and other matters of interest about individuals in the Faculties are available on the following Senate web page.

For Information   **Open Session - Consent**

To:	Senate
Presenter(s):	Charmaine Dean
	Vice President, Research and International
Date of Meeting:	March 2, 2026
Agenda Item:	**12.8** **Awards, Distinctions, Grants, Commercialization Activity, International Engagements**

Recommendation/Motion

This item is for information purposes.

Summary

This report summarizes successful commercialization, research and international outputs and outcomes for the period mid-December 2025 to February 2026.

Proposal/Rationale

This report provides a summary of significant monthly outputs related to; awards and distinctions; funded research; and commercialization and entrepreneurship activities.

Jurisdictional Information

N/A

Governance Path

N/A

Documentation Provided

Attached – Vice-President, Research and International: Report to Senate, March 2026.

Vice-President, Research & International
Report to Senate
March 2026

Introduction
This report to Senate highlights successful research, commercialization and international outputs and outcomes for the period December 2025 and January 2026.

Awards and Distinctions

2026 Order of Ontario Appointee
Dr. Mary Wells (Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering and Dean of Engineering, University of Waterloo)
Wells is appointed to the Order of Ontario, the province's highest civilian honor, in recognition of leadership that advances education, research and access to engineering across the province.

2025 Elected Secretary, Royal Society of Canada's (RSC) Academy of Arts and Humanities
Dr. Alexie Tcheuyap (French Studies and Dean of Faculty of Arts)
In 2021, Tcheuyap was inducted as a Fellow of the RSC in recognition of his body of work on African literature, film and media and is among twelve other Royal Society of Canada Fellows in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Waterloo. His term as Secretary will run for three-years.

2026 Fellow, Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers
Dr. David Clausi (Systems Design Engineering)
Clausi was recognized this year with one of the most prestigious honors in the electrical and computing fields, an award reserved for fewer than one-tenth of one per cent of eligible members worldwide.

2025 Distinguished Contributions Award, Canadian Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology
Dr. Ramona Bobocel (Psychology)
This award recognizes individuals who have made outstanding and sustained contributions to the field of Industrial-Organizational (I-O) Psychology in Canada. Bobocel is recognized for her profound and enduring contributions to I-O Psychology on organizational justice and fairness.

2025 Best Paper Award, IEEE Communications Society Technical Committee on Network Operations and Management (CNOM)
Dr. *Raouf Boutaba and Dr. Mohammed Salahuddin (Cheriton School of Computer Science)*
Together with their collaborators, Boutaba and Salahuddin won the CNOM Best Paper Award which recognizes outstanding papers published over the previous two years in conferences supported by CNOM. Their winning paper was titled, Generalizable Resource Scaling of 5G Slices Using Constrained Reinforcement Learning.

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[2025 Honorary Geographer, American Association of Geographers](#)
Dr. Jennifer Clapp (School of Environment, Resources, and Sustainability)
Jennifer is recognized for her groundbreaking work at the intersection of global economy, food systems, and food security, along with her commitment to praxis, including her current service as a member of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food), and her previous service on the Steering Committee of the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) of the United Nations Committee on World Food Security (CFS) from 2019-2023 (vice chair 2021-2023).

[2025 Global 50 Women in Sustainability Awards](#)
Dr. Amelia Clarke (School of Environment, Resources, and Sustainability)
Clarke is recognized for being a leading researcher in sustainability strategy and governance, under the theme of "Leading with Courage," for the 2025 SustainabilityX Magazine 4th Annual Global 50 Women In Sustainability Awards.

[2026 Doll-Wynder Award, Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (SRNT)](#)
Geoffrey Fong (Psychology and Public Health Sciences)
The Doll–Wynder Award is the highest honour bestowed by SRNT. Named after Sir Richard Doll and Sir Ernst Wynder, two pioneers whose work established the causal link between smoking and disease, the award recognizes a lifetime of outstanding scientific contributions to the understanding, prevention, and control of tobacco use and in advancing public health, public policy and epidemiological research.

[2025 Test-of-Time Award, Asiacrypt](#)
Dr. Ian Goldberg (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
Together with his student collaborators, Goldberg co-authored the paper Constant-Size Commitments to Polynomials and Their Applications, which was originally presented at Asiacrypt 2010, the 16th International Conference on the Theory and Application of Cryptology and Information Security. The Test-of-Time Award honours a paper presented 15 years earlier that has had a significant and lasting impact on the theory and practice of cryptography and information security.

[2025 Best Presenter Award, World Resources Forum](#)
Dr. Komal Habib (School of Environment, Resources, and Sustainability)
Her presentation explored how Canada's rich resource base, innovative policies, and commitment to sustainability position it as a global leader in securing the critical minerals essential for electric vehicles and other clean energy technologies.

[2025 Distinguished Member, Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)](#)
Dr. Craig Kaplan (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
Kaplan won the Distinguished Member award in recognition of his pioneering contributions to the design and modelling of computational geometric patterns and non-photorealistic rendering.

[2026 Krieger-Nelson Prize, Canadian Mathematical Society](#)
Dr. Yu-Ru Liu (Pure Mathematics)
Awarded since 1995, the prize recognizes "outstanding research by a mathematician who identifies as a woman." Liu was the first woman to receive a doctorate in mathematics from a Canadian university and who went on to make significant contributions in teaching, mentoring and community service.

[2025 Distinguished Paper Award, Automated Software Engineering Association for Computing Machinery SIGSOFT](#)
Dr. Shane McIntosh (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
McIntosh and his collaborators won the ACM SIGSOFT Distinguished Paper Award at the 40thIEEE/ACM International Conference on Automated Software Engineering for their paper, Rechecking Recheck Requests in Continuous Integration: An Empirical Study of OpenStack.

[2025 Distinguished Member, Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)](#)
Dr. Weiyi Shang (Electrical and Computer Engineering)
Shang won the Distinguished Member award for his contributions to software performance and log engineering.

[2025 Outstanding Paper Award, Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing Conference](#)
Dr. Freda Shi (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
Shi, and her collaborators, won this award for their paper, LingGym: How Far Are LLMs from Thinking Like Field Linguists which introduced a new benchmark that evaluates how effectively large language models can perform meta-linguistic reasoning.

[2025 Most Influential Paper Award, Object-Oriented Programming, Systems, Languages & Applications (OOPSLA) Conference](#)
Dr. Chengnian Sun (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
Sen was recognized, along with his collaborators, for introducing a novel Equivalence Modulo Inputs mutation strategy that exposed previously undetected bugs in production compilers in their paper, Finding Deep Compiler Bugs via Guided Stochastic Program Mutation.

[2025 Best Paper Award, Association for Computing Machinery Symposium on Document Engineering (DocEng)](#)
Dr. Frank Tompa (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
Together with his collaborators, Tompa won this award for their paper, Exploiting Query Reformulation and Reciprocal Rank Fusion in Math-Aware Search Engines, which introduces new methods that improve how search engines handle mathematical queries.

[2026 Fellow, Institution of Analysts and Programmers](#)
Dr. Alex Wong (Systems Design Engineering)
Wong was designated as a fellow of the Institution of Analysts and Programmers which recognizes leaders who are improving the quality and impact of software worldwide.

[Research Infosource Inc. Canada's Top 50 Research Universities](#)
Once again, Research InfoSource has ranked the University of Waterloo as the #1 comprehensive research university in Canada for eighteen years in a row in the 2024/25 ranking. The raking assesses research funding, publication output and commercialization.

[Clarivate's Most Highly Cited Researchers 2025](#)
Ten University of Waterloo full-time researchers have been named to the annual Highly Cited Researchers™ list from Clarivate for significant contributions to their specific fields of research. Waterloo researchers on this year's Highly Cited Researchers™ 2025 list include:
- Dr. Jennifer Clapp (School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability)
- Dr. Michael Fowler (Chemical Engineering)
- Dr. Roydon Fraser (Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering)
- Dr. Sharon Kirkpatrick (School of Public Health Sciences)
- Dr. Juewen Liu (Chemistry)
- Dr. Linda Nazar (Chemistry)
- Dr. Daniel Scott (Geography and Environmental Management)
- Dr. Xuemin (Sherman) Shen (Electrical and Computer Engineering)
- Dr. Aiping Yu (Chemical Engineering)
- Dr. Weihua Zhuang (Electrical and Computer Engineering)

Funded Awards

National Cybersecurity Consortium (NCC)
In 2025, the NCC dedicated $20.9 million in funding as part of its commitment to the Government of Canada's Cyber Security Innovation Network program. These funds have been distributed to 31 Canadian led projects representing academia, private institutions, and the not-for-profit sector. The following are the three successful Waterloo projects, valued at $2.4M, as part of NCC's second annual call for proposals.

Dr. William (Alec) Cram (School of Accounting and Finance)
Title: May We Have Your Attention Please? Exploring How Employee Attention Influences Cybersecurity Behavior, in collaboration with the University of Delaware and TU Darmstadt
Amount: $223,529
Industry Partners: University of Delaware and TU Darmstadt

Dr. Sebastian Fischmeister (Electrical and Computer Engineering) and Dr. Michael Mayer (Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering - non-CPI member)
Title: MATSEC: Materials-based Cybersecurity in Electronics
Amount: $2,000,000
Industry Partners: Palitronica and Wade Antenna

Dr. Meng Xu (Cheriton School of Computer Science) and Dr. Sihang Liu (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
Title: Securing LLM Agents Against Malicious or Vulnerable Tools
Amount: $254,116

Canada Foundation for Innovation (John Evan Leaders Fund - JELF)

Twenty-six researchers received CFI JELF funding to drive discovery, innovation and research infrastructure development. Collectively, the 26 researchers across Waterloo's six faculties received more than $4.3M for a diverse range of research projects across fields such as advanced materials, architectural exploration and design tools and quantum technologies.

Dr. Mohamed Hibat Allah (Applied Mathematics)
Title: Exploring many-body physics with language models
Amount: $160,000

Dr. Maricor Arlos (Civil and Environmental Engineering)
Title: Invisible threats, visible solutions: Advancing water quality management through micropollutant analysis
Amount: $125,000

Dr. Sahar Pirooz Azad (Electrical and Computer Engineering)
Title: Reconfigurable converter platform for design, protection and control of modern power grids
Amount: $154,204

Dr. Michal Bajcsy (Electrical and Computer Engineering and the Institute for Quantum Computing)
Title: Atomic layer etcher for enhanced quantum technology devices
Total: $579,016

Dr. Andrew Boutros (Electrical and Computer Engineering)
Title: Architecture exploration and design tools for next-generation reconfigurable acceleration devices
Amount: $80,000

Dr. Jordan Cannon (Kinesiology and Health Sciences)
Title: Development of a modular biomechanics laboratory to quantify, assess and (re)train movement from lab-to-clinic-to-field
Amount: $110,000

Dr. Wenhu Chen (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
Co-lead with Dr. Freda Shi (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
Title: Enriching the linguistic diversity of open language models
Amount: $168,004

Dr. Clara Colombatto (Psychology)
Title: Socio-cognitive foundations of human-machine interactions
Amount: $180,000

Dr. Travis Craddock (Biology)
Title: Understanding the basic biophysical mechanisms by which neuroinflammation leads neurodegeneration

Amount: $200,000

Dr. Peter Crank (Geography and Environmental Management)
Title: Addressing urban (over)heating in a warming climate
Amount: $78,000

Dr. Yuntian Deng (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
Title: Progressive internalization of skills for advanced language model reasoning
Amount: $96,000

Dr. Vinny Gupta (Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering)
Title: Fast spectral imaging of fire emissions
Amount: $125,000

Dr. Bradley Hauer (Electrical and Computer Engineering and the Institute for Quantum Computing)
Title: Superconducting millimeter-wave circuits for quantum applications
Amount: $80,000

Dr. Elise Laende (Systems Design Engineering)
Title: Digital infrastructure for motion capture
Amount: $80,000

Dr. Yangju Lin (Chemistry)
Title: Mechanically crosslinked networks: Structure-property relationships and applications in batteries
Amount: $109,000

Dr. Adrian Lupascu (Physics and Astronomy and the Institute for Quantum Computing)
Title: Platform for advanced experiments with superconducting quantum devices
Amount: $421,000

Dr. Shana MacDonald (Communication Arts)
Title: Feminist Interdisciplinary Research Lab
Amount: $105,000

Dr. John Magliaro (Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering)
Title: Elevated- to high-rate characterization facility for advanced lightweight materials and structures
Amount: $115,000

Dr. Tizazu Mekonnen (Chemical Engineering)
Title: Rational design of sustainable and nano-enabled multiphase polymers
Amount: $258,000

Dr. Robert Nishida (Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering)
Title: Framework for advancing aerosol metrics to improve air quality and health
Amount: $95,000

Dr. Shiyu Su (Electrical and Computer Engineering)
Title: High-speed and efficient integrated circuits for next generation computing systems
Amount: $100,000

Dr. Mihaela Vlasea (Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering)
Title: Technologies enabling nature-inspired architected materials and structures
Amount: $375,750

Dr. Jung-Ho Yu (Chemistry)
Title: Raman spectroscopy for multidimensional and ultrasensitive chemical analysis of live biological subjects
Amount: $100,000

Dr. Barbara Zemskova (Applied Mathematics)
Title: GPU accelerated numerical simulations for oceanographic applications
Amount: $160,000

Dr. Hong Zhang (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
Title: Serving systems for large language models with low latency, high utilization, good scalability and low carbon emissions
Amount: $195,069

Dr. Victor Zhong (Cheriton School of Computer Science)
Title: Privacy-aware language agents via post-deployment learning and adaptation
Amount: $80,000

Canada Research Chair (CRC) Program

In 2025, the CRC program invested more than $198 million to support new and renewed Chairholders to attract and retain some of the world's most accomplished and promising minds. In this period, four Waterloo researchers were awarded $3.95 million from the CRC program to advance research that transforms societies, economies, technologies, sustainability and health for humanity to thrive in a complex future.

Tier 1 Canada Research Chairs

Dr. Kerstin Dautenhahn (Electrical and Computer Engineering) – new
Title: NSERC CRC in Socially Intelligent Robotics
Amount: $1,400,000 over seven years

Dr. Kate Ratliff (Psychology) – new
Title: SSHRC CRC in Intergroup Attitudes
Amount: $1,400,000 over seven years + $50,000 John R. Evans Leaders Fund

Tier 2 Canada Research Chairs

Dr. Lan Wei (Electrical and Computer Engineering) – new
Title: NSERC CRC in Nanoscale Devices and Circuits
Amount: $500,000 over five years + $100,000 Federal Research Fund

Dr. Brian Kendall (Earth and Environmental Sciences) - renewed
Title: NSERC CRC in Redox-Sensitive Meal Isotope Geochemistry
Amount: $500,000 over five years

CIHR Project Grants

The Project Grant program is designed to capture ideas with the greatest potential to advance health-related fundamental or applied knowledge, health research, health care, health systems, and/or health outcomes. It supports research projects proposed and conducted by individual researchers or groups of researchers, at any career stage, in all areas of health. In this period, two Waterloo researchers were awarded more than $4M to improve national-level food policies and make continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) devices more accessible.

Dr. Wajd Alkabbani (School of Pharmacy)
Title: Access, Equity, and Real-World Effectiveness of Continuous Glucose Monitoring in Adults with Type 2 Diabetes: A Multi-Provincial Canadian Study
Amount: $481,950

Dr. David Hammond (School of Public Health Sciences)
Title: Evaluating the impact of nutrition policies: the International Food Policy Study
Amount: $3,568,725

Although Waterloo had only two successful grants in the Fall 2026 funding round, there were 36 applications submitted, which was the highest ever number of applications to this program from Waterloo. Overall, the National success rate for this round was 13.6% down from 15.5% in the Spring 2025 round. In 2025, CIHR reduced their overall funding budget by 23.5%.

Commercialization and Entrepreneurship Highlights

The following are examples and stories of Velocity supported University of Waterloo led student start-ups.

Andrew Cordssen-David (BSc '22, MBET '23, Founder) - HeadFirst
HeadFirst produces a small, game-changing device that removed uncertainty surrounding head injuries in contact sports by providing concussion screening using saliva. Saliva contains key biomarkers with strong potential for indicating brain injury. The device is now at pre-clinical trial stage.

Alex Maiereac (MMath'24 and CEO) – [Phantom Photonics](#)
Phantom Photonics develops ultra-sensitive quantum sensors that filter out background noise and detect the faintest signals, even down to a single photon — the smallest unit of light. This offers new levels of precision and stealth for industries operating in extreme environments, from the depths of the ocean to outer space.

Michael Phillips (BASc '18, Co-founder) and Phillip Cooper (BASc '18, Co-founder) – [Vena Medical](#)
Vena medical provides physicians with the world's smallest camera capable of going insides veins and arteries to help treat stroke. Vena recently passed a significant milestone in their start-up journey by gaining a full Health Canada license for their Microangioscope, the first device in the world to provide full-color, real-time imaging inside neurovascular, coronary and peripheral vessels.

Jana Tian (BASc'22, Co-founder) and Sam Dugan (BASc'22, Co-founder) – [Upside Robotics](#)
Upside Robotics replaces early-season mass fertilizer sprays with self-driving, lightweight robots that deliver nutrients precisely where and when crops need them. Combining autonomous navigation with data-driven decision making, Upside reduces waste, cuts emissions and increases yields, bringing a new level of precision to crop care that traditional machinery simply cannot achieve. In this period, Upside raised a $7.5M USD seed round, led by Plural, with participation from Garage Capital and the founders of Clearpath Robotics. This builds on pre-seed funding from ANIMO Ventures and Moxxie Ventures, alongside Entrepreneurs First, Scale Good Ventures and others.