

University of Waterloo
SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Minutes of the March 24, 2026 Meeting

Present: Ashley Day (Secretary), Laura Deakin, Tom Duever, Mark Ferro, Vivek Goel (Chair), Nadine Ibrahim, Blake Madill, Damian Mikhail, David Porreca, Rida Sayed, Jessica Rindlisbacher, Mark Seasons, James Skidmore, Justin Wan

Resources: David DeVidi, Jenny Flager-George, Andrea Kelman, Tony Ly

Guests: Nasser Abukhdeir, James Nugent

Regrets: Vikas Gupta, Carol Ann MacGregor

1. Governance Resources

This item was provided for information only.

2. Open Session

3. Approval of Minutes

3.1 Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

3.2. Minutes of February 17, 2026 Meeting

A motion was heard to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2026 meeting, as distributed. Seasons and Porreca. Carried.

3.3 Business Arising from the Minutes

The Senate Alternative Credentials Committee proposal, which was deferred at the previous Senate meeting, will continue to be developed based on feedback received. The Secretariat will meet with David DeVidi and Tom Duever to discuss next steps.

The proposal for a Senate Academic Innovation Committee, submitted by Senator Nasser Abukhdeir, has been reviewed by Senate Undergraduate Council (SUC) and Senate Graduate Council (SGC). Feedback identified potential duplication with existing committee mandates. The Secretariat will continue to work with Senator Abukhdeir to address this feedback.

4. Reports to the Senate Executive Committee

4.1. Senate Engagement Working Group Update

Laura Deakin, Co-Chair of the Senate Engagement Working Group, provided a verbal update on the group's progress. Draft rules of procedure, roles and responsibilities, and proposed amendments to Senate Bylaw 1 are expected to be presented to the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) and Senate in April. Deakin noted that there has been engagement from the Senate community through email and the online feedback form.

5. Senate Agenda Preparation

5.1. Senate Work Plan 25/26

This item was provided for information only.

5.2. Draft April 6, 2026 Senate Meeting Book

The Chair gave an overview of the main items on the April Senate agenda. Prior to the motion to approve the agenda was heard, members reviewed and discussed two items under other business.

A motion was heard that the Senate Executive Committee approve the April 6, 2026 Senate agenda as amended. Deakin and Madill. Carried.

6. Other Business

The Chair noted that the Secretariat had received two independent communications on behalf of SEC. The first communication from student senator, A. Chang, presents a motion for the establishment of a new student bursary that would provide current and incoming Ontario domestic undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in OSAP eligible programs with \$800,000 in non-repayable, need-based financial aid annually starting in Fall 2026. Damian Mikhail, President of the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA), spoke further to the motion and its recent support from WUSA's Advocacy Affairs Committee.

Members discussed current student grants and bursaries including the mandated tuition set-aside and increases to University support for needs-based student financial aid, the impact of OSAP changes on lower-income students, and the need for the Provincial government to update information on financial accessibility as a result of the OSAP changes.

The Chair noted that while the Senate and Board recommend and approve a high-level budget, how the money is allocated is an operational decision made by programs and departments. The Chair offered to work with Mikhail on a statement to the community on how the University is working on supporting students, including information on what has already been committed to in the 2026-27 Operating Budget report.

The Chair proposed more information be gathered, including the pending OSAP calculations, before the motion is considered. Members agreed with this proposed approach.

The second communication from faculty senator, J. Nugent, presents a motion for Senate to form an ad hoc Senior Leadership Review Committee to make recommendations to the Board of Governors regarding compensation for senior executives and key administrative positions at the University. The Chair noted that currently, executive compensation is governed by the *Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014*, and oversight of all compensation matters lies with the Board's Governance and Leadership Committee.

The Chair invited Nugent to speak to the proposed motion. Nugent clarified that his motion is based on his interpretation of the *University of Waterloo Act, 1972*, under which Senate may make recommendations to the Board on operational matters, including internal resource allocation, but does not have decision-making authority. Nugent noted that Senate has limited visibility into these processes, with only limited public information available, and that the relevant Board committee meets in camera and does not share information on senior compensation, despite the significant resources involved.

Members discussed the existing Board oversight of senior leadership compensation. The Chair added that the Board Governance and Leadership Committee's mandate was recently updated to strengthen language and codify this responsibility on behalf of the Board.

The Chair proposed that the request to better understand the review process for senior leadership compensation be directed to the Board Chair, and that a report on this matter from the Governance and Leadership Committee be provided to the Board. The report would then be available to Senators to enhance transparency. Members agreed with this proposed approach.

It was agreed that both communications would be provided to Senate for information and transparency of the Committee's deliberations and decision.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:27p.m. It was noted that the next meeting of the Senate Executive Committee will be held on April 20, 2026, from 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

March 26, 2026

Ashley Day
Associate University Secretary