

# Senate Research and Innovation Council

## Open Session

April 9, 2026

9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Needles Hall

NH 3318

Waterloo Campus

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## 2026 04 09 Senate Research and Innovation Council Meeting Book

### AGENDA

	1. Governance Resources		
	<a href="#">1.1. Link to Governance Resources</a>		
9:00 a.m.	2. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes		
	2.1. Conflict of Interest		
	2.2. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes	Decision	3
	2.3. Minutes of February 12, 2026 Meeting	Decision	4
	2.4. Business Arising from the Minutes	Information	
	3. Regular Agenda		
9:05 a.m.	4. Chair’s Remarks [Dean]	Information	
9:10 a.m.	5. Research Security Plan [Dean]		
	5.1. Research Security Plan	Discussion	6
9:30 a.m.	6. Canada Impact+ Research Chairs Program [Dean & Müller]		
	6.1. Canada Impact+ Research Chairs Program	Discussion	7
9:45 a.m.	7. Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) [Milligan]		
	7.1. Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)	Discussion	14
10:05 a.m.	8. Water Institute [Brouwer & Houser]		
	8.1. Water Institute	Decision	27
10:25 a.m.	9. Other Business		
	10. Adjournment		
	The next SRIC meeting will be held on May 14, 2026.		

**For Approval**

**Open Session**

**To:** Senate Research and Innovation Council

**From:** Tony Ly  
Governance Officer

**Date of Meeting:** April 9, 2026

**Agenda Item:** **2. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes**

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### **2.1. Conflict of Interest**

Members are invited to declare any conflicts related to the open session agenda at this time. Should a conflict of interest arise during discussion, members are asked to declare a conflict of interest as it arises. Information and guidance on conflicts of interest is provided on the Secretariat [website](#).

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

### **2.2. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes**

**Motion:** To approve the agenda as presented/amended, and to approve the minutes of the meeting as distributed.

### **2.3. Minutes of the February 12, 2026 Meeting**

Documentation Provided:

- Minutes of the February 12, 2026 Meeting

### **2.4. Business Arising from the Minutes**

None.

**University of Waterloo**  
**SENATE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the February 12, 2026 Meeting**

**Present:** Hassan Baaj, Michael Beazley, Raouf Boutaba, Sarah Burch, Sue Ann Campbell, Trevor Charles, Rob de Loë, Charmaine Dean (Chair), Ana Ferrer, Peter Hall, Misha Khan, Tony Ly (Secretary), Ellen MacEachen, Ian Milligan, Marina Mourtzakis, Kirsten Müller, Amir Nazemi, Neil Randall, Jeffrey Wilson, Stan Woo, Alfred Yu

**Resources/Guests:** Melissa Benjamin, John Dick, Grace Gomashie, Jean-Pierre Hickey, Adrian Lupascu, Kate Mercer, Justin Nankivell, Fayaz Noormohamed, Pamela Braza Pitman, Siobhan Stables, Christopher Taylor

**Regrets:** Yasmeen Almomani, Steven Bednarski, Richard Cook, Tom Duever, Vivek Goel, Sara Hart, Alison Hitchens, Todd Holyoak, Suzanne Kearns, Sushanta Mitra, Nicholas Pellegrino, Justin Wan

**Organization of Meeting:** Charmaine Dean took the chair and Tony Ly acted as secretary. The secretary advised that a quorum was present.

### **1. Governance Resources**

Dean informed council members that a link for SRIC online resources was included in the package.

### **2. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes**

#### **2.1 Conflict of Interest**

Burch, Charles, and Randall declared a conflict of interest because of their association with the Centres and Institutes included for item 6. Dean confirmed that their votes will not be counted for item 6.

Charles declared a potential conflict of interest related to item 7 because of his membership with PAIR. Dean advised that item 7 is for information only and a declaration was not required.

No other conflicts of interest were declared.

#### **2.2. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes**

Council heard a motion to approve the agenda and the minutes of the October 16, 2025 meeting as presented. Campbell and Burch. Carried.

#### **2.3. Minutes of the October 16, 2025 Meeting**

Council approved the minutes of the meeting as distributed.

#### **2.4. Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

### **3. Regular Agenda**

#### **4. Chair's Remarks**

Dean thanked council members for attending the joint meeting with the Senate Graduate Council in January. The top 3 topics selected for the next joint meeting were: 1) Strategic priorities for graduate education and studies at the university; 2) Three-Year PhD completion timeline; and 3) Guidance on AI and new technology.

There is ongoing work for the Canada Impact+ Research Chairs program at University of Waterloo. Dean acknowledged members' efforts and contributions.

## **5. Defense Research**

At the previous Senate meeting on January 26, 2026, there were discussions regarding whether the University of Waterloo should explicitly encourage or discourage defense-related research. The Chair of Senate requested that the Senate Research and Innovation Council undertake a more fulsome discussion and provide guidance.

John Dick (OVPRI), Jean-Pierre Hickey (MME), Adrian Lupascu (Physics & Astronomy/IQC), Justin Nankivell (OVPRI), and Siobhan Stables (IQC) provided a brief overview of the topic that included various strategic, ethical, governance, and reputational considerations for conducting defense-related research. Council members engaged in an extended and wide-ranging discussion that included the following key considerations: defense-related research at the University of Waterloo spans multiple Faculties; involves dual-use technologies with both civilian and defense applications; quantum computing; cybersecurity risks and the requirement of secure research spaces; national sovereignty; and compliance with evolving government restrictions on partnerships. Members emphasized the need for a holistic approach, interdisciplinary engagement, and consideration of societal impact. Stables noted that disengagement from defense-related research would not prevent such research from occurring; and as such, the projects and activities will only shift to other actors.

Council supports University of Waterloo researchers engaging in security, sovereignty, and defense-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. This endorsement affirms broad support for interdisciplinary research occurring at the University of Waterloo. A follow-up discussion is anticipated in approximately one year to reassess the landscape and institutional positioning.

## **6. Research Centres and Institutes**

Müller noted that the renewals had been temporarily paused and there is a recommendation for a staggered extension of the mandates for Waterloo Research Centres and Institutes across 2026 and 2027. Müller stated that this approach was approved by the Deans.

A motion was heard to approve the extensions for renewal of the Centres and Institutes as presented. Müller and Woo. Carried.

## **7. Pan-African Initiative for Research**

Taylor presented a proposal for the Pan-African Initiative for Research (PAIR). This is a novel, interdisciplinary, and long-term initiative that aligns with Waterloo's strategic vision and the commitment to the Scarborough Charter. PAIR aims to secure sustainable funding and establish national and international partnerships to collaborate on interdisciplinary research projects. Council members expressed support for the PAIR proposal and its strategic plan to secure long-term funding and resources to ensure sustainability.

## **8. Global Futures**

Noormohamed provided an updated timeline and progress of the Global Futures initiative. Funding is distributed over three years, and more than two-million dollars was awarded to interdisciplinary projects in its first year. There were 61 applications submitted in the second round. Noormohamed noted that marketing and communication support are available to help funded teams. Key discussions from council members focused on: 1) Global Futures role in shaping research priorities at University of Waterloo; 2) grassroots versus a more direct approach to determine institutional priorities; and 3) better alignment with Canada's strategic priority areas. Council is interested in having further discussions on this topic at a future meeting.

## **9. Other Business**

No other items of business were identified.

## **10. Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of the Senate Research and Innovation Council will be held on April 9, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. in Needles Hall 3318.

**For Discussion**

**Open Session**

**To:** Senate Research and Innovation Council  
**From:** Charmaine B. Dean  
Vice-President, Research and International  
**Date of Meeting:** April 9, 2026  
**Agenda Item:** **8. Research Security Plan**

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**Summary**

Charmaine B. Dean, Vice-President, Research and International, will provide an update about the Research Security Plan.

**Documentation Provided**

N/A

**For Discussion****Open Session**

**To:** Senate Research and Innovation Council

**From:** Charmaine B. Dean  
Vice-President, Research and International  
Kirsten Müller  
Associate Vice-President, Research Grants and Infrastructure

**Date of Meeting:** April 9, 2026

**Agenda Item:** **5. Canada Impact+ Research Chairs Program**

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**Summary**

Charmaine B. Dean, Vice-President, Research and International, and Kirsten Müller, Associate Vice-President, Research Grants and Infrastructure, will provide an update about the Canada Impact+ Research Chairs Program.

**Documentation Provided**

Canada Impact+ Program Overview slides.

# Canada Impact+ Program Overview

4/2/2026

A Tri-Agency initiative of CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC

**Attracting world-leading researchers to strengthen Canada's innovation leadership**



UNIVERSITY OF  
**WATERLOO**

# What Is the Canada Impact+ Research Chairs Program?

- **A one-time federal investment of ~\$1.12 billion**
  - Announced on December 9, 2025
  - Tri-Agency initiative (CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC) to recruit world-leading researchers from outside Canada to Canadian universities
- **Chairs are institutional awards — UWaterloo nominates; researchers cannot apply directly**
  - Awards of \$4M or \$8M over 8 years, with potential 4-year extension; CFI infrastructure support up to \$6M per chair
- **Strategic priority areas align with UWaterloo strengths**
  - Advanced Digital Tech • Health & Biotech • Clean Tech • Climate & Environment • Advanced Manufacturing • Defence & Dual-use • Democratic/Community Resilience • Food/Water Security

# Competition Timeline

- **Intake 1**

- Registration deadline: March 10, 2026
- Application deadline: March 24, 2026
- Results notified: June 2026 | Awards start: September 2026

- **Intake 2**

- Registration deadline: June 15, 2026
- Application deadline: June 29, 2026
- Results notified: September 2026 | Awards start: November 2026

# Opportunity for UWaterloo

- UWaterloo is an eligible institution; application limits apply based on Tri-Agency funding history
- Program directly aligns with UW strengths in AI, quantum, cybersecurity, clean tech, and health
- Paired Impact+ Emerging Leaders awards (\$100K/yr, 6 yrs) to recruit internationally-based early career researchers
- Institution must demonstrate EDI leadership, Indigenous research integration, and long-term sustainability beyond the award

# UWaterloo's response

Collaborative approach between OVPRI, Faculties and other ASUs

- Team (ADRs, OVPRI, AVPs) moved rapidly to obtain approval for job advertisements prior to winter break
- January 19<sup>th</sup> - Review of applications (>300)
- January 26<sup>th</sup> – Submission of candidates for virtual interviews to Administrative Review Committee (ARC)
- January 27<sup>th</sup> to February 3<sup>rd</sup> – Virtual interviews of 41 applicants (some joint across campus)
- February 4<sup>th</sup> – decision by ARC for in-person interviews \*
- February 5-26<sup>th</sup> – in-person interviews of 23 applicants
- March 3<sup>rd</sup> – Decision by ARC for applicants to go forward for nomination in the program
- March 10<sup>th</sup> – Registration of candidates (9)
- March 4<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> – Candidates and proposal team work on application package
- March 24<sup>th</sup> - Submission deadline

# Final Submissions

- 8 applicants went forward on first intake, including 1 CERC applicant from Engineering; 1 applicant for second intake
- 2 female, 7 male (1 Arts, 1, Environment, 1 Health, 2 Engineering, 2 Math, 2 Science)
- Primary strategic areas (applicants cover all strategic areas)
  - Health Including Biotechnology (4)
  - Advanced Digital Technology (3)
  - Environment; Climate Resilience; & the Arctic (1)
  - Democratic/Community Resilience (1)

**For Discussion****Open Session**

**To:** Senate Research and Innovation Council  
**From:** Ian Milligan  
Associate Vice-President, Research Oversight and Analysis  
**Date of Meeting:** April 9, 2026  
**Agenda Item:** 6. **Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)**

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**Summary**

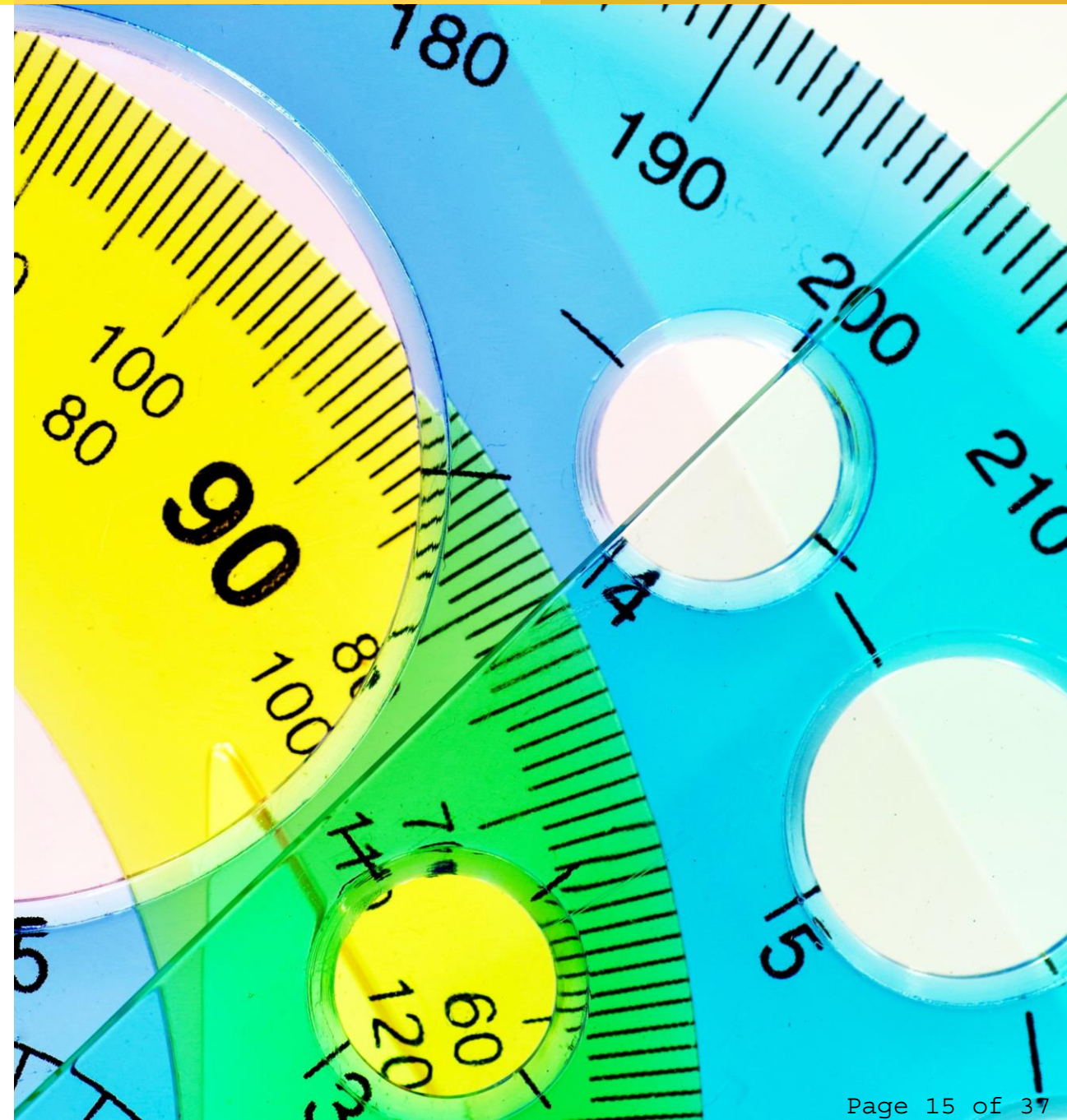
Ian Milligan, Associate Vice-President, Research Oversight and Analysis, will provide a presentation on the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA).

**Documentation Provided**

DORA presentation slides.

# DORA SRIC Update

Ian Milligan  
AVP ROI



# What is DORA (A quick recap)

- “The Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) recognizes the need to improve the ways in which researchers and the outputs of scholarly research are evaluated.”
- “We encourage all individuals and organizations who are interested in developing and promoting best practice in the assessment of researchers and scholarly research to sign DORA.”
- 69 Canadian institutions have signed, including SSHRC/NSERC/CIHR/CFI; McGill, Université de Montreal, University of Calgary, McMaster University, Concordia, Victoria, and many leading research hospitals.

# What is DORA (A quick recap)

- 1. Do not use journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an individual scientist's contributions, or in hiring, promotion, or funding decisions.
- 4. Be explicit about the criteria used to reach hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, clearly highlighting, especially for early-stage investigators, that the scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published.
- 5. For the purposes of research assessment, consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets and software) in addition to research publications, and consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.

# Where are we seeing DORA

- Narrative CVs emerging across competitions!
- Waterloo @ 100 says “We will value knowledge that counts over being counted.”
- Policy 77 says “the primary assessment of quality, originality and impact is made by referees and DTPC members on the basis of examining examples of the candidate's work,” with only secondary reference to other indicators.

## AND WHY I'M HERE

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The former SGRC had endorsed a pathway around creating an institutional working group, holding consultations, a public forum, develop an implementation plan and hopefully sign DORA in 2026.

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**WE ARE HOPING TO WRAP UP CONSULTATIONS  
BY MAY 1<sup>ST</sup>, AS MANY OF OUR RESEARCH FOLKS  
WERE BUSY FOR SOME REASON**

\* cough \* Impact+ \*cough\*

# OVERALL SENTIMENT



Majority supportive, but with substantive concerns (~7 in favour, 2 ambivalent, 3–4 skeptical)



Supporters see DORA as overdue — traditional metrics don't capture research impact across disciplines



Key message from supporters: DORA relaxes existing frameworks rather than overwriting them



Recurring worry even among supporters: UW will sign and not follow through internally

# Supporters say

- DORA is overdue and necessary; traditional metrics don't capture the realities of research impact across disciplines (submissions 6, 11, 13).
- It would strengthen tenure cases that turn on quality vs. quantity and support truly interdisciplinary scholars (submission 13).
- It doesn't overwrite existing frameworks — it relaxes them, which is welcome (submission 5).
- UW leadership already talks about community and industry impact everywhere *except* performance reviews, and DORA could close that gap (submission 11). This respondent also ties it to the broader legitimacy crisis in higher education.
- One respondent simply says UW should already be doing this (submission 4), and another that all units must adopt it consistently (submission 13).

# Top Concerns

- **Increased subjectivity and bias** — the most common concern across both supporters and skeptics. Without clear alternative metrics, comparing heterogeneous outputs is difficult
- **Workload burden** — removing quantitative shortcuts means more time for reviewers and committees who are already stretched. A narrative approach was suggested as a practical option
- **Disciplinary autonomy** — many departments already recognize diverse outputs; DORA framing may imply they don't. Departments must retain authority to set their own standards
- **Standards and rigour** — concern that broadening output types could lower the bar or blur the line between research and advocacy

# Questions Raised through Consultation

- Why do we need DORA if many departments already assess broadly?
- What will the new metrics actually look like in practice?
- How does DORA address citation counts specifically? (Consultation materials are silent on this)
- How will workload impacts be mitigated?
- Is there teaching stream and Indigenous representation on the task force? Will FAUW be involved?
- Is this consultation genuine, or has the decision already been made? One respondent described the DORA webpage as "uncritical" and "promotional" (if so, I take responsibility!).



# What's next?



# UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO



**YOU+WATERLOO**

*Our greatest impact happens together.*



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Senate Research & Innovation Council

**CC:** Charmaine B. Dean, Vice-President, Research and International  
Chris Houser, Dean of Science  
Roy Brouwer, Executive Director, Water Institute  
Tony Ly, Governance Officer

**From:** Kirsten Müller, Associate Vice-President, Research Grants & Infrastructure

**Date:** March 19, 2026

**Subject:** Transition of the Water Institute from a University-level Research Institute to a Science Faculty-level Research Institute

**- For Decision-**

### Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to seek Senate approval for the transition of the Water Institute from a University-level research institute to a Faculty of Science research institute, effective May 1, 2026.

### Background

The Water Institute was established as a university-level research institute by Senate in May 2009 and is currently approved through April 30, 2026. In recent years, the availability of university-level funding to support the Institute's operations have changed. As a result, the Faculty of Science has agreed to assume responsibility for housing, financing, and governing the Water Institute. The Faculty of Science is committed to maintaining the Water Institute's mandate as a cross-Faculty Institute for interdisciplinary water research, education, and innovation, ensuring continued membership participation and engagement from across all 6 faculties at the University of Waterloo.

### Rationale for Transition

The Water Institute received its final annual operating budget as a university-level institute in 2025–26. As such, the transition reflects a sustainable governance and funding model that aligns institutional responsibility with available resources. Continuation of the Water Institute is considered essential for the University of Waterloo's global reputation in the field. Over the past 5 years, the University has ranked consistently between number 24 and number 35 in the world in the water resources domain according to the Shanghai Ranking of Global Universities.

## **Process for Transition of Water Institute**

This proposed transition has been developed collaboratively through consultations, over the past 18 months, among the Office of the Vice-President, Research and International, the Faculty of Science, and the Water Institute's leadership and staff. Consultations and discussions with representatives from all six University of Waterloo Faculties in the Water Institute's Board of Directors, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Institute's External Advisory Board have addressed future governance, staffing, financial responsibilities, and operational continuity. All members have also been informed about the change in structure. Subsequently all Faculty Deans were informed about the proposed transition in early 2026:

- The Faculty of Science will assume responsibility of the Director, staff, program, office, and financial operations beginning May 1, 2026, with some transitional support from the Office of the Vice-President, Research and International in 2026–27.
- At the request of the Faculty of Science, the OVPRI office will be responsible for the current search for a new director.
- Governance structures will be reviewed during 2026–27 to ensure they remain appropriate and effective within a faculty-level institute framework, through a mandate renewal as per Policy 44.

Ongoing engagement with Water Institute faculty and student members will continue during the 2025–26 transition period, including through the Policy 44 Review Report process (Water Institute mandate renewal due January 2027), to ensure transparency, continuity, and continued cross-Faculty participation.

## **Recommendation**

That Senate approves that the Water Institute becomes a Faculty of Science research institute, effective May 1, 2026.

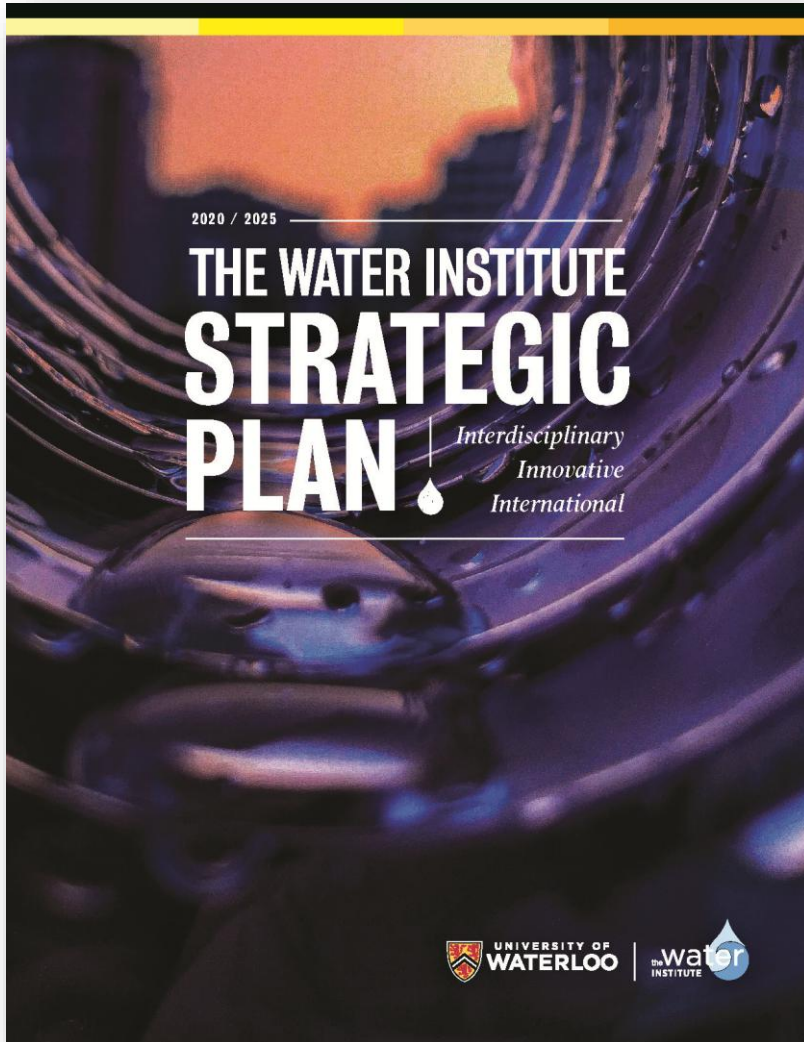
# Transitioning Water Institute from University-level to Faculty-level institute

Senate Research & Innovation Council meeting, April 9, 2026

# Overview

- Water Institute
- Current financial situation
- Proposal to continue the Water Institute as a Faculty-level institute
- Request to SRIC

# Water Institute

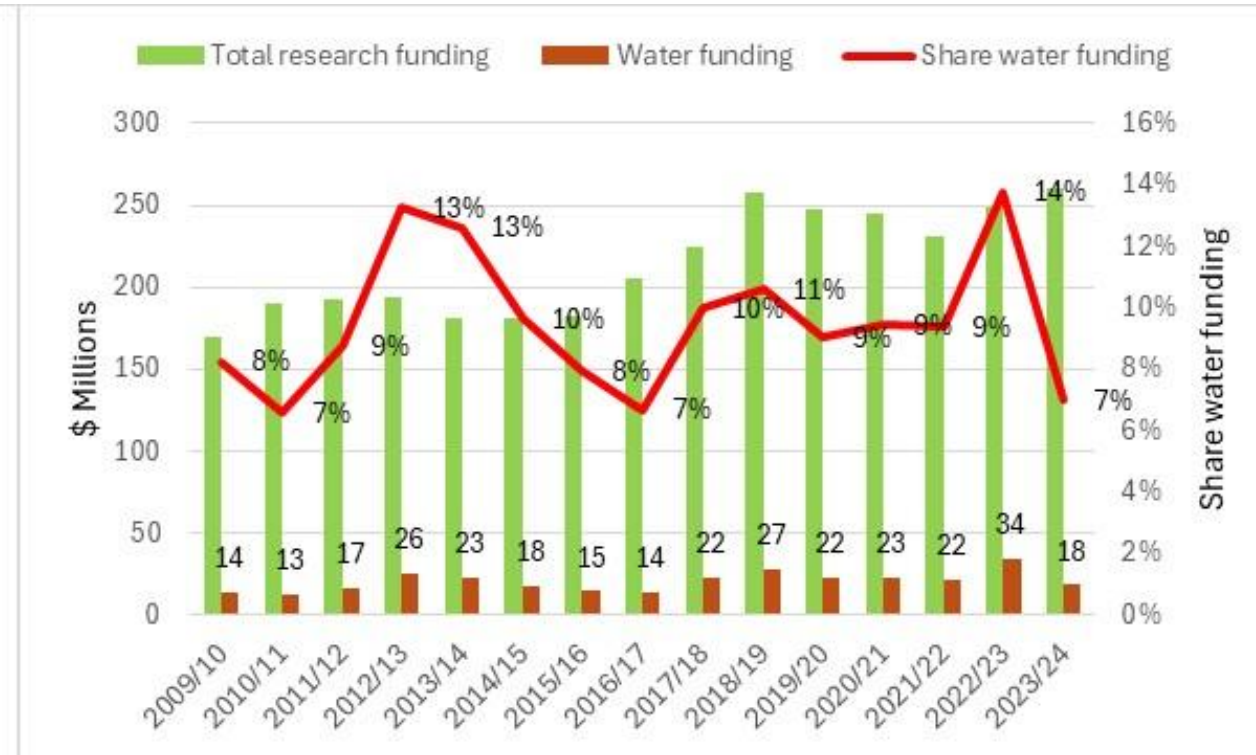


- Established in 2009 as University-level interdisciplinary institute for water research and education.
- **Vision**: to be a global leader that substantially advances the sustainable use and management of water for the benefit of the environment, economy, and society.
- **Mission**: to promote and facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, excellence, and innovation in water research and education.

# Background statistics

- **UW globally known for water research and education (science, engineering, governance, economics)**
- **Large water community on UW campus:**
  - WI has ± 180 faculty members across all 6 faculties (25 schools & depts).
  - ± 400 student members in Society of the Water Institute Graduate Students (SWIGS).
  - High density of CRC's (16), URC's (14), IRC's (2), 1 CERC laureate.
  - Involvement in high-level policy & decision-making (e.g., IJC Great Lakes Science Advisory Board)
- **Visibility of water on UW campus, examples:**
  - CFREF Global Water Futures (\$78M).
  - NSERC Network Program for Forested Drinking Water Source Protection Technologies (\$5.5M).
  - RBC donation towards CWP development (\$1.75M).
  - QES Water Security as a Foundation for Healthy Communities and Sustainable Livelihoods (\$1M).
  - AquaHacking (Gaspé Beaubien Foundation gift).

# Background statistics



**Global leader in water domain:**  
**UW consistently ranked in top 35 in the world**

**Financial importance: 10% of UW research funding related to water** → ±\$20 Million yr<sup>-1</sup>

Source: University of Waterloo, Institutional Analysis & Planning.

# Current financial situation (1)

- Since its initiation, central funding provided to deliver “public” services to the water community on UW campus, focusing on:
  - Project acquisition support
  - Knowledge mobilization
  - Internal communication and external outreach
  - Coordination of CWP, Summer School, *WaterLeadership*, *WaterTalks*, bi-annual international interdisciplinary Water conference etc.
- **Since 09/01/2024 interdisciplinary University-level C&I’s receive  $\pm 45\%$  less funding, with a complete funding stop per 04/30/2026.**
  - ➡ Cost savings: early retirement MD per 04/01/2025.
  - ➡ 2 remaining staff members & ED focusing on critical program management (fee-for-service, CWP) & new revenue generating program development.

# Current financial situation (2)

- Despite significant project acquisition support, WI is not allowed to compete over overhead with Faculties and their Schools/Depts.
- Although WI introduced “fee-for-service” model in 2016, funding from Faculty members covers at most 0.7 fte staff.
- WI saved ±\$180K over the past 10 years based on diverse internal and external collaborations, but this is insufficient to keep the institute operational.
- **In order to ensure continuation of the WI and its critical services, an agreement was reached between WI, VPRI & DoS to transfer financial responsibility to FoS,** following extensive consultation of the institute’s:
  - Board of Directors
  - External Advisory Board
  - Faculty and student members and other Faculty Deans.

# Proposal to continue the Water Institute

- FoS will take over financial responsibility for staff, office space and operational programming starting 05/01/2026.
- **To this end:** WI will transition into a Faculty-level institute.
- The institute's interdisciplinary vision and mission and cross-faculty participation and collaboration will be preserved.
- **To this end:**
  - OVPRI will remain responsible for the search of a new Director.  
Expected starting date new Director: 07/01/2026.
  - WI will continue to go through ongoing mandate renewal procedure following Policy 44.  
Expected submission to SRIC: January 2027.
  - This involves ongoing engagement with WI faculty and student members from all 6 faculties during the 2026/27 transition period.

# Request to SRIC

- To approve that the Water Institute becomes a Faculty-level Institute, effective 05/01/2026.