

Senate Research and Innovation Council

Open Session

May 14, 2026

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Needles Hall

NH 3318

Waterloo Campus

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2026 05 14 Senate Research and Innovation Council Meeting Book

AGENDA

	1. Governance Resources		
	1.1. Link to Governance Resources		
10:00 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 April 9, 2026 Meeting	Decision	4
	2.4. Business Arising from the Minutes	Information	
	2.5. SRIC Annual Review	Information	6
	3. Regular Agenda		
10:05 a.m.	4. Chair’s Remarks [Dean]	Information	
10:10 a.m.	5. Water Institute [Bouwer & Houser]		
	5.1. Water Institute	Decision	9
10:35 a.m.	6. CREATE Grants [Asis & Müller]		
	6.1. CREATE Grants	Information	19
11:00 a.m.	7. Other Business		
11:05 a.m.	8. Adjournment		

Next joint SGC/SRIC meeting will be held on June 15, 2026.

For Approval

Open Session

To: Senate Research & Innovation Council

From: Tony Ly
Governance Officer

Date of Meeting: May 14, 2026

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

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 April 9, 2026 Meeting

Documentation Provided:

- Minutes of the April 9, 2026 Meeting

2.4. Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

University of Waterloo
SENATE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COUNCIL
Minutes of the April 9, 2026 Meeting

Present: Hassan Baaj, Michael Beazley, Raouf Boutaba, Sarah Burch, Sue Ann Campbell, Trevor Charles, Rob de Loë, Charmaine Dean (Chair), Ana Ferrer, Bruce Frayne, Peter Hall, Alison Hitchens, Todd Holyoak, Suzanne Kearns, Tony Ly (Secretary), Ellen MacEachen, Ian Milligan, Marina Mourtzakis, Kirsten Müller, Neil Randall, Justin Wan, Jeffrey Wilson, Stan Woo, Alfred Yu

Resources/Guests: Melissa Benjamin, Justin Nankivell

Regrets: Yasmeen Almomani, Steven Bednarski, Richard Cook, Tom Duever, Vivek Goel, Sara Hart, Misha Khan, Sushanta Mitra, Amir Nazemi, Nicholas Pellegrino

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

This item was provided for information only.

2. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

2.1 Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was declared.

2.2. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

The Chair informed council members that item 8 on the agenda will be deferred.

Council heard a motion to approve the agenda and the minutes of the February 12, 2026 meeting as amended. Burch and Baaj. Carried.

2.3. Minutes of the February 12, 2026 Meeting

Council approved the minutes of the meeting as distributed.

2.4. Business Arising from the Minutes

The Chair reported that there were questions from students regarding the topic of Defense Research. A summary document was included in the previous Senate agenda package for information. There will be an update at the next Senate meeting about the luncheon discussions with Senators regarding Defense Research.

3. Regular Agenda

4. Chair's Remarks

The Chair will be leaving the meeting at 10:00 a.m. and Ian Milligan will be Acting Chair. The next joint Senate Graduate Council and Senate Research and Innovation Council meeting will be held on June 15, 2026. The topics for discussion will be: (1) Graduate research, funding, and student financial support; and (2) Strategic priorities for graduate education. The Chair invited members to submit other topics of interest for the joint meeting.

5. Research Security Plan

Nankivell provided a presentation about the Research Security Plan. The government announced a 5% tax that is tied to research security in 2025. In response to evolving government requirements, there will be a working group that will focus on research security. The 5 key elements related to research security include: Government and risk framework; Due diligence and risk management;

Communication and knowledge sharing; Cybersecurity; and the Built environment. The Government of Canada has provided a Named Research Organizations List, which contains institutions that could pose a risk to Canada's national security. Additional materials and guidance will be shared with campus stakeholders. The Chair invited members to send any questions and comments to Nankivell.

6. Canada Impact+ Research Chairs Program

Council received an update on the Canada Impact+ Research Chairs Program. Müller spoke to the materials provided in the meeting package. There were over 300 applications, virtual interviews were conducted with 41 candidates, 23 applicants completed in-person interviews, and the final submissions included 9 applicants. Key discussions by council members included details about demographic factors of the applicants. The applicant pool demonstrated broad international representation from 30 different countries. Approximately 31% of individuals identified as a minority, and there was no Indigenous applicant. A second intake is anticipated, and an internal review will assess lessons learned and identify potential process improvements.

7. Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)

Charmaine Dean left the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

The Acting Chair, Ian Milligan, provided council members with an update on DORA. Members discussed the potential institutional adoption of DORA, which promotes reduced reliance on journal-based metrics in evaluation and adopting a narrative excellence approach. While there was general alignment with DORA principles, campus stakeholders have raised concerns regarding subjectivity, workload burden, and consistency across disciplines. Council members emphasized the importance of having clear evaluation frameworks, additional training for Chairs, and alignment with existing performance review processes. There will be additional consultation with stakeholders. Members were invited to submit their feedback through an online form.

8. Water Institute

This item on the agenda was deferred.

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 May 14, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. in Needles Hall 3318.

For Information**Open Session**

To: Senate Research and Innovation Council

From: Tony Ly
Governance Officer

Date of Meeting: May 14, 2026

Agenda Item: **2.5. Senate Research and Innovation Council: Annual Review**

Summary

This memo serves as a formal notice of the annual review for the Senate Research and Innovation Council (SRIC) terms of reference. This review reflects the University's ongoing commitment to effective and transparent governance practices, and follows recent reviews of other Senate standing committees and councils.

The purpose of the review is to ensure that the Council's composition, mandate, and responsibilities remain effective and aligned with Senate's overall mandate and the University's bicameral governance model. This review of SRIC is currently being conducted in parallel with the work of the Senate Engagement Working Group, allowing for coordination and sharing of findings and recommendations.

Next Steps

The Secretariat will work with the Chair of SRIC to prioritize any changes. SRIC members are invited to send their feedback about the Council's membership composition, mandate, and responsibilities. Please send your comments or feedback to senate@uwaterloo.ca.

Documentation Included:

- Appendix A: Senate Research and Innovation Council Terms of Reference

Appendix A: Senate Research and Innovation Council Terms of Reference

1. Membership

The membership of this council shall consist of the following:

Ex-officio

- President and Vice-Chancellor
- Vice-President, Academic and Provost
- Vice-President, Research and International, who shall chair the council
- Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs
- Associate Vice-President, Research and International
- Associate Vice-President, Research Oversight and Analysis
- Associate Vice-President, Commercialization and Entrepreneurship
- University Librarian or designate
- The Dean of each Faculty or designate, who shall normally be an associate dean responsible for research

Appointed by Senate

- One (1) associate dean responsible for graduate studies
- Two (2) heads of a research centre/institute that is governed under Policy 44
- Up to four (4) additional members holding regular faculty appointments
- Six (6) faculty Senators, one from each Faculty
- One (1) faculty member from the Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo
- Three (3) students, two graduates and one undergraduate, who may or may not be student members of Senate
- One (1) postdoctoral scholar

For members appointed by Senate, the aim is to have broad and inclusive representation from all Faculties.

Resources

- Director(s) from the Office of the Vice-President Research and International, as appointed by the Vice-President
- University Secretary or designate

2. Responsibilities

The Council shall have the following responsibilities:

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.

On behalf of Senate, consider and approve renewals for centres and institutes, and report such renewals to Senate for information. Any matter of controversy that might arise may be referred to Senate.

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

3. Meetings

The council shall normally hold four (4) regular meetings each year, to be scheduled in the period from September to June.

Special meetings may be called by the chair of the council.

Joint meetings of this council and the Senate Graduate Council shall normally be held at least once annually to consider strategic matters of shared interest.



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.

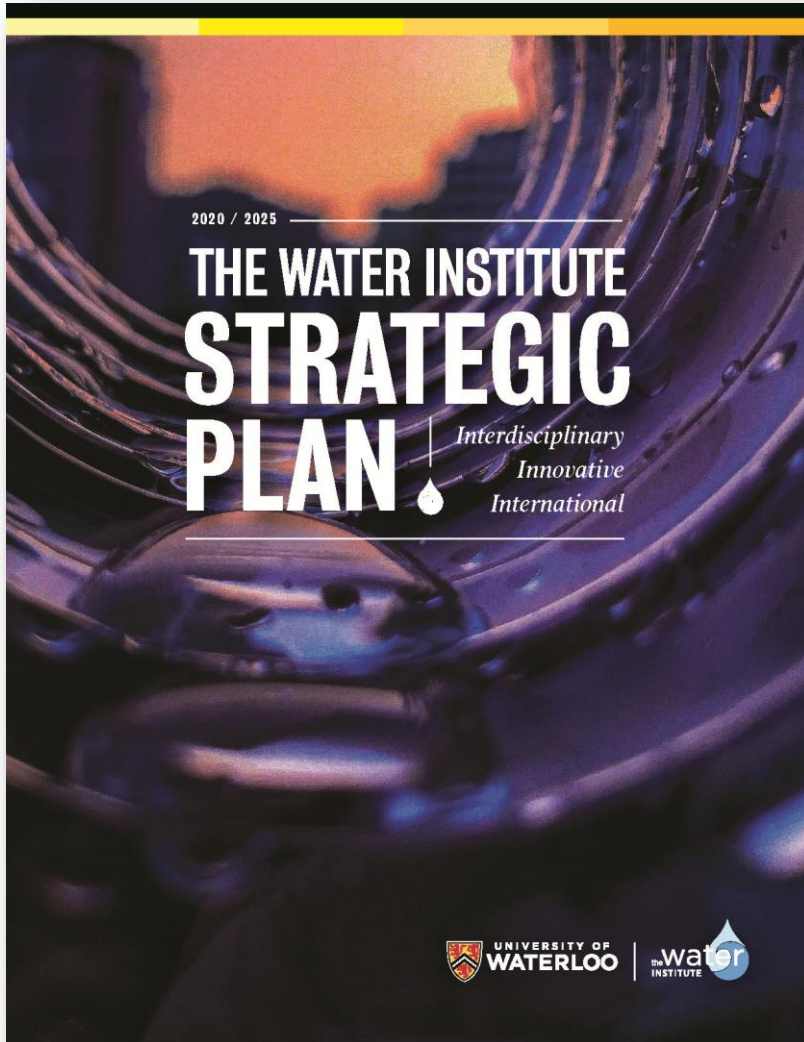
Transitioning the Water Institute from a University-level to a Faculty-level institute

Senate Research & Innovation Council meeting, May 14, 2026

Overview

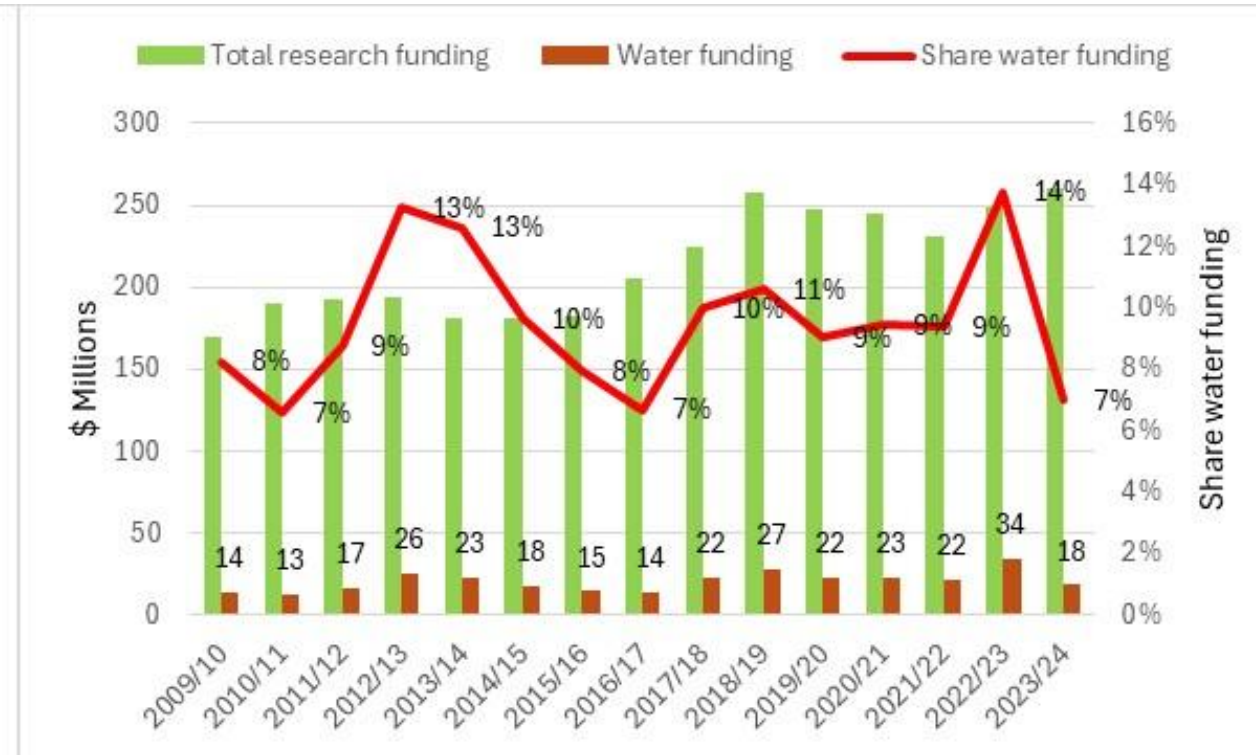
- Water Institute
- Current financial situation
- Proposal to continue the Water Institute as a Faculty-level institute
- Request to SRIC

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



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⁻¹

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.

For Information**Open Session**

To: Senate Research and Innovation Council

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

Angelica Asis
Director, Grants and Proposal Development

Date of Meeting: May 14, 2026

Agenda Item: **6. CREATE Grants**

Summary

Kirsten Müller, Associate Vice-President, Research Grants and Infrastructure, and Angelica Asis, Director, Grants and Proposal Development, will provide an update about the CREATE Grants.

Documentation Provided

N/A