

University of Waterloo
SENATE GRADUATE COUNCIL
Minutes of the May 25, 2026 Meeting

Present: Mike Beazely, Steven Bednarski, David Clausi, Rob de Loë, Brian Ingalls, Brian Laird, Christiane Lemieux, Tony Kongly [Secretary], Carter Neal, Christopher Nielsen, Brad Pomeroy, Ian Rowlands, Justin Wan [Chair], Clarence Woudsma

Resources/Guests: Sarah Brown, Angela Christelis, Diana Goncalves, Carrie MacKinnon Molson, Marianne Simm, Ian VanderBurgh, Richard Wikkerink

Regrets: Helen Chen, Charmaine Dean, Tom Duever, Vivek Goel, Abhishesh Homagain, Lilhac Medina, Tizazu Mekonnen, Nicholas Pelligrino, Meray Sadek

Organization of Meeting: Justin Wan took the chair and Tony Kongly acted as secretary. The secretary advised that a quorum was present.

1. Governance Resources

This item was provided for information only.

2. Approval of Agenda

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

2.1. Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2.2. Approval of the Agenda and Consent Items

Council approved the agenda as distributed.

2.3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

3. Consent Agenda

3.1. Minutes of the April 16, 2026 Meeting

Council approved the minutes of the meeting as distributed.

3.2. Curricular Submissions

Council approved all curricular submissions items 3.2.1. – 3.2.4. on behalf of Senate.

3.3. Graduate Awards and Scholarships

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

3.4. SGC Annual Review

Council members were invited to send their comments and feedback about SGC membership composition, mandate, and responsibilities to the Secretariat.

4. Regular Agenda

5. Chair's Remarks

The Chair provided updates regarding the Canada Impact+ program, which included strong numbers for both PhD and postdoctoral applications, particularly from the Faculty of Engineering, Science, and Mathematics.

The Chair discussed ongoing efforts to improve the success rates of applications for the CREATE program. There will be a joint Senate Graduate Council and Senate Research and Innovation Council meeting scheduled on June 15 to discuss graduate funding, student financial support, and strategic priorities for graduate education at University of Waterloo. The Chair thanked council members and GSPA staff for their contributions throughout the academic year.

6. Curricular Submissions

6.1. Faculty of Arts

Pomeroy presented the School of Accounting and Finance plans to expand the Master of Accounting program to include a Toronto option that leverages existing educational space to enhance recruitment for both full-time and part-time students. The proposed changes will include admission intake for all three academic terms: Spring, Fall, and Winter. These modifications are intended to align with evolving CPA professional requirements, expand access to students in the Greater Toronto Area, and support long-term program sustainability. Council members discussed operational considerations related to delivering an academic program in Toronto and student admission requirements.

A motion was heard to recommend that Senate approves the major modifications to the Master of Accounting (MAcc) program for the School of Accounting and Finance, effective May 1, 2027, as presented. Pomeroy and Ingalls. Carried.

6.2. Faculty of Mathematics

Ingalls presented the major modifications from the Faculty of Mathematics. Following a cyclical review, there were recommendations to add a co-op option and reduce the number of courses required for the Master of Actuarial Science. The changes are intended to improve program flexibility while maintaining alignment with professional accreditation and examination requirements. Council members discussed the structure of the co-op pathway and confirmed that both co-op and non-co-op students will complete the same academic coursework.

A motion was heard to recommend that Senate approves the major modifications to the Master of Actuarial Science (MActSc) and the Master of Actuarial Science (MActSc) – Co-operative programs for the Faculty of Mathematics, effective January 1, 2027, as presented. Ingalls and Lemieux. Carried.

7. Transnational Education Programs

VanderBurgh provided a presentation about the Transnational Education Programs, which are being explored to support revenue generation, brand development, and market diversification to other countries. VanderBurgh highlighted new partnership opportunities in China and Singapore involving dual-degrees programs. The Global Engagement Steering Committee was recently created and includes the President and Provost. Council members discussed lessons learned from previous international initiatives, including governance oversight, market analysis, enrolment forecasting, exit strategies, research security, and academic freedom considerations. VanderBurgh indicated that further consultation is needed and council members were invited to share their feedback.

8. TA/RA Unionization Updates

The Chair confirmed that the collective agreement has been ratified and implementation planning is underway. GSPA has launched information sessions and online resources to support implementation efforts. New Workday hiring processes for GTAs, GRAs, and sessional instructors are currently being developed. The Chair advised that future GRA appointments will likely require public postings and more formal hiring procedures. Council members discussed the operational implications of these changes, including impacts on current hiring practices and the need for additional coordination between the Faculties.

9. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

No item was removed from the consent agenda.

10. Other Business

de Loë informed council members that the Water Institute has transitioned from a university supported institute to a Faculty-level institute within the Faculty of Science. The Chair noted that the new Executive Director for the Water Institute is not solely affiliated with the Faculty of Science. The collaborative programs continue to be supported by the participating academic units.

11. Adjournment

The next meeting of the Senate Graduate Council will be held in Fall 2026.