

University of Waterloo
SENATE
Minutes of the Monday 23 October 2023 Meeting
[in agenda order]

Present: John Abraham, Nasser Abukhdeir, Sheila Ager, Marc Aucoin, Lisa Aultman-Hall, Aubrey Basdeo, Jean Becker, Jeff Casello, Trevor Charles, Joan Coutu, Kristine Dalton, Laura Deakin, Charmaine Dean, Jack DeGooyer, David DeVidi, Catherine Dong, Mark Ferro, Paul Fieguth, Wendy Fletcher, Bruce Frayne, Murray Gamble, Genevieve Gauthier-Chalifour (Secretary), Mark Giesbrecht, Vivek Goel (Chair), Rob Gorbet, Kelly Grindrod, Mike Grivicic (Secretary), Vikas Gupta, David Ha, Peter Hall, Kevin Hare, Neela Hassan, Chris Houser, Natalie Hutchings, Nadine Ibrahim, Narveen Jandu, Martin Karsten, Acey Kaspar, Achim Kempf, Veronica Kitchen, Scott Kline, Christiane Lemieux, Lili Liu, Brad Lushman, Jennifer Lynes Murray, Stephanie Maaz, Shana MacDonald, Ellen MacEachen, Carol Ann MacGregor, Colleen Maxwell, Kristiina Montero, Richard Myers, Cathy Newell Kelly, Rory Norris, James Nugent, Erin O'Connell, Troy Osborne, David Porreca, Luke Potwarka, Cynthia Richard, Mary Robinson, James Rush, John Saabas, Labibah Salim J Ali, Beth Sandore Namachchivaya, Rida Sayed, Asher Scaini, Marcus Shantz, Siva Sivoththaman, James Skidmore, Christopher Taylor, Sharon Tucker, Graeme Turner, Diana Vangelisti, Mary Wells, Stanley Woo, Annie Yang

Guests: Aldo Caputo, Becky Elming, Melanie Figueiredo, Jenny Flagler-George, David George-Cosh, Diana Goncalves, Sarah Hadley, Michelle Hollis, Andie Kaiser, Andrea Kelman, Jennifer Kieffer, Bob Lemieux, Norah McRae, Christine McWebb, Ian Milligan, Fayaz Noormohamed, Chris Read, Karl Schuett, Daniela Seskar-Hencic, Greg Smith, Kerry Stryker, Marilyn Thompson, Tim Weber-Kraljevski, Roly Webster, Meghan Whitfield, Sarah Willey-Thomas, Katy Wong-Francq

Absent: Dominic Barton*, Judy Castaneda, Kim Cuddington, Aiman Fatima, Sonia Ismail, Alysia Kolentsis*, Xianguo Li, Blake Madill, Peter Meehan, Christopher Nielsen, Jacinda Reitsma*, Sivabal Sivaloganathan, Dan Weber*, Clarence Woudsma, Changbao Wu
*regrets

OPEN SESSION

All members of Senate held a moment of silence to acknowledge the passing of Stephanie Ye-Mowe, a former senator and a dedicated student leader at Waterloo.

1. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chris Houser offered a territorial acknowledgement along with a personal reflection.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Senators were asked to declare any conflicts they may have in relation to the items on the agenda. No conflicts were declared.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, AND APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

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 13-16 of the Senate agenda. Dong and Porreca. Carried.

4. MINUTES OF THE 18 SEPTEMBER 2023 MEETING

A motion was heard to approve the minutes as distributed. Newell Kelly and deGooyer. Carried.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

This item was received for information.

6. SENATE WORKPLAN

This item was received for information.

7. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

a. President's Update

Goel acknowledged that recent university statements regarding the situation in Israel and Gaza have been hurtful to some members of the community and offered a sincere apology for that unintentional result. He emphasized that he condemns the terrorist attack of October 7 perpetrated by Hamas. He also emphasized that the situation in Gaza is an unacceptable humanitarian tragedy. Goel stated that all parties should abide by international law and the Geneva Convention, and crimes against humanity are never justified. The University of Waterloo will continue to follow the requirements of the law as well as its free speech policy which is based on the direction from government. All members of the community are free to express their ideas within the bounds of law including provisions for hate speech under the Criminal Code of Canada and discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code. Under Policy 33 all members of the community are expected to maintain a supportive, respectful and tolerant environment. A member noted their concern at the university's statements and suggested the university might consider developing a process for issuing statements to ensure they reflect the view of the community as a whole, or consider instances where it may not be appropriate to issue institutional statements.

The president remarked on other recent events and those upcoming:

- Thanks to Senators for participating in the Board of Governors retreat in September
- Truth and Reconciliation events held on 29 September
- Fall Convocation held the previous weekend
- Employee Equity Census is underway, and upcoming launch of the Employee Engagement Survey on 12 November

b. Provost's Update

Rush provided a presentation on the recent launch of the Provost's Advisory Committee on Building a Resilient University of Waterloo, following from initial work that started in May 2022 and with a final report with recommendations having been delivered in August 2023. It was noted that the advisory committee process shows the need to accelerate integrated planning across the institution. Rush also reviewed activity in response to the June 28 Hagey Hall attack and noted that work is ongoing, including improvements to response systems/protocols, increased training/awareness, prioritizing physical security, improving emergency communications, and working to earn trust and build community. Members observed that while high tech solutions may be useful, the University should also be open to low tech ways to address issues; the need to balance increased security with maintaining access; the need to coordinate activity within a decentralized University structure; and, that electronic access would allow for rapid response and changes to access when required.

Rush and Porreca observed that the Policy 76/77 process is proceeding, and the lines of communication are open between both sides, having stepped back from arbitration to move into mediation in early November.

8. FACULTY UPDATE PRESENTATION – HEALTH

Lili Liu provided a presentation on the Faculty's initiatives and events, including: student learning supported by top-level anatomy lab and increased requirement for courses outside the Faculty to round their experience; the Faculty was able to secure Elder Henry due to focus on Indigenous priorities in the strategic plan, and the Faculty continues to foster Indigenous curriculum and spaces; development of course for eCampusOntario; recent report on research impact entitled "Health in 3D" and enhancing communications with the Health HUB.

Following Dean Liu's presentation, the deans led a flash mob to bring awareness to the United Way campaign with help from the UW Hip Hop club and the Waterloo Warriors.

9. REPORT – SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The two items were taken together, and a motion was heard to elect Helena Shilomboleni as a member of Senate Undergraduate Council, term to 30 April 2024, and further to elect Kevin White as a member of Senate Graduate & Research Council, term to 30 April 2025, all as described in the report. O'Connell and Deakin. Carried.

10. REPORT – SENATE LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Goel spoke to the report which details key initiatives and funding, including building capacity toward rolling integrated planning with less emphasis on five-year plans, and that considerable analysis can be done from survey data and other data sources. Goel noted the special focus on student mental health, wellbeing, and sense of belonging. Key performance indicators in education, research, service/innovation, operations, and financial strength were also noted, and that Waterloo is a leader in a number of areas but lags in others. Members discussed the issue of grade inflation at the secondary school level, noting that some evidence shows that remote instruction seemed to raise entering averages. It was suggested that this matter may be brought to Senate Undergraduate Council for further discussion. Senators noted there would be a basis to prompt the province on the potential overreliance on grades to measure learning, and the Waterloo at 100 paper proposes to move away from strict reliance on grades and more attention to impact in learning.

11. REPORT – SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Rush discussed the report, which follows through on the commitment to bring forward a fall budget update. Rush provided an overview of the impact of salary reopener clauses arising from Bill 124, and enrollment trends for both undergraduate and graduate students, domestic and international. Rush noted there is no further update on the Blue Ribbon Panel as the community awaits the report and response from the government. The rising interest rate environment has helped to offset other budget pressures; and, current year budget pressures may be handled with one-time measures but the factors impacting this year's budget will persist in upcoming years. Risk from international enrollments and geopolitical factors was also noted. Senators observed that the ongoing trends of flat funding combined with rising expenses presents an unsustainable situation, which may be addressed in full or in part by the Blue Ribbon Panel report and outcomes. In the interest of time, a portion of the presentation relating to the MCU framework and the Waterloo Budget Model was deferred to the November meeting.

12. REPORT – SENATE UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL

DeVidi spoke to the report and the proposal to pilot a curriculum subcommittee, which aims to direct more of the council's time and attention to strategic matters while allowing curricular approvals to be completed with the benefit of the council's rigour and expertise. Members observed that the proposed enhancement to the delegation of authority underscores the importance of reviewing committee reports and the consent agenda.

In response to a question, it was noted that upon a successful completion of the pilot, the subcommittee would recommend to have the student representative named as "WUSA president or delegate" to reflect and represent the student constituency broadly. A motion was heard to endorse the establishment of a term-limited pilot of a curriculum subcommittee for Senate Undergraduate Council, as described in this report. DeVidi and Abukhdeir. Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda was approved under item 3, with items approved or received for information.

13. REPORT – SENATE LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Received for information.

14. REPORT – VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH & INTERNATIONAL

a. Awards, Distinctions, Grants, Waterloo International Engagements

Received for information.

15. REPORT OF THE PROVOST – FACULTY APPOINTMENTS, LEAVES

Received for information.

16. LIST OF GRADUANDS – FALL 2023 CONVOCATION

Received for information.

17. OTHER BUSINESS

With no further business in open session, Senate convened in confidential session.

31 October 2023
MG/dg

Mike Grivicic
Associate University Secretary to
Senate