

University of Waterloo
SENATE
Minutes of the Monday March 4, 2024 Meeting
[in agenda order]

Present: John Abraham, Nasser Abukhdeir, Sheila Ager, Marc Aucoin, Aubrey Basdeo, Jean Becker, Jeff Casello, Judy Castaneda, Trevor Charles, Joan Coutu, Kristine Dalton, Laura Deakin, Charmaine Dean, Jack DeGooyer, David DeVidi, Catherine Dong, Paul Fieguth, Wendy Fletcher, Genevieve Gauthier-Chalifour (Secretary), Vivek Goel (Chair), Kelly Grindrod, Mike Grivicic (Associate Secretary), David Ha, Peter Hall, Kevin Hare, Neela Hassan, Natalie Hutchings, Nadine Ibrahim, Sonia Ismail, Narveen Jandu, Martin Karsten, Acey Kaspar, Achim Kempf, Veronica Kitchen, Scott Kline, Alysia Kolentsis, Christiane Lemieux, Xianguo Li, Lili Liu, Brad Lushman, Jennifer Lynes Murray, Stephanie Maaz, Shana MacDonald, Ellen MacEachen, Blake Madill, Colleen Maxwell, Peter Meehan, Kristiina Montero, Richard Myers, Catherine Newell Kelly, Christopher Nielsen, Rory Norris, James Nugent, Troy Osborne, David Porreca, Jacinda Reitsma, Cynthia Richard, Mary Robinson, James Rush, Labibah Salim J Ali, Beth Sandore Namachchivaya, Asher Scaini, Marcus Shantz, James Skidmore, Anita Taylor, Graeme Turner, Diana Vangelisti, Dan Weber, Mary Wells, Stanley Woo, Changbao Wu, Annie Yang

Guests: Catherine Burns, Nenone Donaldson, Bernard Duncker, Donna Ellis, Melanie Figueiredo, Jenny Flagler-George, Barbara Forrest, Diana Goncalves, Sarah Hadley, Michelle Hollis, Ross Johnston, Diane Johnston, Andrea Kelman, Jennifer Kieffer, Nick Manning, Jon Mason, Eleanor McMahon, Norah McRae, Christine McWebb, Ian Milligan, Bessma Momani, Fayaz Noormohamed, Nicholas Pfeifle, Karl Schuett, Daniela Seskar-Hencic, Greg Smith, Allan Starr, Brandon Sweet, Nickola Voegelin, Tim Weber-Kraljevski, Sarah Willey-Thomas, Katy Wong-Francq

Absent: Lisa Aultman-Hall*, Dominic Barton*, Kim Cuddington, Aiman Fatima, Mark Ferro*, Bruce Frayne*, Murray Gamble*, Mark Giesbrecht, Rob Gorbet*, Vikas Gupta*, Chris Houser, Carol Ann MacGregor, Erin O'Connell, Luke Potwarka, John Saabas*, Rida Sayed, Sivabal Sivaloganathan, Siva Sivoththaman, Sharon Tucker, Clarence Woudsma

*regrets

OPEN SESSION

The chair offered remarks:

- Welcome to Eleanor McMahon, who begins in her role as Vice-President, University Relations
- The flags on campus have been lowered to half-mast to mark the passing of former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney
- Upcoming celebrations and observances include International Women's Day, the beginning of Ramadan, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Easter, and International Trans Day of Visibility

1. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Mary Wells offered a territorial acknowledgement along with a personal reflection.

The chair indicated that Senate will seek volunteers for this item for future meetings.

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. Porreca and Dong. Carried.

4. MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 29, 2023 MEETING

A motion was heard to approve the minutes as distributed. Casello and Newell Kelly. Carried. A senator noted one item where the minutes could have included more content on the different views expressed; staff will take the matter to Senate Executive Committee.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising.

6. SENATE WORKPLAN

The chair noted items from the workplan are included on the meeting agenda as item 8, 11 and 17(a); the report re: University Professor is expected to come forward at the April meeting.

7. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

a. President's Update. Goel provided his report and offered the following:

- Acknowledgment of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the heightened emotions and tensions that are being felt as this conflict continues; reports of a possible ceasefire are encouraging
- Regarding the principles of freedom of speech and respectful engagement, the task force continues its work and is co-chaired by Christine McWebb and Scott Kline
- The university awaits further details on the recent federal announcement regarding the capping of study permits to be issued to international students, and at Waterloo the required attestation letters will only be provided to students who accept their offer of admission and provide the required tuition deposit
- The province's recent announcement of \$1.3 billion in funding for postsecondary education, which includes \$900 million for operating budget support and \$200 million earmarked for those institutions facing the most difficult financial situations
 - o The tuition freeze for domestic in-province students is being extended to 2026-27
 - o While Waterloo is grateful for these immediate supports, these measures fall notably short of those recommended by the province's own Blue-Ribbon Panel
 - o The funding announcement came in parallel with the tabling of the *Strengthening Accountability and Student Supports Act* which brings new requirements pertaining to mental health, anti-racism and fee transparency for costs paid by students, with the potential side effect of adversely impacting institutional autonomy
 - o Other announcements included allowing the offering of applied master's degrees within the college system, and a career portal

8. ASSOCIATION ANNUAL UPDATES – REPORT OF THE PRESIDENTS OF FAUW, WUSA, GSA

David Porreca provided a presentation: FAUW has emerged from a year of both crisis and renewal with a refreshed board of directors as well as new staff. Some key upcoming priorities include the salary negotiations that are underway, ongoing activity at the Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee, a full-scale governance review within FAUW, completion of the Policy 76/77 process, and work to prospectively represent research professors. FAUW plans to have closer coordination with the other associations on campus.

Rory Norris provided a presentation: WUSA is moving into its second year under the new governance model; the recent elections saw a historically strong turnout of 25%; continued advocacy efforts, including through provincial and national advocacy groups; ongoing support of student clubs and societies; new turnkey desk in Davis Centre; newly-reopened space in the old "Bombshelter", modernized study space in the upper level of the Student Life Centre, as well as plans for an Indian restaurant. Members ascertained more details on the WUSA governance model and the process undertaken to review WUSA governance, and a member noted that the annual carnival event (while popular) has an observable adverse impact on the physical grounds where it is held.

Neela Hassan provided a presentation: the GSA serves 4700 students, providing political representation both on and off campus; details on GSA governance model; student services and supports include transit passes, legal and tax aid, academic support, issues related to food security, supplementary health and dental plans, and the Graduate House facility; advocacy for and negotiation of a minimum funding increase; ongoing efforts at Indigenization of the GSA; external engagement

includes an international student working group with partners from Laurier and Conestoga. [During Hassan's presentation, a group of visitors interrupted the meeting and her presentation without being recognized by the chair; a member of the group voiced their anguish at the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and expressed concern regarding the University's actions and public stance in that regard.]

9. FACULTY UPDATE PRESENTATION - ARTS

Sheila Ager provided a presentation on the Faculty of Arts:

- More than 8000 students, with 341 faculty and 150 staff
- 15 departments, three schools, and strong partnerships with the AFIWs
- Wide array of academic program offerings at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral level, along with many diplomas and certificates
- Strategic Plan 2023-30 entitled "A Future for Humanity"
- Co-op is now available in all undergraduate programs, with significant increases to student taking co-op in recent years
- Highlights of recent Arts Alumni Achievement Award winners
- Research leadership includes several research chairs and interdisciplinary collaborations
- Efforts at reorganizing the Faculty are ongoing

Members discussed/clarified: reorganization of the Faculty would focus on enhancing effectiveness, utilizing resources more fully and enabling new opportunities; the Faculty has been very successful in recruiting excellent postdoctoral scholars; with increased uptake of co-op, the employment rate of Arts student is similar to that for the whole of campus.

10. REPORT – SENATE UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL

David DeVidi took items 10 (a)-(d) together and provided an overview of all items, making a motion for each.

a. Major Modifications – Systems Design Engineering

To approve the creation of a Human Factors & Interfaces Specialization, an Intelligent & Automated Systems Specialization, a Physical & Mechatronic Systems Specialization, and a Societal & Environmental Systems Specialization within the Systems Design Engineering plan, effective 1 September 2024, as presented.

b. Major Modifications – Quantum Engineering Option

To approve the creation of the Quantum Engineering Option within the Faculty of Engineering, effective 1 September 2024, as presented.

c. Major Modifications – Microbiology Option & Cell and Molecular Biology Option

To approve the creation of the Microbiology Option and the Cell and Molecular Biology Option within the Faculty of Science, effective 1 September 2024, as presented.

d. Plan Inactivation – International Studies in Engineering Option & Society Technology, and Values Option

To approve the inactivation of the International Studies in Engineering Option and the Society, Technology, and Values Option, effective 1 September 2024, as presented.

DeVidi and Deakin. All motions carried.

11. REPORT OF THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

a. Update on 2023/24 Annual Operating Budget

James Rush provided a presentation, and noted the following:

- Budget opened with a \$4 million deficit, now projected to grow to \$16.5 million
- Addressing of the budget gap will be via spending restraint as well as through utilization of one-time sources (including from STEM funding announced by the province, as available)
- Overall tuition revenue is on track from opening estimates, with offsetting deviations from the increase in domestic undergraduate vs. the decrease from international fee-paying students
- Increases to salary/benefit expenses arising from Bill 124 reopener

- Challenges anticipated in 2024-25 arising from governmental and geopolitical uncertainty, and also from constrained revenue sources (tuition freeze, diminished potential international student enrollments)
- Details on specific allocations to Waterloo from the recent \$1.3 billion funding announcement are not yet available
- Waterloo is anticipated to receive a portion of funding for STEM enrollments, but is not anticipated to receive funding earmarked for those institutions facing the most difficult financial situations
- Measures to address the budget deficit will include forgoing some central fund investments in areas such as infrastructure renewal, and broadly will require an approach that is transparent and multi-modal
- Communications to campus are planned on other related measures to mitigate the deficit, including budget reductions that will be sought across all units

Members discussed:

- Budget data presented is a result of shared governance across many units, with Senate receiving budget information congruent with its role as an oversight body
- The level of detail provided in the budget materials is greater than in previous years, with senators expressing varied opinions on whether even greater detail would be desirable or whether the current level of detail will suffice for Senate's deliberations
- Investments from central funds will need to be prioritized as part of budget measures to mitigate the deficit, and planned investments will need to be deferred; when examining deferred maintenance, the University will need to look for synergies and efficiencies
- Hiring activity will be restricted, with a mechanism to vet and approve hiring plans by units; the University will continue to prioritize key activities and allocating the necessary resources for those activities
- Certain on-campus offerings are co-funded between the central budget and fees drawn from students, and it is anticipated that net new expenses in those areas will be carefully examined before proceeding

Senators were invited to send further questions following the meeting through the secretary.

12. AMENDMENTS TO UNIVERSITY POLICIES

a. Recommended Amendments to Policy 3 – Sabbatical and Other leaves for Faculty Members and to Policy 43 – Special Conditions for Employment for Deans

Rush spoke to the report, noting that ambiguities arising from the two policies and the memo would be resolved with the proposed amendments, and Porreca affirmed FAUW support for the recommendation. Members clarified: administrators currently in their role will be “grandfathered” their leave under the existing framework, and those taking on new appointments will be subject to the amended framework; the ability of a faculty member to take certain types of leave (such as sabbatical) would depend on their appointment e.g. tenure-stream vs. teaching-stream; policy is clear that sabbatical leave is not intended to lead into retirement, and there have been instances of individuals who have retired from the University with a remaining balance of earned leave having not been taken.

A motion was heard to approve the proposed amendments to Policy 3 – Sabbatical and Other Leaves for Faculty Members, and to cancel Policy 43 – Special Conditions for Employment for Deans (Policy 43), as described in this report and attachment, and further to recommend that the Board of Governors give final approval to the same proposed amendments. Porreca and Rush. Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

13. REPORT – SENATE GRADUATE & RESEARCH COUNCIL. Received for information.

a. Regulation Revisions – Faculty of Engineering Dean’s Honours List

To approve the proposed academic regulation revisions to update the Distinction and Dean’s Honours Minimum Cumulative Average for Graduating Honours and Term Distinction, for the Faculty of Engineering, effective 1 September 2024, as presented.

b. Regulations Revisions – Invalid Credential Combinations

To approve the proposed academic regulation revisions to the Invalid Credential Combinations section of the Undergraduate Studies Academic Calendar for the Faculty of Environment's Business Option and Sustainability Financial Management, effective 1 September 2024, as presented.

14. REPORT – VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH & INTERNATIONAL – Awards, Distinctions, Grants, Waterloo International Engagements

Received for information.

15. REPORT OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST

a. Faculty Appointments, Leaves

Received for information.

16. COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS – TEACHING AWARDS

To approve the committee appointments for the Distinguished Teacher Awards and for the Amit & Meena Chakma Award for Exceptional Teaching by a Student, as presented in this report.

17. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Senate Self-Assessment Surveys

The chair indicated that the surveys will be forthcoming for Senate and Senate committees/councils.

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

March 13, 2024
MG/dg

Mike Grivicic
Associate University Secretary to
Senate