

**University of Waterloo**  
**SENATE**  
**Minutes of the 10 June 2024 Special Meeting**  
**[in agenda order]**

Present: John Abraham, Nasser Abukhdeir, Sheila Ager, Bilal Ahmed, Avery Akkerman, Marc Aucoin, Veronica Austen, Aubrey Basdeo, Jordan Bauman, Jean Becker, Jeff Casello, Judy Castaneda, Andrew Chang, Martin Cooke, Cecilia Cotton, Kim Cuddington, Laura Deakin, Charmaine Dean, David DeVidi, Catherine Dong, Mark Ferro, Paul Fieguth, Wendy Fletcher, Teresa Fortney, Bruce Frayne, Murray Gamble, Genevieve Gauthier-Chalifour (Secretary), Mark Giesbrecht, Vivek Goel (Chair), Rob Gorbet, Mike Grivicic (Associate Secretary), Vikas Gupta, David Ha, Neela Hassan, Chris Houser, Natalie Hutchings, Narveen Jandu, Acey Kaspar, Achim Kempf, Veronica Kitchen, Scott Kline, Sachin Kotecha, Christiane Lemieux, Ondrej Lhotak, Lili Liu, Brad Lushman, Jennifer Lynes Murray, Stephanie Maaz, Shana MacDonald, Ellen MacEachen, Carol Ann MacGregor, Colleen Maxwell, Peter Meehan, Kirsten Muller, Richard Myers, Cathy Newell Kelly, Christopher Nielsen, James Nugent, Troy Osborne, Everett Patterson, Nicholas Pellegrino, Nicholas Pfeifle, David Porreca, Neil Randall, Jacinda Reitsma, Mary Robinson, James Rush, John Saabas, Beth Sandore Namachchivaya, Rida Sayed, Asher Scaini, Mark Seasons, Marcus Shantz, Siva Sivoththaman, James Skidmore, Katie Traynor, Sharon Tucker, Diana Vangelisti, Johanna Wandel, Mary Wells, Stanley Woo, Changbao Wu

Guests: Omar A, Rum Abdelazim, Abdi Abdi, Rami Abdul Ranim, Sarah Abdul Ranim, Eleenor Abraham, Mohammad Aghaee, Mahmoud Ahmed, Sabeeh Ahmed, Gasak Al Jasim, Lulu Al-Hendi, Wisam Alkneder, Iman Asal, Tahreem Awan, Mohammed Badar, Devin Bai, Bintou Barrow, Ben Bazak, Daniela Berry, Aparajita Bhandari, Dahlia Birss, Linda Bleam, Imake Boudin, Noa Boulaka, Honor Brabazon, Lauren Brecht, Lauren Bryant, Aldo Caputo, Sam Charles, Maha Chawdhury, Amanda Connolly, Yonael Debebe, Sara Desoky, Nenone Donaldson, Bernard Duncker, Maya El-Baltaji, Biro Elliot, Muhammad Elsoukkary, Eidan Erlich, Ori Erlich, Farah Fadzil, Yara Fahmy, May Farhad, Steven Ferreira, Melanie Figueiredo, Jenny Flagler-George, Mo Forgi, Barbara Forrest, Josslyn Gabriel, Anne Galang, Mike Gaspic, Marium Ghauree, Goldi Gill, Moishy Goldman, Diana Goncalves, Janine Graham, Spencer Greenspan, Ari Grossman, Yoav Gudes, Amir Hamadache, Syeda Hasan, Mohamed Helwa, Katie Homer, Maia Hutton, Ola Idris Ali, Ariq Isfar, Cecile Isimbi, Diane Johnston, Muhammad Kanji, Aleece Katan, Courtney Kates, Suhaavi Kaur, Andrea Kelman, Sean Kernitsman, Amaar Khan, Monia Khan, Jennifer Kieffer, Aminah Kiferu, Salim Labibah, Maryam Latifpoor Keparantis, Alex Loni, Sarah Malik, Rachel Mamer, Nick Manning, Murtoza Manzur, Jon Mason, Jessie M'Auley, Yore Mawm, Eleanor McMahon, Christine McWebb, Eden Mekonen, Soumya Menon, Rawan Miznazi, Yaseen Mobada, Bessma Momani, Maria Morrone, Nomair Naeem, Hasan Namrah, Fayaz Noormohamed, Oyinda Ogundimbola, Liu Pollock, Tanya Pompilio, Anna Purkey, Sriranjini Raman, Sam Ramer, Dilroz Rana, Chris Read, Hazem Salem, Gerry Schneider, Brian Schwan, Daniela Seskar-Hencic, Sana Shah, Nimar Shajahan, Mostafa Shehadeh, Neil Sheroy, Jennifer Shousterman, Mitewii Simon, Mitch Simon, Alisa Sivak, Heather Smyth, Allan Starr, Jeremy Steffler, Kerry Stryker, Brandon Sweet, Sarah Taupan, Arthur Taylor, Hanan Thibeh, Nickola Voegelin, Tim Weber-Kraljevski, Meghan Whitfield, Sarah Willey-Thomas, Alkheder Wisam, Elie Wolfe, Mishaal Yasir, Mohammed Youssef, Alfred Yu, Efi Zaguri, Zaricam Zauy, Linda Zhang

Regrets: Peter Hall, Nadine Ibrahim, Blake Madill, Kristiina Montero, Sivabal Sivaloganathan, Anita Taylor, Clarence Woudsma, En-Hui Yang

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The chair welcomed Senators and guests to the meeting and reminded all in attendance of the importance of maintaining decorum to foster a respectful discussion.

## **1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

## **2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

A motion was heard to amend the agenda to replace pages 8-17 with alternate documents, being those originally submitted to the Secretariat as part of the request for the special Senate meeting. Nugent and Abukhdeir.

Senators discussed the documents which were included with the meeting agenda and were amended from those originally submitted. It was noted the documents were amended following discussion at the Senate Executive Committee in accordance with its duties, in alignment with Senate's powers and mandate, and with the agreement of the main proponent of the request.

A Senator raised that the original proposed motion and materials more closely reflected the intent of the signatories, including specific discussion of the partnership with Technion. It was noted that some of the signatories of the original request were not necessarily in agreement with the motions as submitted, but wanted to foster a fulsome discussion at Senate.

Senators discussed Senate's role in establishing an overall framework for partnerships and that Senate does not adjudicate on single partnerships. Senators discussed the extraordinary nature of the circumstances relative to Senate's mandate and powers, and the appropriateness of debate as a result.

It was noted that additional communications to Senate were received and included with the special meeting agenda for information. Requests to make representations to Senate have been received and will be handled under item 4.

Following discussion, the question of the amendment to the meeting agenda was called and the amending motion was defeated.

The motion to approve the agenda as presented was carried.

## **3. REPORT – SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **a. Addressing Request for Special Meeting of Senate**

The University Secretary provided an overview of the powers assigned to Senate and to the Board of Governors, respectively, through the University of Waterloo Act and noted Senate is primarily empowered to establish the educational policies of the University, and may make recommendations to the Board of Governors with respect to any matter relative to the operations of the University. The Board has general authority to govern the University with the exception of matters assigned to Senate by the Act, and this general authority encompasses power related to the University's investment funds. Senate does not have authority over specific institutional partnerships though it may have a role in establishing related policies in the context of research or academic partnerships. A Senator indicated that they did not agree with the interpretation of the Act as laid out in the report.

The chair invited Senator Rida Sayed to speak to the motions that will be under consideration. Sayed offered thanks to the Secretariat and to the 21 signatories, noting that all of the 21 signatories are diverse, agree that the topic is worth discussion, and do not form a bloc nor have a single view on the issues. Sayed also offered that the current geopolitical situation is urgent and pressing, and he would not want the University to be complicit in violence through inaction, and so this request requires discussion in a timely manner.

#### **4. COMMUNICATIONS TO SENATE**

- a. South West Ontario Chapter, Jewish Faculty Network. Received for information.
- b. UW Department of Communication Arts. Received for information.
- c. Undergraduate Student Dvir Zagury made a representation to Senate as follows: it is important to feel safe on campus and within the University community, and the decisions taken at governance bodies such as Senate have a direct impact on those in the community; the motion pertaining to academic partnerships is not in line with the values of the community, and works against academic integrity and academic freedom; the advanced research undertaken via the partnership under scrutiny has no plausible military usage; if the outcome of these debates is to erode those partnerships, it will be a negative outcome for the University.
- d. Graduate Student Ahmad Nabil made a representation to Senate as follows: the debates today spur from increasing student activity and interest from within the University community; the partnership with Technion is of specific concern as it relates to the conflict in Gaza; a related communication included in the Senate material presents assertions that are disputed; there is broad support for the proposed actions in item 6 from clubs and groups within the campus community, and there is no need for any delay in taking action in that regard.
- e. Faculty Member David Simakov made a representation to Senate as follows: the original motions as submitted in support of the special Senate meeting are one-sided in their nature; concern that a political agenda may undermine the institution's academic freedom; the University should reject calls to cut academic ties to the institutions in question and should commit to academic freedom.

Additional communications to Senate received subsequent to the agenda distribution were provided as addenda for the information of Senators (see item 7).

#### **5. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

##### **a. Report to Senate on Actions to Address Issues Raised on Investments and Partnerships**

Goel spoke to the report and highlighted the commitments to action made at previous meetings of Senate and the Board of Governors, and that the proposed approach aims to increase transparency and hear from a diverse range of voices in the community. The timing also aligns with the Board's commitment to review its ESG commitments, particularly with respect to social factors. The proposed actions will include robust processes to review institutional partnerships and the University's investment policy framework, aiming to enunciate principles and providing the community with the chance to be heard in alignment with the collegial shared governance model.

#### **6. MOTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

The chair proposed that the three motions be put on the floor together to foster discussion of the items in an unrestricted manner, with separate votes on each motion at the end of Senate's deliberations. Three motions were made:

##### 1. Motion regarding investment disclosure

That Senate recommend that the Board of Governors annually disclose a comprehensive report of all investments and holdings in an open session of the Board of Governors or one of its committees as appropriate, with the first report being issued no later than the first quarter of 2025.

2. Motion regarding institutional partnerships

That the Senate formally express support for the establishment of a defined set of principles and framework to guide approaches to institutional partnerships which are reflective of University of Waterloo values.

3. Motion regarding ESG factors

That Senate recommend that the Board of Governors consider the inclusion and implementation of social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, nonviolence, and international human rights as priority areas in the Environmental, Social and Governance (“ESG”) factors, and

That Senate recommend an annual update report be provided on progress towards said inclusion and implementation within the University’s investment portfolios, in an open session of either the Board of Governors or one of its committees as appropriate, with the first update to be brought forward no later than one year from the date of passage of this motion.

Sayed and Skidmore.

Senators discussed the University community’s interests with respect to the geopolitical conflict, and the common desire for a peaceful resolution.

Senators discussed investment disclosure, including student advocacy, the benefits of disclosure, accountability reporting, and the timeline for the proposal under consideration.

Senators discussed strategic partnerships, including the benefits of strategic partnerships and potential risks of some partnerships, the importance of the appearance of neutrality in partnerships, considerations and possible consequences around severing partnerships, the inadequacy of current policy and practice towards reviewing institutional partnerships, and the importance of principled decision-making within institutional governance.

Senators discussed the relative power of task forces and appropriate resourcing. Senators also discussed engagement with the federal government on the issue of partnerships and support for academic freedom, and the importance of clear guidance to support implementation of any new framework.

The chair called the questions.

On the first question, the motion carried.

On the second question, the motion carried.

A motion was heard to amend the third motion as put, to remove “consider” from the first article and to reword the motion to directly recommend the elements as drafted in the first article. The amending motion was carried.

On the third question, the motion carried as amended:

That Senate recommend that the Board of Governors include and implement social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, nonviolence, and international human rights as priority areas in the Environmental, Social and Governance (“ESG”) factors, and

That Senate recommend an annual update report be provided on progress towards said inclusion and implementation within the University’s investment portfolios, in an open session of either the

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Board of Governors or one of its committees as appropriate, with the first update to be brought forward no later than one year from the date of passage of this motion.

**7. ADDENDA – ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS TO SENATE, IN ORDER RECEIVED**

Items (a)-(h) were received for information.

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The special meeting was adjourned with a short break ahead of the following regular Senate meeting.

August 15, 2024

Mike Grivicic  
Associate University Secretary