

University of Waterloo
SENATE
Minutes of the April 6, 2026 Meeting

Present: John Abraham, Yasmeen Almomani, Michael Barnett-Cowan, Aubrey Basdeo, Jordan Bauman, Raouf Boutaba, Andrew Chang, David Clausi, Martin Cooke, Ray Darling, , Hans De Sterck, Laura Deakin, David DeVidi, Michael Drescher, Thomas Duever, Andrea Edginton, Mark Ferro, Paul Fieguth, Bruce Frayne, Murray Gamble, Gen Gauthier-Chalifour (Secretary), Vivek Goel (Chair), Rob Gorbet, Vikas Gupta, Peter Hall, Kevin Hare, Chris Houser, Acey Kaspar, Misha Khan, Jochen Koenemann, Sachin Kotecha, Christiane Lemieux, John Lewis, Ondrej Lhotak, Christopher Lim, Jun Liu, Lili Liu, Brad Lushman, Shana MacDonald, Carol Ann MacGregor, Blake Madill, Pendar Mahmoudi, Heather Mair, Peter Meehan, Damian Mikhail, Sushanta Mitra, Carter Neal, Christopher Nielsen, James Nugent, Alex Pawelko, David Porreca, Neil Randall, Arya Razmjoo, Jacinda Reitsma, Sharon Roberts, Meray Sadek, Beth Sandore Namachchivaya, Rida Sayed, Mark Seasons, Marcus Shantz, James Skidmore, Karen Sunabacka, Christopher Taylor, Alexie Tcheuyap, Sharon Tucker, Diana Vangelisti, Bojana Videkanic, Justin Wan, Johanna Wandel, Mary Wells, Jeffrey Wilson, Stan Woo, Clarence Woudsma, En-Hui Yang

Regrets: Nasser Abukhdeir, Laith Alkhawaldeh, Veronica Austen, Helen Chen, Cecilia Cotton, Charmaine Dean, Teresa Fortney, Nadine Ibrahim, Marc Jerry, Achim Kempf, Scott Kline, Colleen Maxwell, Richard Myers, Nicholas Pellegrino, Jessica Rindlisbacher, Jagdeep Singh Bachher, Su-Yin Tan, Katie Traynor

Guests/Resources: Heather Bolton, Graham Brown, Aldo Caputo, Tanya Daniels, Ashley Day, Nenone Donaldson, Jenny Flagler-George, Jennifer Gillies, Diana Goncalves, Sarah Hadley, Jennifer Kieffer, Tony Ly, Nick Manning, Fayaz Noormohamed, Gwendoline Nubila, Judene Pretti, Samir Sharma, Ian VanderBurgh, Nickola Voegelin, Tim Weber-Kraljevski

Organization of Meeting: Vivek Goel took the chair and Gen Gauthier-Chalifour acted as secretary. The secretary advised that a quorum was present.

1. Governance Resources

2. OPEN SESSION

The Chair called the meeting to order and welcomed all members to the meeting. The Chair welcomed Ray Darling, Registrar, as a new member of Senate and congratulated Martin Cooke on his appointment as Associate Vice-President, Academic, starting July 1. The Chair noted it was the last meeting for current Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) President Damian Mikhail and thanked him for his service.

3. Territorial Acknowledgement

Vivek Goel, President and Vice-Chancellor, and Chair of Senate, provided the territorial acknowledgement.

3.1 Senate Art Initiative and Installation

Christopher Stuart Taylor, Associate Vice-President, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Anti-racism, spoke to the Senate/Board Room Art Initiative, intended to showcase diverse artistic voices and strengthen community engagement and will include works across multiple mediums. Next steps include forming the adjudication committee, issuing the initial call for artists, and finalizing installation logistics.

Gen Gauthier-Chalifour, University Secretary, spoke about the current installation, "Bead the Tract", on behalf of Logan MacDonald, Director of Longhouse Labs and the artists, Courtney Skye, Talena Atfield, Tesha Emarthle, Jija Jacobs, and Kahionwinehshon Phillips, who could not be in attendance.

4. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

4.1 Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

4.2 Approval of the Agenda and Consent Items

A member requested that the item on page 20 of the meeting materials, proposing a motion to form an ad hoc Senior Leadership Review Committee be added to the agenda. The Chair confirmed that discussion of this item would take place under item 7.1 on the 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 12.1-12.7 of the Senate agenda. Porreca and Madill. Carried.

4.3 Minutes of the March 2, 2026 Meeting

There were no amendments to the minutes.

A motion was heard to approve the open and confidential minutes of the March 2, 2026 and March 9, 2026 meetings, as distributed. Porreca and Wan. Carried.

4.4 Business Arising from the Minutes

No items of business arising were identified.

5. Report of the President

5.1 General Update

Vivek Goel, President and Chair of Senate reported that the 2026 QS World Subject Rankings reflect continued improvement in the University of Waterloo's global standing. Waterloo now has 15 subjects ranked within the top 100 internationally, including four in the top 50: Computer Science, Mathematics, Electrical Engineering, and Data Science. While rankings are not a primary institutional focus, the trend toward a broader range of highly ranked disciplines was highlighted as a positive indicator of sustained academic strength.

The Chair spoke to the recent work related to the federal Impact+ Chairs Program. Over the past four months, teams across the Office of Research and the Faculties collaborated to submit eight nominations for this program, which provides \$1 billion over twelve years to support the recruitment of outstanding international faculty. The Chair acknowledged the significant coordination and compressed timelines involved and thanked those who contributed. This effort was noted as evidence of the University's capacity to work collaboratively and respond quickly, reinforcing confidence among external partners, including government.

In response to questions raised at the previous Senate meeting regarding OSAP changes and institutional support for students, it was noted that further detail on needs-based financial aid will be provided by the Provost in the 2026-27 Operating Budget Report later in the agenda.

On March 23, Canada's Auditor General released a report on the implementation of International Student Program reforms, concluding that the changes were not effectively executed and that permit reductions exceeded intended targets. The report reinforced concerns long expressed by the University and the sector regarding the pace and unintended impacts. The University welcomed IRCC's stated commitment to establish clear processes and more equitable assessment of study permit applications.

The Government of Ontario tabled its 2026 Budget on March 26, reaffirming \$6.4 billion in funding for the postsecondary sector and signaling the development of a provincial AI strategy. The Budget included mention of the Communitech-led Build Waterloo AI initiative, which pairs small businesses with co-op students to identify high-value opportunities and deploy real AI-enabled workflows. The spring-term pilot attracted strong student interest,

with more than 1,000 applicants for 21 positions. If successful, the provincial budget language suggests potential for future program expansion.

6. Report of the Vice-President, Academic and Provost

6.1 University Professor Designation

Tom Duever, Interim Vice-President, Academic and Provost, announced the 2026 University Professor designations as N. Asokan, Faculty of Mathematics, Cheriton School of Computer Science; Randy Harris, Faculty of Arts, English Language and Literature; and, John McPhee, Faculty of Engineering, Systems Design Engineering.

7. Report of the Senate Executive Committee

7.1 Summary of the March 24, 2026 Meeting

Goel spoke to the report as included in the meeting materials. At its March meeting, the Senate Executive Committee (SEC) received and reviewed two independent communications from Senators requesting motions be brought forward to Senate.

First, a motion to establish a new student bursary was proposed by Senator A. Chang. The committee determined that consideration of the motion was premature and that additional information be gathered, including pending details on OSAP changes. It was noted that the Provost would provide further context on needs-based financial aid and proposed increases during the operating budget presentation later in the meeting.

Second, a motion from Senator J. Nugent proposed establishing an ad hoc Senior Leadership Review Committee to make recommendations on senior administration compensation. The Chair noted that compensation for designated executives is governed by Ontario government legislation and falls under the purview of the Board's Governance and Leadership Committee. SEC agreed that a request for greater clarity on the review process be directed to the Board Chair, and that a report from the Governance and Leadership Committee be provided to the Board in open session, which would then be available for Senators to review.

Nugent motioned from the floor that the proposal to establish an ad hoc committee be added to the agenda.

Board Chair and Chair of the Governance and Leadership Committee, Murray Gamble, spoke to the Committee's recently updated terms of reference, which includes oversight of compensation matters including executive compensation. Oversight of designated executive's compensation has long been within the Committee's mandate, with compensation largely frozen in recent years unless responsibilities change. The process for reviewing compensation below the designated executive level is being documented for the Committee. A report on this matter will be provided to the Committee and presented to the Board during the open session at a future meeting. It was reaffirmed that responsibility for these matters rests with the Board.

Members discussed the motion, noting opposing views.

A motion was heard to add the proposal, found on page 20 of the meeting material, to the agenda. Nugent and Porreca.

The motion did not carry.

8. Report of the Senate Planning and Finance Committee

8.1 2026-2027 Budget

Duever provided an overview of the University of Waterloo's 2026-2027 Budget Report, as presented in the meeting materials. Projected expenses were outlined by fund and it was noted that allocations are based on source and purpose with trust and endowment funds restricted to designated uses. While the University continues to meet its obligations, it

remains in a deficit position within the context of ongoing long-term financial constraints. Increases to grant funding recently announced by the province was highlighted as providing \$50.8M in additional funding. Duever further reviewed revenue information, noting that estimates do not include income from new programs and that expense projections exclude salary increases not yet in place.

Duever provided an overview of the multi-year plan to return to a balanced budget, emphasizing the need for continued efficiency, expense management, and development of new revenue-generating programs, with assumptions informed by provincial growth, international agreements, and other opportunities.

Duever spoke to the recent changes to OSAP bursaries and provided an illustration of potential impact, observing that a \$20,000 package (previously \$12,000 loan and \$8,000 grant) may shift to an estimated \$15,000 loan and \$5,000 grant. It was acknowledged that students will feel the impact of this change. Duever added that \$1.5M from tuition increases has been set aside to support needs-based funding and enhance student supports. Work is underway to review the funding mix, with further consideration planned for next year. Future decisions will depend on OSAP rules, calculation methods, and potential implications related to student access guarantees.

Members discussed the additional funds allocated to deferred capital renewal and the potential human impact as a result of budget reduction targets.

A motion was heard that Senate recommend that the Board of Governors approve the operating budget revenues and expenses for 2026-2027, as presented in Tables 14 and 20 of the University of Waterloo 2026-2027 Budget Report. Porreca and Woudsma. Carried.

Separate from the operating budget approval, Mikhail motioned from the floor that an item be added to the agenda related to an explanation of how OSAP cuts are expected to affect students financially and an action plan to address the impacts. Members spoke in support of the item being added to the agenda. Mikhail and Nugent. Carried.

The Chair noted the motion would be discussed under item 15. Other Business.

9. Report of the Senate Graduate Council

9.1 Faculty of Arts

Justin Wan, Chair of the Senate Graduate Council, spoke to the materials provided in the meeting package. There were no questions.

A motion was heard that Senate approves the major modifications to the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Political Science and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Political Science - Co-operative Program, effective May 1, 2026, as presented. Wan and Tcheuyap. Carried.

9.2 Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

Wan spoke to the materials provided in the meeting package. There were no questions.

A motion was heard that Senate approve the major modifications to the 2026 Graduate Studies Academic Calendar, effective May 1, 2026, as presented. Wan and Nielson. Carried.

10. Student Academic Disability Accommodations Policy

10.1 Student Academic Disability Accommodations Policy

David DeVidi, Associate Vice-President, Academic, spoke to the Policy as provided in the meeting materials. DeVidi highlighted the Policy Drafting Committee process, and the recommendation for a Student Accommodations Policy as an outcome of the Accessible Education Project.

Jennifer Gillies, Associate Provost, Campus Support and Accessibility, spoke to the key changes from the current Student Accommodation Guidelines that have been used by the community since their inception in 2019, to the proposed Policy and Procedures. Gillies highlighted the outcomes of the consultation process, such as supplementing the Dispute Resolution procedures, and communications related to the new policy.

Members commended the work of the Policy Drafting Committee. They discussed the dispute resolution process, the importance of training faculty on new accommodation-related concepts, program- and course-level essential requirements, and the inclusion of information on the accessibility fund to cover equipment costs during the policy's one-year review period.

A motion was heard that Senate approve the proposed new Policy 19: Student Academic Disability Accommodations; and, that Senate recommend the Board of Governors give final approval to the Policy. DeVidi and Mikhail. Carried.

11. Report of the Associations

11.1 Annual report of the Associations

Damian Mikhail, President of the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA), presented the Annual WUSA Report. Mikhail highlighted recent initiatives such as the Club Funding Increase, WUSA Governance Reform, University and Government advocacy efforts and Annual Members Meeting. There were no questions.

Meray Sadek, President of the Graduate Student Association (GSA), presented the Annual GSA Report. Sadek highlighted the role of the GSA, the political positions and structures, GSA Health services, and Graduate spaces such as art installations and the Graduate House.

Members congratulated both Mikhail and Sadek on a successful year as student leaders.

The report from the Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo was deferred to the May meeting of Senate.

12. Consent Agenda

The following items were approved / received for information as part of the consent agenda motion for approval under item 4.2.

- 12.1 Delegation of Authority for Approval of the Roster of Graduands
- 12.2 26-27 Senate Nominations for the Board of Governors
- 12.3 Report of the Senate AQUE Committee
- 12.4 Report of the Senate Graduate Council
- 12.5 Report of the Vice-President, Academic & Provost
- 12.6 Report of the Vice-President, Research and International
- 12.7 Senate Work Plan

13. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

There were no items removed from the consent agenda.

14. Confidential Consent Agenda

The following items were approved / received for information as part of the consent agenda motion for approval under item 4.2.

- 14.1 Confidential Minutes from the March 2, 2026 Meeting
- 14.2 Confidential Minutes from the March 9, 2026 Special Meeting

15. Other Business

Mikhail spoke briefly to his motion, as presented,

Be it resolved that the Senate requests a report from the Provost detailing estimated impacts of the OSAP cuts on UWaterloo student finances.

Be it further resolved that the Senate Requests that the Provost outline possible actions to be taken to mitigate the loss of needs based financial assistance, including but not limited to additional UWaterloo grant funding.

The Chair confirmed the Provost accepted the motion and agreed that Senate would receive a report from the Provost addressing the request for information once additional details from the province become available.

16. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:35p.m. The next meeting of Senate will be on Monday May 4, 2026.

April 8, 2026

Ashley Day
Associate University Secretary