

University of Waterloo
SENATE GRADUATE & RESEARCH COUNCIL
Minutes of the June 16, 2025 Meeting
[in agenda order]

Present: Steven Bednarski, Sue Ann Campbell, Charmaine Dean (co-chair), Robert de Loe, Peter Deadman, Bernard Duncker, Anna Esselment, Mike Grivicic (secretary), Alison Hitchens, Brian Ingalls, Julie Joza, Brian Laird, Ian Milligan, Marina Mourtzakis, Nicholas Pellegrino, Meray Sadek, Siva Sivoththaman, Clarence Woudsma (co-chair), Alfred Yu

Resources/Guests: Trevor Charles, Angela Christelis, Jennifer Coghlin, Ashley Day, Narveen Jandu, John Lewis, Carrie MacKinnon Molson, Justin Wan, Richard Wikkerink

Absent: Hassan Baaj, Mrittika Dreesha, Ana Ferrer, Abhishesh Homagain, Joseph Meleshko, Carlee Ann Montgomery, Martin Ross, Marianne Simm, Shirley Tang

Organization of Meeting: Charmaine Dean took the chair and Mike Grivicic acted as secretary. The secretary advised that quorum was present. The agenda was approved without formal motion.

1. Conflict of Interest

None declared.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

2. Approval of the Minutes

Council approved the minutes of the meeting as distributed.

3. Graduate Awards and Scholarships

Council approved all new awards and bursaries as presented.

4. CURRICULAR SUBMISSIONS

Council approved items 4.1 through 4.6 on behalf of Senate.

REGULAR AGENDA

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising.

6. Co-Chair's Remarks

The chair noted that this is the council's final regular meeting, with the two new councils having been approved by Senate effective September 1st. It is anticipated that the first meeting of each new council will have an item of business to develop a work plan for the respective body. Though there is enthusiasm that the new Council structures will provide efficiency and new opportunities for strategic discussions, the importance of graduate studies and research portfolios continuing to work together in the future was noted, given their close connectivity. This linkage should occur at the Faculty level and, as planned, also the institutional level through the two new Senate committees.

7. 2026-27 Academic Calendar

7.1 Academic Calendar Dates for 2026-27

Jennifer Coghlin, Associate Registrar, Enrolment Services & Academic Policy, spoke to the report and outlined areas where adjustments to the schedule were required. Members ascertained that there is hesitance to begin orientation activities on an earlier date in Fall 2026 because this may have adverse impacts for students e.g. difficulty obtaining accommodations, conflicts with summer jobs. The utilization of final exams has risen in recent years to levels that were seen pre-pandemic, and there are typically fewer exams scheduled in the latter days of the exam period in comparison to the earlier days. A motion was heard to recommend that Senate

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approve the 2026-2027 academic calendar dates and calendar guidelines for establishing academic dates, as presented. Milligan and Deadman. Carried.

8. Campus Plan Update

John Lewis provided a slide presentation. Project to update the campus plan launched in September 2024, with a draft campus plan to be developed for the end of 2025 and to be brought forward to Senate and the Board of Governors in early 2026. Consultants engaged in the project have been engaged by the University previously and are familiar with the institution. Community engagement intends to raise the profile of the project within the campus community through interviews, meetings and visioning sessions. Progress to date includes the development of six guiding principles and a three-part vision statement, with four key ideas (the greenway; cohesive campus; campus streets, gateways, and pathways; discovery, innovation and learning).

Members entered discussion. The plan for using outdoor spaces will need to mitigate against adverse weather conditions. East-west corridors on campus will be important to improve. The buildings in East Campus feel very disconnected from the main campus and many of the design elements mentioned as part of the plan would be a welcome implementation in that part of campus. Potential to make Ring Road more accommodating for pedestrians. North Campus and the R+T Park have a separate master plan process underway. This topic would be one for consideration at a joint meeting of the two new councils in the coming months as the plan moves toward finalization and approval in early 2026.

9. Renewal of Centres & Institutes

9.1 Questions to Consider for Centre/Institute Renewals

This item was received for information.

9.2 Waterloo Centre for Microbial Research

Council received a slide presentation, highlighting the mission of the centre, its achievements and research accomplishments, and opportunities going forward in areas such as agriculture, mining, and pandemic applications. The centre has applications in progress for CFI and NSERC CREATE funding. Student teams from the centre have a history of strong showing at competitive events. Members ascertained that much of the centre's future plans focus on building infrastructure to allow a bottom-up approach for the use of that infrastructure, and that the centre will be hosting its first ever symposium. A motion was heard to renew the Waterloo Centre for Microbial Research for a five-year term, on behalf of Senate. Campbell and Duncker. Carried.

10. DORA Update

Ian Milligan provided a slide presentation on the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), including recommendations, Canadian signatories, and adoption by the Tri-Agencies. In consulting with units, the feedback has been largely supportive with the need for training underscored by proponents and prospective users. Going forward, there will be an institutional working group formed to engage the campus community and move towards potential adoption in early 2026.

Members discussed the DORA. It may be prudent to ascertain the view of FAUW as adoption of DORA may impact activity covered by the MOA. Adoption of DORA would aim to bring about cultural change rather than to be a cudgel for specific activities and fosters equity and equality among faculty. In implementation, the University will need to be mindful that metrics may still hold disproportionate sway among some members of the community. A prospective town hall event to engage the community ought to include individuals from other institutions that have adopted DORA to discuss the impacts. Narrative CVs may be in either English or French, though obtaining French-language support can be difficult for some institutions and/or in some areas – the broader issue of providing French-language support is one that Dean is raising at the NSERC Council.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

The chair thanked all members for their dedication and service to SGRC, and in particular those members whose terms are ending: Bernard Duncker will complete his term as associate vice-president, research and international; Peter Deadman, Anna Esselment, Martin Ross, and Siva Sivoththaman will all be completing their terms as associate deans; and Mrittika Dreesha, Abhishesh Homagain, Joseph Meleshko, and Carlee Anne Montgomery are completing terms as student members.

With no other business the meeting moved into confidential session.

12. OTHER BUSINESS – CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

There was no other business.

13. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting of Senate Research & Innovation Council is Thursday October 16, 2025 from 1:00-2:30 p.m.

The next meeting of Senate Graduate Council is Thursday October 23, 2025 from 10:00-11:30 a.m.