

University of Waterloo
SENATE LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE
Minutes of the November 13, 2024 Meeting
[in agenda order]

Present: Nasser Abukhdeir; Martin Cooke; Charmaine Dean; Catherine Dong; Paul Fieguth; Mark Giesbrecht; Vivek Goel; Rob Gorbet; Mike Grivicic (secretary); Ondrej Lhotak; Lili Liu; Everett Patterson; Jacinda Reitsma; James Rush (chair); Siva Sivoththaman; Alexie Tcheuyap; Diana Vangelisti; Johanna Wandel; Mary Wells;

Guests: Amy Bender (3); Ashley Day; David DeVidi; Jenny Flagler-George; Gen Gauthier-Chalifour; John Lewis (3); Fayaz Noormohamed; Mike Pereira (3); Christopher Taylor

Absent: Chris Houser; Shana MacDonald; Kristiina Montero; Kirsten Muller; Katie Traynor; Clarence Woudsma

The chair welcomed Martin Cooke as the newest member of the committee.

1. Approval of the Agenda and Minutes

1.1 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were declared.

1.2 Approval of the Agenda

A motion was heard to approve the agenda as presented. Gorbet and Liu. Carried.

1.3 Minutes of the September 11, 2024 Meeting

A motion was heard to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2024 meeting, as Distributed. Abukhdeir and Wandel. Carried.

1.4 Business Arising from the Minutes

As noted in the memo that was distributed with the agenda, item 2.1 'Planning for the Upcoming Cycle of SLRP' follows from the discussion at the September 2024 meeting.

2. Chair's Remarks

Rush provided remarks from the chair. Upcoming institutional activities planned for negotiations of strategic mandate agreement, as well as to comply with requirements under Bill 166 and for building new student housing following the passage of Bill 185. Members noted that Waterloo's Senate already required disclosure along the lines mandated for educational materials and so are relatively ahead of other institutions in that regard. Tools are in development to support reporting to the province, and various offices and working groups have been mobilized re: policy compliance requirements, and once results are seen in practice those observations can be included in providing reporting/advice to the province. Appointment of Ian VanderBurgh as special advisor to the provost on strategic enrolment management, which is attuned to addressing the challenges of increasing revenues in the face of the University's overall challenges with the operating budget. Many of the proposed major items for the committee's consideration reflect a potential combination of this committee and the Senate Finance Committee, which will be discussed under item 5

2.1 Planning for the Upcoming Cycle of SLRP

This item was discussed as part of the chair's remarks under item 2.

3. Presentation - University of Waterloo Campus Plan Update

John Lewis provided a PowerPoint presentation, along with Mike Pereira and Amy Bender. This exercise is an opportunity to guide the development of the University for the next decade, and the last update to the plan was in 2009. The aim is to have a student-centered document that

reflects the Indigeneity of the community, while contemplating new approaches to teaching and research as well as innovative use of space. While the plan will be important, equally important will be having an implementation strategy to action the vision that is eventually formed. The plan will support AODA implementation, branding, mobility and transportation, and integration with the wider community. Coordination occurs through a steering committee, and currently there are three planning consultancies shortlisted to support the eventual development of the campus plan. Engagement with the community is anticipated to occur early and broadly and will aim to take advantage of the subject matter expertise that exists on campus. Members noted that the campus plan should have some reflection of the history of the institution (including the considerable Mennonite history in the area), along with being forward-looking. In communicating the campus plan, there should be attention given to how the new plan addresses shortcomings that existed previously and how the plan ties into the vision for the institution e.g. Global Futures. The process of developing the new plan should take fullest advantage of the planning talent and expertise on campus.

4. Cross-Institutional and Multidisciplinary Initiatives—Briefings and Discussion

4.1 Cross-Faculty Master's Co-Supervision Initiative in Data and Computation

Mark Giesbrecht gave a presentation. This initiative supports interdisciplinary research collaboration across all Faculties. The initiative funds up to 15 fellowships per year. One big success arising from this was the Math+X Inter-Faculty Research Workshop with a theme on data and computation for the five Global Futures. Concerns and issues that arose pertain to the smaller overall number of international applicants, and there is attention to increasing internal and external advertising to support growth of this initiative. Members noted that this initiative tests a potential mechanism to support students and navigating perceived barriers, which seems to work. Lessons from the experience would suggest that ongoing funding could run through the Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs Office, and that a percentage of the flowthrough funds could be devoted to interdisciplinary studies. Fostering interdisciplinary interaction is often best done in the context of supporting students interested in those intersectional opportunities, though there are anecdotes of some units having a bias toward supervision of students from within the given Faculty.

4.2 Collaborative Master's Program in Health Technologies

Mary Wells gave a presentation. Supporting development of three health-based graduate programs in engineering include the new MASc and PhD in biomedical engineering, a course-based master's program in health technologies that is under development and anticipated to be approved in Spring 2025, and a focus on creating pathways for physician-entrepreneurs to study in the Masters in Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology (MBET) program. Collaboration with other Faculties includes identifying faculty who can supervise graduate students as well as utilizing courses in other Faculties for those programs. Members noted that other course-based programs would benefit from adopting the model of integrating courses in other Faculties. A potential source of funding may arise from co-op employers being moved to contribute to programming that yields high-quality students for their employment (alumni would also likely be interested in supporting these sorts of initiatives).

5. Consideration of Restructuring of Senate Long Range Planning Committee

Goel emphasized the importance of thinking of the committee's role and having the opportunity to examine issues separately in ways that go beyond the focus of the academic mission. Gauthier-Chalifour spoke to the material distributed with the agenda, noting that considering a potential restructure would be congruent with a broader review of committee structures for currency, and Waterloo is a relative outlier among the U15 in having the two committees separate.

Members discussed the materials distributed and considered the prospect of a restructured committee. Are there strategic reasons to keep the two functions separate? A realignment could allow a refocusing in alignment with the *University of Waterloo Act*. A new committee likely would not greatly reduce the number of meetings overall but would simplify the coordination required on issues germane to these committee and reduce resource requirements to support those discussions. Topics related to finance/budgets as well as those pertaining to long term planning enhance and reinforce each other, and the existence of each committee presents a situation of information asymmetry between the two; however it may also be beneficial to keep two separate committees with a mandate to meet jointly on a regular cycle. Changes within the institution (e.g. moving to integrated budget planning) display the need to reconcile the broad mandate of this committee with more modern approaches to the management of the institution. It is plausible that Senate's role with respect to the budget could be recalibrated toward assessing whether the recommended budget supports the academic direction being taken by the University.

Gauthier-Chalifour indicated that a similar item of business will be brought to the Senate Finance Committee and invited members to send along further feedback after the meeting. For the next meeting of this committee, it is anticipated that a draft providing options/directions may be brought forward for consideration and discussion.

6. Other Business

There was no other business.

7. Next Meeting: March 26, 2025 from 1:30-3:00p.m.

November 20, 2024

Mike Grivicic
Associate University Secretary