

University of Waterloo
SENATE UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL
Minutes of the June 16, 2025 Meeting

Present: Katherine Acheson, Faisal Al-Faisal, Veronica Austen, Patrik Buhring, Makenzie Campbell, Benoit Charbonneau, Victoria Chu, Ashley Day (secretary), Laura Deakin, David DeVidi (chair), Leanne Ferries, Carol Ann MacGregor, Damian Mikhail, Kristiina Montero, Cathy Newell Kelly, Cynthia Richard, Helena Shilomboleni, Robert Stark, Victoria Swanson, Chris Vigna, Johanna Wandel, Richard Wikkerink, William Wong

Resources/Guests: Angela Christelis, Jennifer Coghlin, Mike Grivicic, Jason Grove, Danielle Jeanneault, Andrea Prier, Derek Rayside, Matthew Thijssen

Absent: Avery Akkerman, Chloe Ding, Namrah Hassan, Matthew Woodward

Organization of Meeting David DeVidi took the chair, and Ashley Day acted as secretary. The secretary advised that a quorum was present. The agenda was approved without formal motion.

1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

2. MINUTES OF THE APRIL 8, 2025 MEETING

Council approved the minutes of the meeting with one amendment to item 10 (last line in the first paragraph).

3. CURRICULAR SUBMISSIONS

Council approved items 3.2 – 3.4 on behalf of Senate.

REGULAR AGENDA

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

At the last SUC meeting on April 8th, it was agreed that the Honours Bachelor of Medical Science program proposal proceed through an expedited pathway. After a successful site visit at the end of April, and minor proposal modifications, the SUC Subcommittee conducted an e-vote on this item concluding on May 26th, which carried. The SUC e-vote subsequently took place from May 27-30 and carried, such that, SUC recommend that Senate approve the program at its June meeting.

5. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The chair welcomed new student member, Makenzie Campbell, as the Science Student Representative who will serve from June 2025 to April 2026. The chair then thanked members whose terms will be ending, as this was the last meeting for AFIW representative from Renison University College, Kristiina Montero, Chris Vigna from the Faculty of Health, and Matthew Woodward, Student representative from the Faculty of Environment.

It was noted that last year the Senate Undergraduate Council appointed three of its members to the AQUE Committee for a term of two years; Carol Ann MacGregor, Cynthia Richard and Helena Shilomboleni will continue to serve in 2025/26. This year AQUE approved over 21 Final Assessment Reports and Program Progress Reports with more to be approved in June and July.

The chair gave an overview of the accomplishments of Senate Undergraduate Council for the 24/25 Senate Year. From June 2024 to April 2025, Senate Undergraduate Council approved 988 curricular items. The summary did not include the large number of presentations and discussions the committee took part in over the past year. The chair thanked the committee for their hard work and continued engagement in curriculum quality assurance.

6. EXTERNAL PARTNERS AND CAPSTONE PROJECTS

Andrea Prier and Derek Rayside presented efforts to enhance academic standards and guardrails for co-op and capstone experiences at the University of Waterloo. They outlined the current scale of activity, with over 500 capstone projects per year, and emphasized the need to improve consistency in how student projects and external partners are managed. Proposed guidelines would ensure student agency in project selection and definition, aligning with UW Policy 73, and establish clearer expectations for instructors and partners.

The discussion highlighted several ongoing challenges, including inconsistent course classification in Kuali and the lack of a shared institutional definition of what constitutes a capstone project. Committee members stressed the importance of clarity and transparency, particularly around issues such as intellectual property and the handling of prototypes developed in collaboration with external stakeholders. The presenters acknowledged that some questions, particularly around IP, require further institutional guidance. The chair noted that the goal over time is to expand capstone opportunities and provide real world experiences across campus.

Financial sustainability and equity were also key themes. While some peer institutions charge external partners to participate in capstone projects, the committee discussed the need to balance revenue generation with equitable access, especially for non-profit or health-related organizations. Suggestions included leveraging advancement or faculty funds to offset costs. The chair invited Prier and Rayside to return to the committee in the future to provide updates on the initiative's progress.

7. Academic Calendar Dates for 2026-2027

Jennifer Coghlin spoke to the proposed academic calendar dates for 2026-2027. This item was approved at Senate Graduate and Research Council this morning (June 16, 2025) with no amendments and will be presented at the September Senate for approval should the motion pass at Senate Undergraduate Council.

A motion was heard to recommend that Senate approve the 2026-2027 academic calendar dates and calendar guidelines for establishing academic dates, as presented. Newell Kelly and Acheson. Carried.

8. OUTLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Deakin presented the Outline Advisory Committee draft terms of reference. The proposed mandate of the Outline Advisory Committee would be to "oversee the requirements and recommendations for course outlines at the University of Waterloo and the appropriate development of the automated Outline tool that implements the requirements." The Outline Advisory Committee intends to return to Senate Undergraduate Council with recommendations to streamline the process of approving and implementing minor and editorial changes to content and format of course outlines. Deakin gave a brief overview of the forthcoming minor and major modifications, with the major modifications as a new category of information in an outline.

A request was made to have a member from AFIW on the committee to ensure information sharing and alignment. Deakin to follow up with more information.

The chair noted that this item will be brought back to Senate Undergraduate Council in the fall for further discussion and potentially a formal recommendation to Senate.

9. USEFULNESS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES FOR GENERAL PURPOSES

The chair led a discussion on the potential value of advisory committees for general institutional purposes. DeVidi referenced ongoing work related to the Accessible Education Project, which has been coordinated over the past several years and is expected to continue into the foreseeable future. One of the project's goals is to establish a sustainable community of practice by the end of 2025. While there is strong interest among a small group of individuals, challenges remain in effectively sharing ideas more broadly across the institution.

An example is the committee for the Accessible Education Project, which functions as an existing advisory structure and could feed into governance pathways such as the Senate Undergraduate Council for discussion and decision-making. This raised the broader question of whether such a committee model could serve as a template for other initiatives. A member noted that such a model

would be helpful in providing faculties with a starting point for internal discussion and feedback. The Accessible Education Committee was compared to other groups that operate under more rigid terms of reference, suggesting that a more flexible structure could accommodate the need to be agile. The committee expressed interest in revisiting this proposal in the fall, with agreement to bring it back for further discussion in September or October.

10. SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT OUTCOMES: REVISITING THE UDLES

Matthew Thijssen, Director of Sustainability, provided an update on sustainability initiatives at the University of Waterloo, emphasizing efforts to embed sustainability across operations, engagement, and academic programming. Citing the Waterloo Sustainability Survey, Thijssen noted that 80% of students wanted more opportunities to learn about sustainability, highlighting the need for curricular integration. Over the past 18 months, a working group conducted consultations and developed a framework resulting in 11 recommendations focused on community-building and institutional support. Progress includes SIC grants, a Sustainability Leadership Certificate, and community of practice sessions.

Members discussed how sustainability could align with the Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (UDLES), particularly in the areas of experiential learning and diversity. Examples from peer institutions (Western, Humber, Laval) were reviewed. Some members questioned whether UDLES is the right mechanism for integrating sustainability, citing challenges such as rigid program structures and inconsistent uptake across faculties. Others emphasized the importance of establishing a baseline understanding of sustainability as part of broader institutional goals like Global Futures and Waterloo at 100.

There was general agreement on the need for ongoing discussion and prioritization to operationalize values like sustainability within academic programs. While grant funding and elective options are helping build support, suggestions included getting champions onboard to support the work, similar to the work required over the last 10 years to implement university communication requirements.

Further feedback can be sent to Ashley Day or Dave DeVidi. The topic will be revisited in the fall at a future SUC meeting.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

With no further business identified, the committee then moved into confidential session.

CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

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12. SENATE EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY

The chair gave a brief overview of the survey results, noting that only 25% of SUC responded and 33% of the subcommittee responded to the survey questions. Many committee members agreed that the low response rate may indicate general satisfaction with how the committees are working.

One member noted that the subcommittee is working as intended with the room on today's agenda to have strategic discussions. Another member asked that a brief overview be given before each topic is presented to ensure members understand why the discussion is taking place at SUC. The chair encouraged members to ask questions or ask for more information should they require it. The secretariat will try to provide more information and context for presentations through the use of cover reports.

Members also discussed the need for feedback from presenters to ensure they leave SUC with the information they wanted out of the session. The secretariat will begin to reach out to presenters after each meeting to confirm if feedback from the committee was helpful or if further discussion or clarification is required. It was also suggested that students be further engaged with the materials, ensuring that there is an understanding of the motions coming forward and resolving any questions ahead of the meeting if possible.

13. OTHER BUSINESS – CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

There was no other business.

13. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting adjourned. The next meeting of Senate Undergraduate Council will be held on September 30, 2025.

August 6, 2025