



Senate Council
Minutes of the Friday, January 23, 2026 Meeting

Present: Carol Ann MacGregor (Vice Chair), Carol Acton, Michelle Atkin, Veronica Austen, Steven Bednarski, Kieran Bonner, Honor Brabazon, Susan Brophy, Roberta Cauchi-Santoro, Melissa Chaffe, Armaan Dattani, Carm De Santis, Fred Desroches, Scott Kline, Alysia Kolentsis, Carlie Leroux-Demir, Carl Rodrigue, David Seljak, Toni Serafini, Mark Spielmacher, Andrew Stumpf, Sylvia Terzian, Alessia Ursella, David Williams

Recording Secretary: Christine Schwendinger

Absent: Chris Burris, Tristanne Connolly, Stephanie Gregoire, Norm Klassen, Peter Meehan*, Ariana Moreno Tanaka, Jane Nicholas, Karen Radcliffe*, John Rempel, Yuri Sangalli*, Siobhan Sutherland, Ryan Touhey*, Bruno Tremblay*, Chad Wriglesworth, Nikolaj Zunic*
**regrets*

On Sabbatical/Leave: Andrew Deman, Maureen Drysdale, BJ Rye, Anastasia Tataryn, Cristina Vanin, Denise Whitehead

Note: Eleven members joined the meeting via the online video conferencing platform, Zoom.

Open Session

1. Territorial Acknowledgement and Prayer/Reflection

H. Brabazon opened the meeting with a territorial acknowledgement followed by reading a passage of a book by bell hooks on her complex feelings about academic life and education being the practice of freedom.

2. Chair's Remarks

The Chair has sent regrets. The Vice Chair will chair this meeting.

The Governance Committee has appointed M. Chaffe, Director, Student Affairs and A. Dattani, Manager, Outreach and Recruitment as non-voting ex-officio members of Senate Council. The Vice Chair welcomed them to Senate Council. Given the work they do in recruitment and student-facing programming, it will be good to have them at these meetings.

3. Agenda Review, Declare Conflicts, Additions, Changes

No conflicts, additions, or changes to the agenda were declared.

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented.

Moved: S. Terzian, **Seconded:** A. Kolentsis, **Carried.**

Consent Agenda

4. Minutes of the October 24, 2025 Senate Council Meeting

5. Vice President Academic and Dean Report

- a. Appointments

Motion: To approve by consent item 4 and to receive for information item 5 above.

Moved: S. Bednarski, **Seconded:** C. Rodrigue, **Carried.**

Regular Agenda

6. Business Arising from the Minutes of the October 24, 2025 Meeting

There was no business arising from the minutes.

7. Governance Committee Report

a. *Academic Operations Manual:*

- i. The new *Standards for Permanency and Promotion in Teaching Stream Appointments* policy was brought forward for a first reading. The Vice President Academic and Dean (VPAD) thanked the Associate Dean for her work on the policy. The VPAD noted that we want there to be some consistency between this document and our existing standards for tenure and promotion. We also want our policy to reflect language from the University of Waterloo (UWaterloo) standards, particularly for educational leadership and other areas they value when promoting people in the Teaching Stream. While the draft policy put forward last year and later withdrawn had some similar language this is considered a new policy.

Senate Council discussed the policy. Questions raised included where the Senate Council standards of commitment, quality, and impact in service could be found (3.1(b) and 3.3(b)); whether the language of relevant service activities should be “will” or “should” for those applying for promotion to professor, Teaching Stream (4.2); etc. It was noted that for promotion to professor, Teaching Stream, there has to be some service related to teaching and the person can explain in their case file how their service is relevant to the classroom, to their teaching activities and teaching practice. It is up to the Renewal, Tenure, and Promotions Committee to determine whether these standards have been met. However, it was noted that SJU is small and we cannot penalize someone for service they were not able to do that has a clear connection to teaching (e.g., curriculum committee). It has to be something that everyone can achieve.

The VPAD will solicit some feedback on the questions raised and will bring this back when the policy comes forward for a second reading and approval. Any concerns between meetings can be sent to the VPAD.

Motion: To give the new *Standards for Permanency and Promotion in Teaching Stream Appointments* policy a first reading.

Moved: C. Rodrigue, **Seconded:** C. Leroux-Demir, **Carried.**

For information, once approved this new policy will replace the *Standards for Continuing Appointments at the Rank of Lecturer* policy when that policy is no longer needed. Also, the intention is to bring forward minor housekeeping changes to the *Standards for Renewal, Tenure, and Promotion* policy at the next meeting to have some places of parallel language.

8. Academic Committee Report

- a. *Master of Catholic Thought:* The Acting Director, Master of Catholic Thought (MCT) program, provided an overview of the MCT Advisory Committee’s discernment process that led to the proposed major changes to the MCT program. There have not been a lot of students in the program in the past. What is being proposed is a sustainable program given our resources and one that is more in line with student and prospective student feedback on their expectations for the program. The program has been restructured to include four required courses with a fifth course open for students who might be transferring in or those who want to take an

additional course (it was clarified that the fifth course can be repeated, with different topics) and a more substantial thesis.

Senate Council discussed the MCT proposal. Senate Council members congratulated the MCT Advisory Committee for their work. Questions/comments raised included a number of things related to the admissions language that had been carried over from our current program—specifically the number of references required since applicants out of university for some time may have difficulty finding academic references (it was noted that having two academic references is standard) and the “four-year Bachelor’s degree” should be clarified as “or equivalent” or “honours” since some may have completed this degree in three years. There was some discussion of why there was not a specific course in history, and the Director noted the ways in which history is included throughout the program and remains an option for theses.

The Director confirmed that the MCT Advisory Committee did discuss the possibility of students completing the program in one year. But responding to student needs and looking at who we would be recruiting, they believe the vast majority of students will be part-time. With the proposed structure, students would move through within two years but if we get the critical mass, full-time within one year would be possible. The VPAD noted that institutionally she is committed to offering all four required courses in a year if needed (traditionally we have offered two) or exploring other possible scheduling options.

The Director confirmed there would be minimal direct costs to UWaterloo for delivering this program since all faculty resources are through SJU. The program can be a small number and still be financially sustainable. The quality assurance piece will determine whether the proposed changes are viewed as a major modification or an entirely new program.

The MCT proposal will now go to the UWaterloo Faculty of Arts’ Graduate Affairs Group and then Senate for approval, with quality assurance steps in between. After final approval, the new program can be brought to the SJU Board of Governors for ceremonious approval.

Motion: To approve the MCT plan change, to be effective September 1, 2026.

Moved: S. Kline, **Seconded:** S. Terzian, **Carried. One Abstention.**

Motion: To approve the five new CT courses, to be effective September 1, 2026.

Moved: S. Kline, **Seconded:** V. Austen, **Carried.**

Motion: To approve retiring the 16 CT courses, to be effective September 1, 2026.

Moved: S. Kline, **Seconded:** A. Stumpf, **Carried.**

9. Committee on Research and Scholarship Report

The Research Officer referred to the various items in his written report. This term, the Committee on Research and Scholarship (CRS) will be doing a review of the 2025 internal grants process, including the results of a survey asking for feedback on that round; there is still time to fill out the survey. The CRS will also be reviewing/revising the Indigenous-centred Research policy and looking at other items about research at SJU. Faculty are invited to write to the Research Officer about other matters they wish to add to the CRS’s discussion.

10. President Report

The President had provided a written report. There were no comments or questions on the report.

11. Vice President Academic and Dean President Report

The VPAD referred to the various items in her written report. There were no questions or comments on the report.

12. Academic Plan Update

The VPAD had provided a written summary of where we currently are with the 2023-2026 Academic Plan, the successes and ongoing work in the three major priority areas: 1) Keeping Our Promises, Living Our Mission, 2) Leveraging Our Strengths to Reach New Audiences, and 3) Enriching Lives Through Research. In general, she feels the Plan has been progressing nicely and what has been accomplished has been good for the institution. Examples include the revenue-generating non-credit Certificate in Catholic Leadership, which is helping to fund the Lectures in Catholic Experience, part of the experience for students in that program; good work is happening in the archives, with information being used in classes and at conferences; there has been a lot of good work in Student Affairs along with the Well-Link Lab to implement the student wellness portfolio; the new Faculty Research Release Pool was created through collective bargaining to give people a way to apply for time as opposed to money; etc. One area of work is figuring out the academic component of student co-registration; a pilot of SJU Start was taught in Fall 2025 and went well. Another area of work is creating a possible research institute at SJU, which is a complicated intellectual endeavour that will require creative thought and financial consideration (e.g., having research fellows).

Regarding the SJU Start pilot being taught under the Human Sciences (HUMSC) course code, the VPAD replied that we will hold one more year of the pilot this way. She would like to bring a proposal to Academic Committee and Senate Council this term around a new St. Jerome's seminar code (SJS), but this will not be ready for next fall, perhaps the following year.

There was general agreement that SJU should continue with this current Plan, extending it beyond its scheduled end of 2026. Academic Committee serves as the steering committee for academic planning. The VPAD welcomes updates on what is happening in departments or people's own research agendas that relate to the Plan.

13. Indigenization and Decolonization

The Indigenous Advisory Circle continues to meet. The President can report on its activities at the next meeting.

J. Becker, Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Relations, has now retired and an interim replacement has been appointed.

14. Announcements and Events

The Health Humanities panel discussion with practitioners from The Working Centre will be held on February 6, 2026, 10:30 a.m., SJ2 1002, followed by lunch. SJU has a long-standing relationship with The Working Centre, and this will be an important event to bring people together and to support students in the Health Humanities program as well as other programs.

The first Reading Series event this winter will be held on February 6, 2026, 4:30 p.m., SJ2 1002, with writer and educator V. Nguyen, fellow Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) colleague from Renison University College. Nguyen will be offering a reading of his memoir, which was a Governor General's Literary Award for Nonfiction nominee this year.

15. New Business

The VPAD provided an update about leadership searches at UWaterloo. The Registrar retired at the end of December and there has been a search for her replacement; the Associate Vice-President, Strategic Enrolment Management is functioning as Interim Registrar pending the announcement and arrival of the new person. The terms of the Associate Vice-President, Academic and the Interim

Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs are coming to an end on June 30, 2026, and UWaterloo has begun the process to identify replacements as of July 1, 2026; the two nominating committees are seeking input/feedback on the portfolios, which will inform the searches. The presidential search is ongoing, a confidential process; a recommendation is anticipated to come to Senate in the next month or two. Two other searches coming up will be for the Vice-President, Academic and Provost (the process has begun of forming the nominating committee and the AFIW representative will be the VPAD) and the Vice-President, Research and International (there will also be an AFIW representative, to be determined who). Additionally, T. Penny Light (former SJU faculty member) has been appointed the new head of United College.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Moved: A. Stumpf, **Seconded:** K. Bonner, **Carried.**

January 23, 2026

/cs