



**ACADEMIC COUNCIL**  
**UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE (USC)**

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**Minutes of the Public Session of the April 15, 2025 Meeting**  
via [Videoconference](#)  
9:04 a.m. – 9:49 a.m.

**Undergraduate Studies Committee Agenda & Materials 2024-2025**

**Present:** M. Hossein Nejad (Chair), W. Barber, J. Boswell, N. Crow, K. Clow, A. Duff, R. Fortier, H. MacPherson, J. McCabe, S. Nokleby, D. Papke, J. Tam, A. Wingate

**Regrets:** M. Bluechardt, T. Ubor

**Staff and Guests:** K. Ayotte (Secretary), J. Laffier, K. McCartney, B. Tranter, S. Vettor

**1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement**

The Chair called the Public session of the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and J. McCabe read aloud the Land Acknowledgement.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

*Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by J. McCabe, the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) Agenda was approved as presented, including approving and receiving the Consent Agenda and its contents.*

**3. Chair's Remarks**

M. Hossein Nejad noted that he would be serving as Acting Chair in M. Bluechardt's absence and extended best wishes for a successful exam season and an enjoyable spring and summer.

**4. New Program Proposal (Recommendation)**

**4.1 Faculty of Health Sciences: Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Honours) Second Entry\* (M)**

J. McCabe advised that the proposed program has been in development for approximately one year and targets second-degree entry students, those with a previous undergraduate degree or substantial credits. She noted that currently, 15-20% of nursing applicants have prior university education, a group not fully served by the existing four-year collaborative degree and that this new standalone program, separate from existing Durham College partnerships, leverages faculty strengths in simulation and strength-based nursing, offering an accelerated alternative to the traditional four-year path.

Addressing questions, J. McCabe confirmed that the program does include a course addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendation for Indigenous health education. She clarified that admissions would remain competitive, with limited spots, and that a small

number would be allocated to internal program transfers. She advised that transfer trends are already monitored and would continue to be tracked.

Addressing whether there is flexibility in the entry requirements, particularly if an applicant is missing some of the required course credits, J. McCabe responded that the specified courses are essential for foundational knowledge and are typically already completed by applicants from health-related backgrounds. So there is limited flexibility, as eligibility for second-degree entry depends on having those specific prior credits.

Concerns were raised regarding resource planning, including the workload for developing new courses and the lack of clarity around faculty hiring, especially with increased student numbers. It was noted that existing faculty may cover some needs, and that resource allocation is expected to follow program approval.

*Upon a motion duly made by J. McCabe and seconded by A. Duff, the USC hereby recommends to Academic Council the approval of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Honours) Second Entry program and the subsequent recommendation of the program to the Board.*

#### 4.2 Mitch and Leslie Frazer Faculty of Education and Faculty of Social Science and Humanities: Bachelor of Arts (Honours) – Educational Psychology\* (M)

S. Vettor presented the proposed four-year Honours program in Educational Psychology, developed collaboratively by two faculties. She highlighted that this would be the first undergraduate program of its kind in Canada offering a structured pathway for students interested in both education and psychology. She noted that the program supports academic and career development through graduate study options and specializations in areas such as mental health, technology, and inclusive education. Experiential learning is embedded throughout, including internships and research projects, with an expected initial cohort of 40–60 students annually.

A concern was raised regarding whether students might be discouraged from choosing a specialized program, opting instead for more traditional degrees with broader recognition. In response, S. Vettor explained that the program was designed to reflect existing student interest and to offer flexibility through electives and specializations, noting that it supports multiple post-graduate and career pathways, ensuring students are not limited by the specialization. She also responded to concerns regarding course instructors and clarified that most courses will be taught by existing faculty, with a few new hires and sessionals if necessary. She advised that the program will be managed within current teaching capacity, and future hires may be considered if the program grows.

Members expressed strong support for the proposed program, highlighting its innovation and potential. It was suggested that more interdisciplinary programs like this could benefit students, especially those with interests that cross traditional fields.

*Upon a motion duly made by K. Clow and seconded by J. McCabe, the USC hereby recommends to Academic Council the approval of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) – Educational Psychology program and the subsequent recommendation of the program to the Board.*

## **5. Auditing Process for Students – Canvas Access (I)**

A. Wingate provided an update on a previous discussion regarding the configuration of auditing students in the system. After consulting with the Student Systems team, it was clarified that auditing students receive a unique status code, giving them access similar to regular students, but without earning credits or grades. He advised that they are also marked with an unchecked "gradable indicator" field. Upon registration, auditing students are assigned a student role in Canvas, not an auditor role. He noted that faculties typically request that instructors be added as auditors, but not students and if needed, further restrictions in the Learning Management System (LMS) can be applied through an IT service desk ticket. However, it was noted that the current registration setup already ensures auditors are non-gradable and restricted, so additional lockdowns may not be necessary.

A. Wingate responded to a question advising that a recent policy update allows graduate students to audit undergraduate courses at no cost, provided they have permission from their supervisor and Graduate Program Director (GPD). He clarified that the only way to add a student as an auditor is through the formal registration process using a specific code, and that instructors cannot manually add them.

A fulsome discussion took place regarding the differences between auditing and observer roles, particularly concerning access to course materials. It was noted that auditing students, while not graded, still have access to certain course materials, including assessments, which could be problematic in some cases. The distinction between registration status in the student system and roles within the learning management system was clarified. Auditors, who are formally registered, have full access to course content, whereas observers, who are not formally registered, have limited access. A suggestion was made to provide instructors with a clearer understanding of the different access levels for auditors, observers, and teaching assistants, to ensure transparency. It was agreed that further steps would be taken to compile a summary of these distinctions, which could be shared with instructors.

A. Wingate mentioned that efforts are underway to streamline the auditing process for students. This summer, a new form will be developed in collaboration with admissions to make it easier for students, particularly those from other institutions, to declare their interest in auditing a course. Currently, external students use a non-degree track application form, which can lead to confusion, so the goal is to create a clearer process for visiting students wishing to audit courses.

## **6. Consent Agenda\* (M)**

The Chair confirmed that the Consent Agenda and the items in the Consent Agenda were approved and received in the approval of the Agenda at the start of the meeting.

6.1 Public Minutes of the March 18 18, 2025 Meeting\* (M)

6.2 New Course Proposals:

[SUST 4001U – Sustainability Group Capstone I](#) (I)

[SUST 4002U – Sustainability Group Capstone II](#) (I)



**7. Volunteer for April Land Acknowledgement**

A. Wingate volunteered to provide the May 2025 meeting's Land Acknowledgement.

**8. Adjournment (M)**

*Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby, the Public Session of the USC meeting adjourned at 9:49 a.m.*

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary