



**ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Academic Council**

**AGENDA**

Date: November 25, 2025

Time: 2:30 p.m. - 4:20 p.m.

[Zoom Videoconference Link \(registration required\)](#)

**AC Meeting Schedule and Materials 2025-2026**

No.		Topic	Lead	Suggested Start Time
<b>PUBLIC SESSION</b>				
1.		Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement	Chair	2:30 p.m.
2.		Agenda (M)		
3.		Chair's Remarks		
4.		Inquiries and Communications	Chair	2:40 p.m.
	4.1	COU Academic Colleague Report* (I)	R. Ruttenberg Rozen	2:45 p.m.
5.		Provost's Remarks	L. Livingston	3:00 p.m.
6.		2026-2027 Budget Approach* (D)	L. Livingston B. MacIsaac S. Thrush	3:05 p.m.
7.		Understanding Human Rights: Training Initiatives at Ontario Tech University (I)	A. Sunstrum	3:35 p.m.
8.		Undergraduate Studies Committee – No Report	Chair	3:55 p.m.
9.		Graduate Studies Committee – No Report		

<b>10.</b>		<b>Research Committee</b>	L. Jacobs	4:00 p.m.
<b>11.</b>		<b>Consent Agenda: (M)</b>	Chair	4:05 p.m.
	11.1	Minutes of the Meeting of October 28, 2025* (M)		
<b>12.</b>		<b>Other Business</b>	Chair	4:15 p.m.
<b>13.</b>		<b>Termination</b>	Chair	4:20 p.m.

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary

Policy Instruments Available for Written Consultation:

(a) [Renting Automobiles for University Business Directive](#)

The Academic Colleagues meeting for October took place on Wednesday evening Oct. 22, and Thursday Oct. 23. There were three meetings in total. The agenda of the first meeting, which took place on the evening of Oct 22, included a presentation by [Dr. Randy Boyagoda](#), the Provostial Advisor on Civil Discourse at the University of Toronto. The agenda of the second meeting included a discussion of Dr. Boyagoda's talk and preparation for the third meeting which involved a presentation to the executives.

### **Oct. 22 Notes from Talk Given by Dr. Randy Boyagoda on the topic of Civil Discourse**

Civil discourse as willingness to think out loud together to increase understanding of each other (social goods)

- If we as Universities cannot create spaces to support Civil Discourse, who can?
- Dr. Bagyagoda shared the origin story of his role at University of Toronto
- was Acting Vice Provost Faculty & Academic in the Fall of 2023
  - Recent events revealed the lack of civil discourse already on our campuses
- Dr. Boyagoda has been invited to present to many different venues. The great majority of invitations comes from civil societies, public libraries, etc
  - Everyone is having issues not just academia
  - challenges to engage with differences of opinion
  - "we are not alone"
- Chaired a working group which was organized before encampments; however consultations overlapped with it

Report found 8 major categories of challenges in promoting civil discourse:

1. low-trust environment
  - a. students skeptical of faculty, faculty of students; faculty+students of administration - and vice versa;
2. power
  - a. power is elsewhere
  - b. everyone perceives power as something held by 'others' (limits agency)
3. technology
  - a. formative effects on students
  - b. (students and Jr. Faculty to 'come of age' during the pandemic (virtual context) and having a hard time returning to in-person context
4. generational differences
  - a. especially with regard to understanding the differences between personal commitments, professional commitments, and public life
    - i. especially true of junior colleagues looking for statements to be released
5. neutrality
  - a. Kalven report from UChicago vs ratifying the fundamentally unequal status quo

- b. <https://provost.uchicago.edu/reports/report-universitys-role-political-and-social-action>
- 6. Statements
  - a. huge issue after Oct 7th
  - b. many people wanted a statement from upper administration so we didn't need to engage with things ourselves
- 7. Impossibility of managing outside events
  - a. you can't control world events and when Faculty, Staff & students have family members literally impacted by these events, 'having a civil discourse' sounds tone-deaf
- 8. value of local solutions
  - a. for example "Dartmouth model for difficult conversations" – held once/week meetings to 'think out loud'
  - b. but that's a 1500-person (almost heterogenous) campus in New England; doesn't scale to a metropolitan large university

### **Notes from Oct. 23 Meetings**

Framing - why do we need to consider the role of civic discourse in higher education at this moment?

- Topic came out of concerns about University sovereignty, academic freedom, Bill 33;
  - but Bill 33 is a symptom of (and response to) a larger challenge: disenfranchisement of a group of people
- “If we as Universities cannot create spaces to support Civil Discourse, who can?”
- Institutional response, capacity-building needs, challenges

### **Executive Response**

- Need for university leadership to develop principles of free speech with the realization that friction will result (Principled approach that will create the space and culture to engage in civil discourse)
- These principles should permeate all conversations from the classroom to the senate
- University providing skill-building for how to handle conflict in the classroom to avoid silencing some groups
- Talked about mistrust at all levels - creating fear to engage on free discourse
- Acknowledged the role of social media shaming to limit free speech and this needs to be addressed

Remaining Questions (from the breakout session I participated in):

1) Faculty are afraid to engage in controversial discussions because they fear from their jobs: how does your institution protect against this?

2) The institutional upholding of a single ideological perspective has left many people feeling disenfranchised. How can we re-engage them? *(example: students holding right-leaning opinions are checking out or best case are hiding their opinions from their professors - how can we mitigate this? (single 'right' perspective))*

3) How are we cultivating or suppressing people's ability to engage in critical debate?

4) How can we define the "one step too far line" so that we can avoid hate speech & discrimination while still fostering 'good disagreements', curiosity, and healthy debate?

5) What measures can help create safe spaces for “brave spaces” in our institutions where pluralistic perspectives can be put forth and engaged with?

## ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

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**SESSION:**

Public ☒  
Non-Public ☐  
Consent ☐

**ACTION REQUESTED:**

Decision ☐  
Discussion ☒  
Information ☐

**TO:** Academic Council

**MEETING DATE:** November 25, 2025

**PRESENTED BY:** Brad MacIsaac, Vice-President, Administration  
Lori Livingston, Provost and Vice-President, Academic  
Sarah Thrush, AVP, Planning & Strategic Analysis

**SUBJECT:** 2026-2027 Budget Approach

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

As we start to plan for the next three years, we will focus on 2026-2027 with assumptions based on the information received to date. Leadership has created many scenarios, ranging from conservative to aspirational growth plans. The budget will be set with institutional sustainability in mind; however, as in past years, leadership will have a list of priority spends should extra funds exist when students register in September. Looking at the most conservative scenario, the main assumptions to be considered are:

- a) **Enrolment Revenue:** The preparation of the operating budget involves the use of projections and estimates. This major revenue driver assumes enrolment going up when compared to the last budget. The risks, if any, are related to international intake due to existing federal policies that limit the number we can bring in.
- b) **Tuition Revenue:** The assumptions include the provincial government's continued freeze on domestic rates. For international students, we do not have tuition restrictions; however, based on a review of system comparators (both regionally and internationally), we are modelling a 3% increase (apart from research-based grad programs which are frozen). A full program by program tuition review will occur before February.
- c) **Expenses:** We must first manage the mandated salary increases, followed by prioritized hiring plans which will be explained further in the final budget proposal. The first draw on

the budget is an investment to cover increases in personnel costs compared to the last budget.

### **KEY CONSIDERATIONS:**

- It remains a priority to challenge ourselves to think differently about how we operate daily and to be continually forward thinking towards a differentiated, sustainable future for the University.
- With the current assumptions, we are estimating the vast majority of increased revenues is committed to covering existing expenses. This increased revenue has come from increased tuition revenues associated with our Differentiated Growth strategy. We will likely not be able to maintain all current staffing ratios, yet we will be investing more in personnel costs. We will also be investing in our technology platforms such as the IT enterprise system plan outlined last year, and the use of Artificial Intelligence to reduce mundane tasks. Finally, we must continue to set aside funds for future years, to sustain the institution during times of fiscal uncertainty or unforeseen long-term capital expenditures.
- We also have not heard about the provincial government's efficiency fund which could include an extra \$3M one time only support.

### **ANALYSIS:**

**Risk Assessment:** There are two major unknowns in the revenue scenario. The federal government has just announced further reductions to international permits and we will need to wait for the technical details on how that will impact the budget. We also have not heard if the provincial government will continue with the sustainability funding from which Ontario Tech has received over \$3M in each of the past two years.

In every year there is a level of overall risk of not achieving the desired enrolment results (e.g., a 1% deviation in enrolment will lead to an approximate  $\pm$  \$1M variance from tuition fee revenues). Please note that the University is normally within  $\pm 2\%$  when predicting enrolment totals. The bigger risk may be what is not included in the budget framework. We recognize that inflation and supply issues continue to wreak havoc on some operating expenses. Currently, we have not placed an inflationary increase in the budget. Instead, we are asking for units to put in an ask for us to prioritize or reallocate from within their existing budgets.

### **Next Steps**

- November Information Sessions
- Nov 27<sup>th</sup> Budget Module Opens
- Jan 22<sup>nd</sup> Budget Submission
- March 3<sup>rd</sup> Senior Leaders Budget Retreat
- March/April Information Sessions
- April 23<sup>rd</sup> Budget presented to the Audit & Finance Committee

### **LINKS/REFERENCE MATERIAL:**

- 2026-2027 Budget Assumptions PowerPoint

# 2026-2027 Budget Assumptions

- **Lori Livingston, Provost and Vice-President, Academic**
- **Sarah Thrush, AVP Planning and Strategic Analysis**
- **Brad MacIsaac, Vice-President Administration**

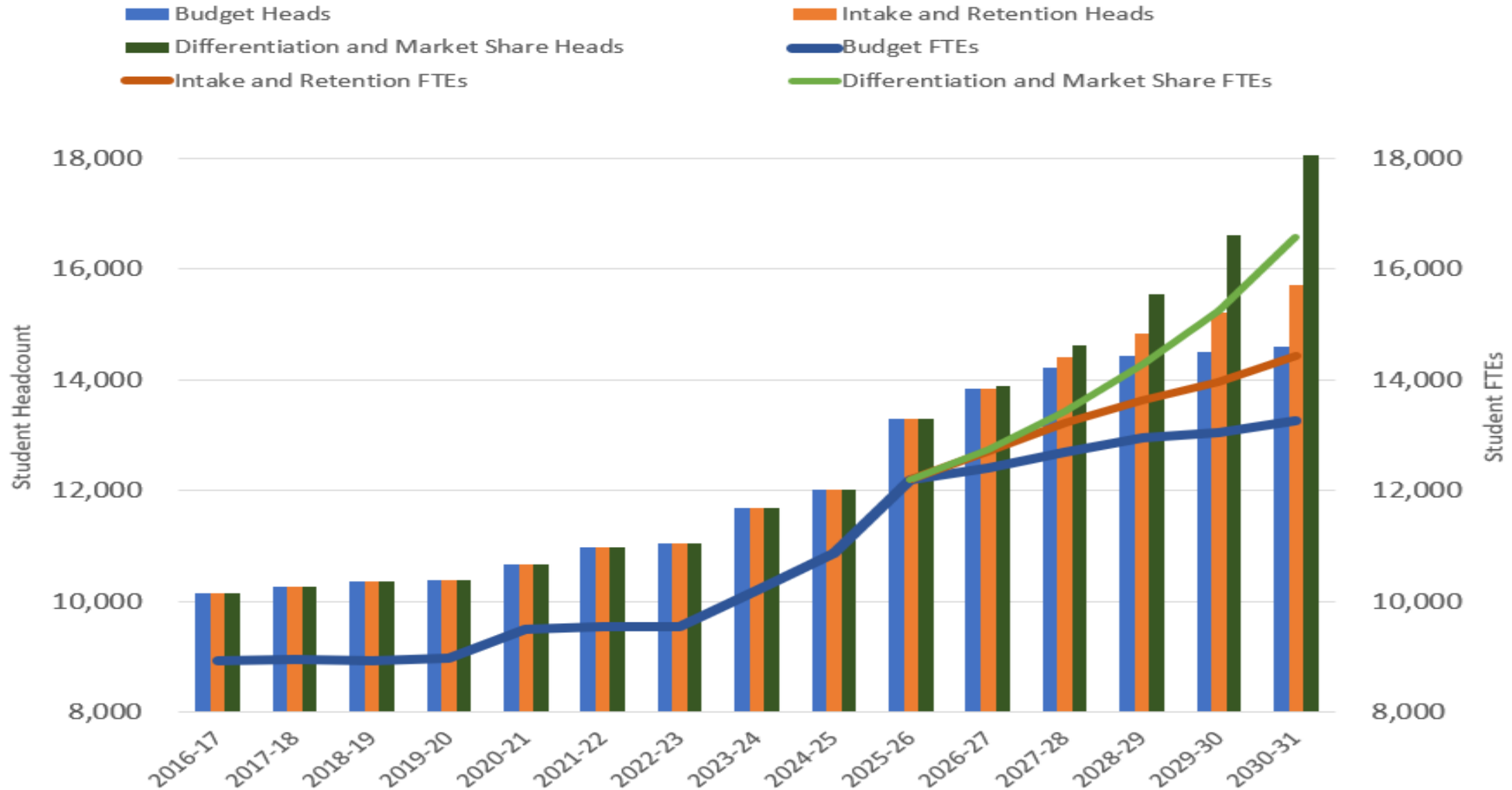


# Ontario Tech Budget Process

- November presentation of Revenue and Expense assumptions and conversations on key priorities
  - April presentation of the next Budget year (plus estimates on the budget forecasts for the next two years)
- ❑ <https://sites.ontariotechu.ca/finance/index.php>
  - ❑ <https://sites.ontariotechu.ca/finance/planning-reporting/financial-statements/multi-year-rolling-budget-2024-2027/index.php>

# Enrolment Plan

Student Enrolment



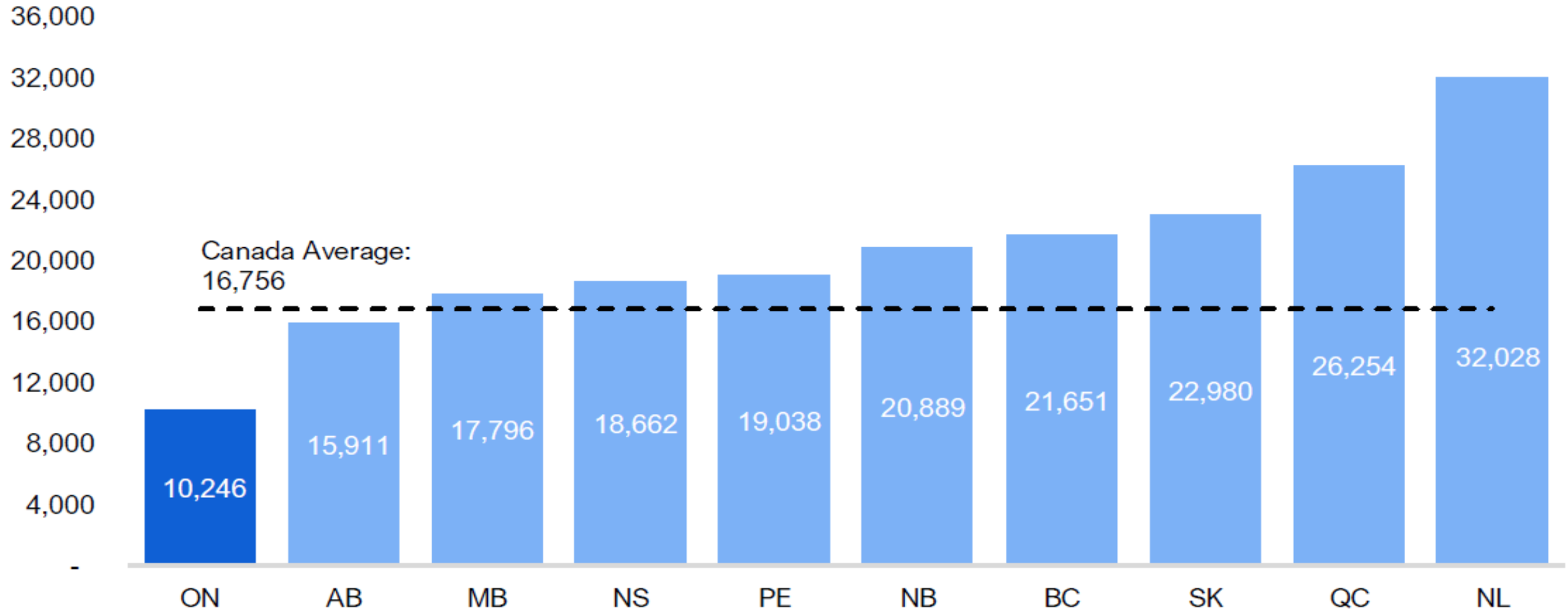
# Revenues

- **Government Grants**
  - Grants are essentially frozen at 2012 levels.
  - Operating vs Performance grants
  - Directed Increases (ie Facilities Renewal, Mental Health, etc)
- **Tuition**
  - Domestic (grant eligible) freeze
  - International 3%
- **Ancillary**
  - Fees are collected for specific purposes therefore allocated
- **Other**

# Government Funding

## Provincial funding to public universities per FTE domestic university student by province, 2022-23

Dollars

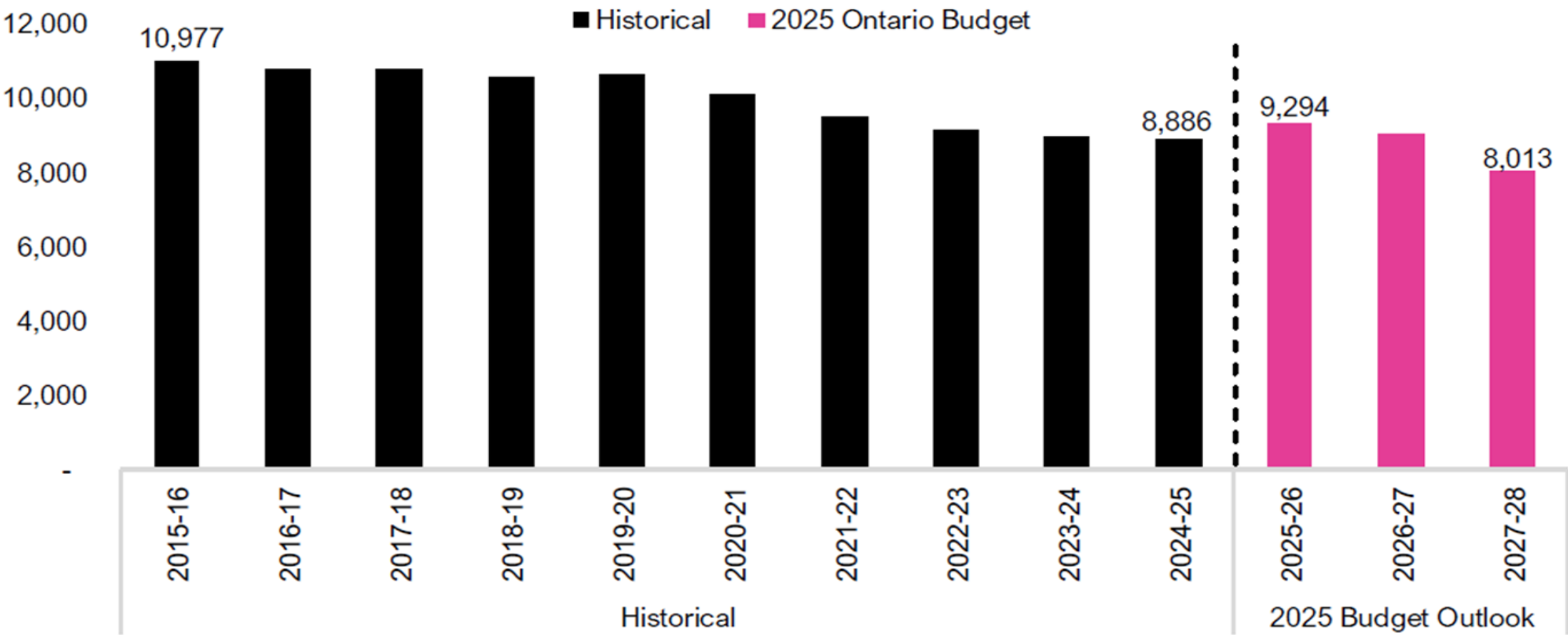


Note: The FAO estimates full-time equivalent enrolment as full-time enrolment, plus part-time enrolment divided by 3.5. Canada average does not include territories. Quebec and Nova Scotia university funding includes direct subsidies to lower "in province" domestic student tuition fees.

Source: Statistics Canada, "Revenues of universities by type of revenues and funds", Table: 37-10-0026-01 and "Postsecondary enrolments, by registration status, institution type, status of student in Canada and gender", Table: 37-10-0018-01.

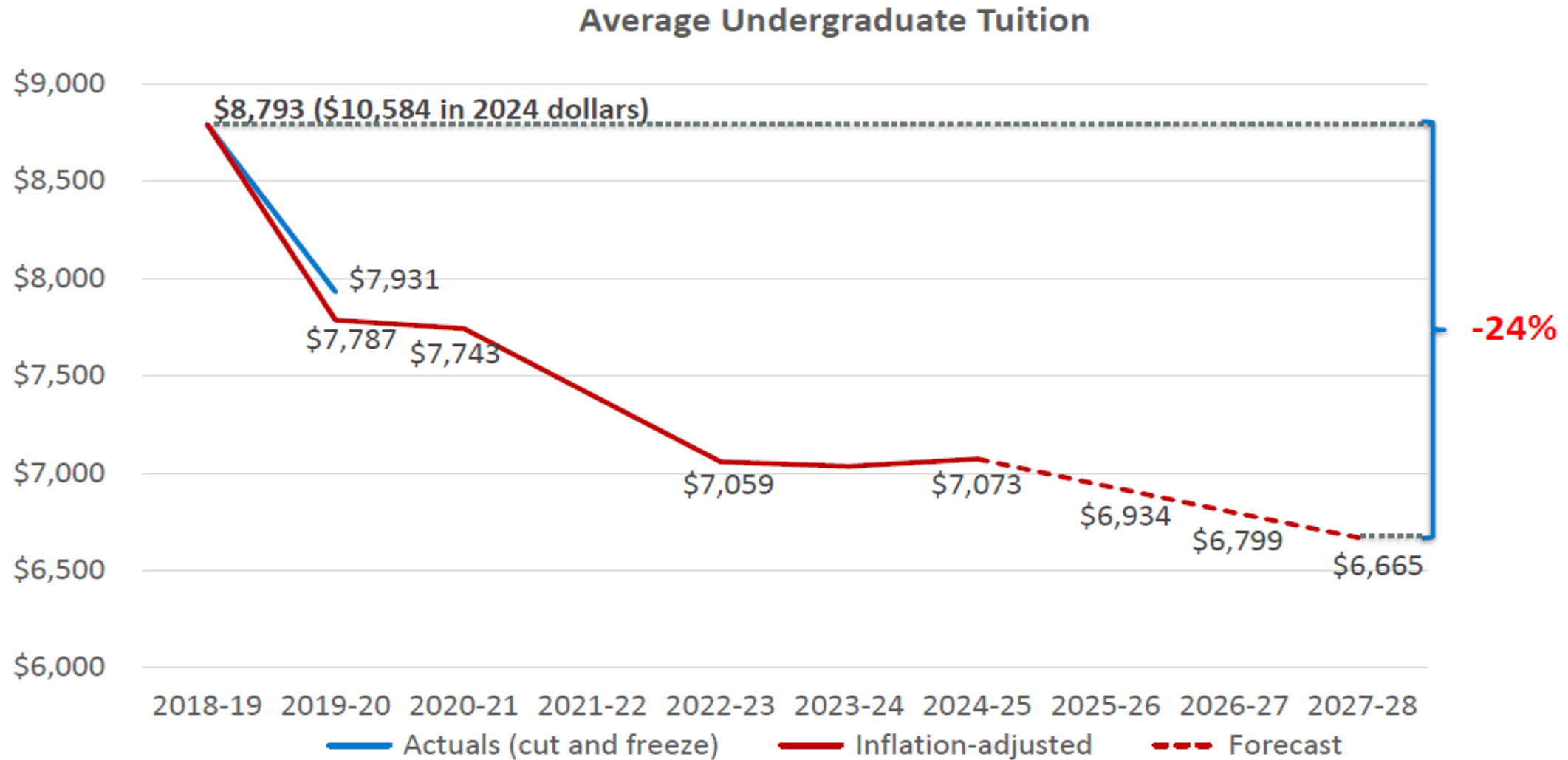
# Government Grants

Provincial operating funding to public universities per FTE domestic student, inflation-adjusted, 2015-16 to 2027-28  
2024-25 Constant Dollars



Note: The FAO estimates full-time equivalent enrolment as full-time enrolment, plus part-time enrolment divided by 3.5.  
Source: Statistics Canada, "Postsecondary enrolments, by registration status, institution type, status of student in Canada and gender", Table: 37-10-0018-01, and FAO analysis of information provided by the Province.

# Substantial Decline in the Value of Domestic Tuition

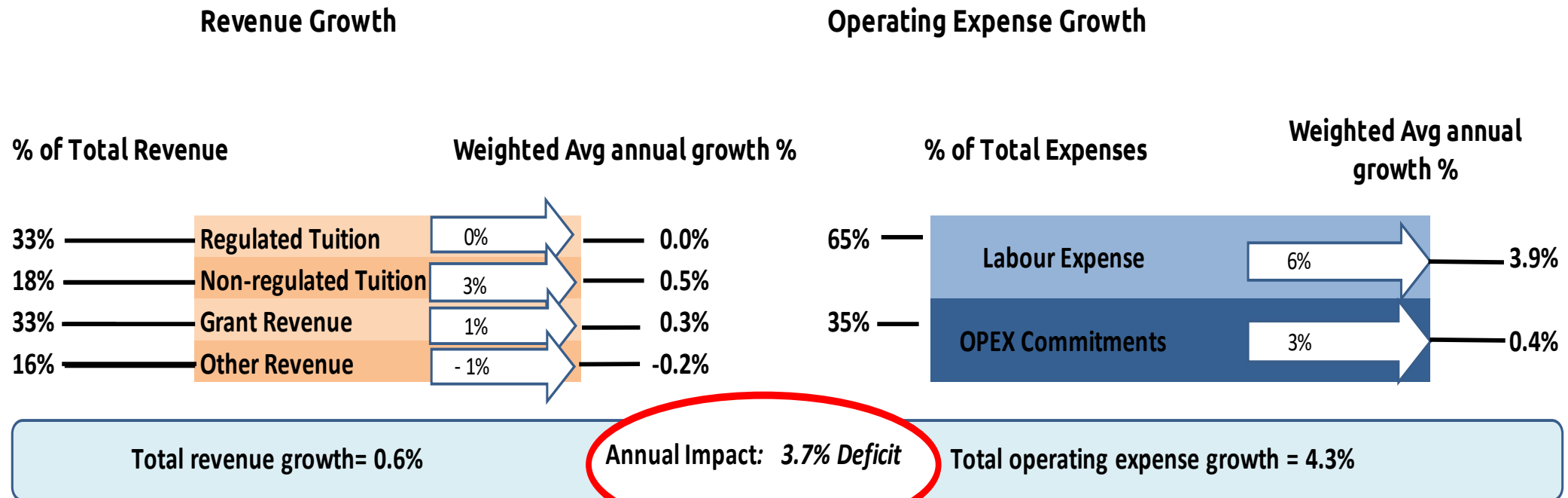


s: Includes all undergraduate programs. The forecast assumes 2% annual inflation with no tuition increase.

ces: Statistics Canada. [Table 37-10-0120-01](#) Undergraduate tuition fees; Statistics Canada. [Table 18-10-0005-01](#) Consumer Price Index, annual average.

# Expenses

- Revenue: If UG international went up 5% on average the weighted impact on budget is less than 1%.
- Expenses: Looking at current salaries alone when we include ATB and PTR they are going up 6% a year for a weighted average of 3.9%
- Starting base budget DOES NOT include inflationary increase for OPEX. Most units will need to reallocate from within



# Strategic Priority: Differentiated Growth

- **Challenge ourselves to think differently about how we operate on a daily basis**
  - The current budget model is not sustainable.
  - Forward thinking towards a differentiated, sustainable future
  - Efficiencies
- **Accelerate the differentiated growth strategy to attract new student markets**
  - Multi-prong strategy (flexible, accessible, industry-driven)
  - Intentionally pursue high yield opportunities (e.g., AI integration into academic, administrative functions; condense summer courses, etc.)





## Next Steps

- Nov Information Sessions
- Nov 27<sup>th</sup> Budget Module Opens
- Jan 22<sup>nd</sup> Budget Submission
- March 3<sup>rd</sup> Senior Leaders Budget Retreat
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# Questions??



# Understanding Human Rights: Training initiatives at Ontario Tech University

Andrew Sunstrum (he/him)  
Director, Human Rights Office

Jennifer MacInnis (she/her)  
General Counsel

November 2025

# Purpose

The Human Rights Office promotes a respectful campus and works with community members to ensure a study, work and living environment free from discrimination, harassment and gender-based violence. Our services are available for all University members, including Students, Faculty, Staff, and Visitors.



# Policies

- Respectful Campus Policy & Procedures (Harassment & Discrimination)
- Accommodation Policy (Discrimination)
- Student Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures (Harassment, Gender-Based Violence & Sexual Misconduct)



# We're Here to Help!

The Human Rights Office provides supports and tools to campus parties involved in human rights-related conflict. We support: de-escalation, dialogue, facilitated discussions and formal investigations.

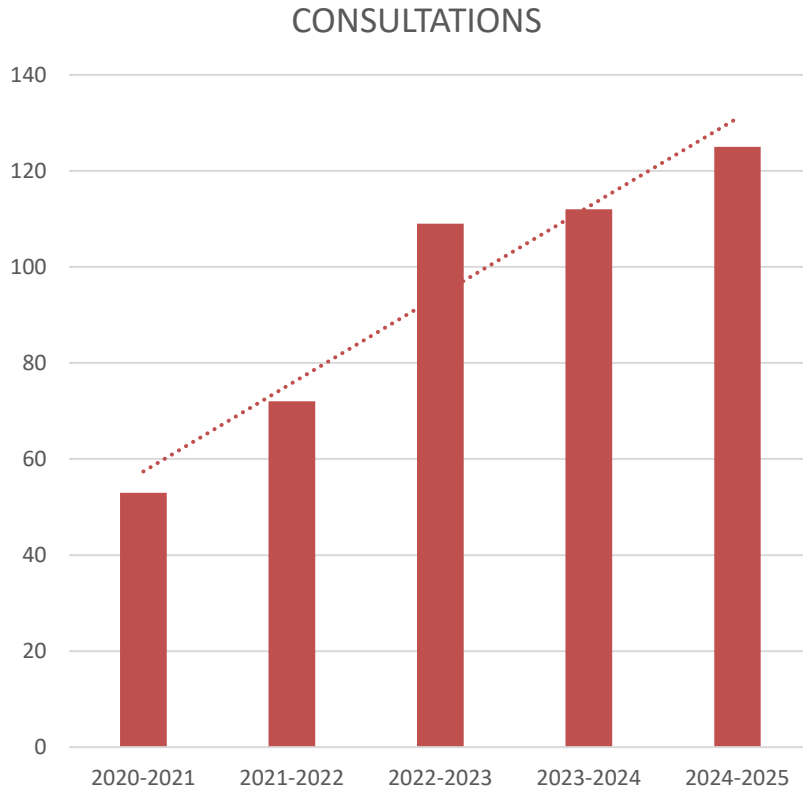
Confidential consultations are available to **anyone** who wants to understand their rights, obligations or who suspects a policy breach.

# Confidential Dispute Prevention & Resolution Services:

- Consultations
- Early Resolution activities
- Informal resolution (mediation, restorative justice)
- Formal Investigation (in some cases mandatory)



# Consultations



- 2020/2021: 53
- 2024-2025: 125
- 136% increase over 5 years





# TRAINING & EDUCATION



# Existing Training & Education

- Preventing Sexual Violence - Building a Respectful Campus Together – Launched in 2023
- Communications
- Consultations
- Ad hoc – as needed



# EDUCATION: Social Media & Digital Signage



## Human Rights Office

### Student Sexual Violence

If you are a student who has experienced sexual violence, the Human Rights office is here to assist you.

We connect you with the services and support you need.

For more information, visit:  
[ontariotechu.ca/sexualviolence](https://ontariotechu.ca/sexualviolence)

## Human Rights Office

Harassment, Discrimination, Reprisal

The Human Rights Office provides supports and tools to campus parties involved in human rights related conflict.



Confidential consultations are available to anyone who wants to understand their rights or who suspects a policy breach.

To request a  
consultation  
meeting:



To report  
harassment,  
discrimination  
or student  
sexual violence:



For more information, visit: [ontariotechu.ca/humanrights](https://ontariotechu.ca/humanrights)

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# EDUCATION: Swag & Poster Campaign



## Human Rights Office

Promoting a respectful campus.

To request a  
consultation  
meeting:



To report  
harassment,  
discrimination  
or student  
sexual violence:



[ontariotechu.ca/humanrights](https://ontariotechu.ca/humanrights)

## #Wegetconsent

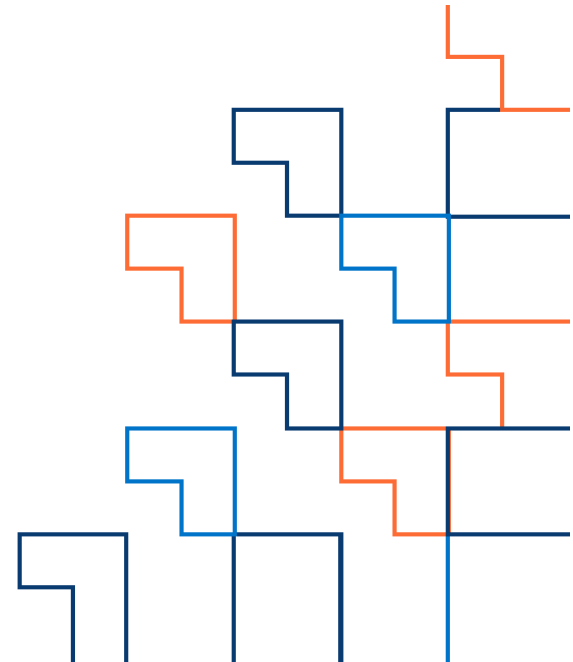
[ontariotechu.ca/sexualviolence](https://ontariotechu.ca/sexualviolence)

# TRAINING: Preventing Sexual Violence: Building a Respectful Campus Together

## Human Rights Office Student Sexual Violence

If you are a student who has been affected by sexual violence, the Human Rights office is here to help. We connect you with the services and supports you need.

The Human Rights office can assist you with immediate measures to limit future harm and can facilitate your access to: safety resources and planning, confidential mental health for wellness and healing, connecting with community support services, academic accommodations and assistance with filing a report (if requested).



# TRAINING: Discrimination & Harassment

- **Comprehensive training module covering Discrimination, Duty to Accommodate and Workplace Harassment**
- **Address trends in consultation data**
- **Difference between Harassment and Incivility/Disrespect**
- **Define expectations for individuals in the workplace: management and employees**



# EDUCATION



Harassment



Disrespect



# TRAINING: Workplace Harassment - Case-law

- Ontario Human Rights Code: **June 15, 1962** (first in Canada)
- Workplace Harassment – Occupational Health and Safety Act: **June 2010, September 2016**
- Key considerations:
  - a course of vexatious comment or conduct
  - Known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome
- Arbitrations:
  - Ontario (Workplace Safety and Insurance Board) and CUPE, Local 1750 (Carito), (2014) 245 L.A.C. (4th) 347 (Brown) “friction and conflict are inevitable byproducts of human interaction. **Only significant misconduct that leads to serious harm should be viewed as harassment** within the meaning of the collective agreement.”
  - Arbitrators have since continued to interpret this form of workplace harassment to encompass “**serious actions with significant consequences**” as opposed to “**the normal abrasiveness of daily life in the workplace,**” including “**interpersonal conflict,**” “**personal animosity**” and “**employee feuds.**”
  - An Arbitrator observed that the process could itself be **used as a means of obtaining vengeance against petty irritants or trivial concerns.**
  - An Arbitrator observed that **the employee needs to take responsibility for their actions which may have contributed to how matters unfolded.**





# EDUCATION

**Conflict is an opportunity**

**Encourage a culture of effective conflict management**

**Empower individuals to address conflict**



# CONFLICT RESOLUTION

**How can Employees  
contribute to  
Preventing Human  
Rights Disputes?**



# CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Understand the difference between disrespect and harassment
- Speak with individuals you have concerns with first
- Misunderstanding and miscommunication is a significant cause of conflict
- Don't make assumptions about the motivation of others: be open to dialogue and understanding
- Seek help if efforts to resolve the conflict are not successful



# Consultation

When in doubt - reach out!

Email: [Humanrights@ontariotechu.ca](mailto:Humanrights@ontariotechu.ca)



# Any Questions?

- Feedback on education measures



## ACADEMIC COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Public Session of the October 28, 2025 Meeting  
via Videoconference  
2:32 p.m. - 4:13 p.m.**

**Academic Council Committee Agendas, Materials and Minutes 2025-2026**

**Present:**

Steven Murphy, Chair  
Asifa Aamir  
Scott Aquanno  
JoAnne Arcand  
Rachel Ariss  
Laura Banks  
Wendy Barber  
Mihai Beligan  
Rupinder Brar  
Toba Bryant  
Krystina Clarke  
Amanda Cooper  
Ana Duff

Mikael Eklund  
Shanti Fernando  
Shahram Heydari  
Jessica Hogue  
Mehdi Hossein-Nejad  
Sayyed Ali Hosseini  
Brenda Jacobs  
Les Jacobs  
Venuga Kariharan  
Lori Livingston  
Janet McCabe  
Carolyn McGregor  
Pejman Mirza-Babaei

Fedor Naumkin  
Scott Nokleby  
Gabby Resch  
Aliza Rizwan  
Carol Rodgers  
Robyn  
Ruttenberg Rozen  
Gillian Slade  
Peter Stoett  
Joe Stokes  
Jemma Tam  
Dwight Thompson  
Ken Wilson

**Regrets:**

Ahmad Barari  
Mary Bluechardt  
Catherine Davidson

Mitch Frazer  
Hossam Kishawy  
Denina Simmons

Shannon Vettor

**Staff and Guests:**

Kirstie  
Ayotte (Secretary)  
Chelsea Bauer  
Stephanie Callahan  
Nicola Crow  
Karla Gomez

Barbara Hamilton  
Krista Hester  
Jennifer MacInnis  
Brad MacIsaac  
Kimberley McCartney  
Amy Neil

Lisa Townsend  
Becky Tranter  
Sarah Thrush  
Adam Wingate

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

The Chair called the Public Session of the Academic Council (AC) meeting to order at 2:32 p.m. and T. Bryant provided their personal Land Acknowledgement.

**2. Agenda (M)**

Upon a request from a Member, Agenda item 10.1 was removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Upon a request from a Member, Agenda item 10.2 was removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Upon a request from a Member, Agenda item 10.4 was removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

A Member requested that the Policy Instrument Written Consultation, referenced under the Agenda, be added to Other Business.

*Upon a motion duly made by J. Tam and seconded by D. Thompson, the Agenda was approved as amended, including approving and receiving the Consent Agenda and its contents as amended.*

### **3. Chair's Remarks**

The Chair expressed appreciation for the many accomplishments across the University and extended gratitude to faculty, staff and students for their contributions to the recent Fall Convocation ceremonies. The Chair highlighted the success of Convocation with all Faculties celebrating together and the diversity this represented.

The Chair also noted the launch of the School of Ethical AI (SEAI) and the Mindful Artificial Intelligence Research Institute (MAIRI), as well as strengthened partnerships following a visit to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He also referenced the ongoing energy related initiatives to promote the University's work and expertise in this sector, including a ministry roundtable and the collaboration with OPG and the Ontario Science Centre on the *Watt Next* youth education tool.

The Chair concluded by encouraging continued support for campus athletics and upcoming home openers.

### **4. Inquiries and Communications**

None Received.

### **5. Provost's Remarks**

The Provost highlighted Ontario Tech rower Kierstyn Hawke, a student who recently earned a bronze medal at this year's Ontario University Athletics (OUA) Championships, as well as the Women's Novice Fours team which captured silver.

She also extended her congratulations to Dr. Manon Lemonde, who was awarded an Honorary Degree of "Fun" at the recent Fall Convocation ceremonies, in recognition of over 20 years of service as Chief Marshal. Noting her upcoming retirement on December 31, 2025, she encouraged members to reach out to Manon and offer their thanks and congratulations.

Members reflected on Dr. Lemonde's kindness, noting the impact she had both within the University and the broader community, while emphasizing the importance of the compassion she consistently exemplified and championed.

### **6. Undergraduate Studies Committee**

M. Hossein-Nejad provided the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) report on M. Bluechardt's behalf. He provided brief remarks noting that at the September 2025 USC meeting, the Committee conducted its annual Terms of Reference review, reaffirming its mandate for oversight of program development, curriculum changes, program reviews, admissions and

related policy recommendations. He also noted that the Committee reviewed the 2025-2026 USC Workplan which is a flexible guide to support upcoming activities and track submission timelines.

A Member raised a question regarding the sharing and retention of USC materials on the University Secretary website. K. Ayotte clarified that while the matter had been discussed informally at USC, it was not an agenda item. She noted that the University website is not intended to serve as a long-term repository for materials and that archival records beyond five years remain accessible upon request. She confirmed that the Secretariat follows the University's Records and Retention policies and procedures and is considering approaches for requesting archived material.

*Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by J. Tam, Agenda Item #9 was moved forward for consideration next on the Agenda, following which Members returned to former Agenda item #7.*

#### **7. Graduate Studies Committee**

P. Mirza-Babaei reported that the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) met in September 2025 and conducted its annual Terms of Reference review, confirming its role in overseeing the governance of graduate programs, course changes, and policies. He advised that the Committee also reviewed its 2025-2026 GSC Workplan, which is a flexible guide to support upcoming activities and track submission timelines.

#### **8. Governance & Nominations Committee**

L. Livingston reported on the Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC) October 2025 meeting, noting that the Committee reviewed its flexible 2025-2026 GNC Workplan and completed its review and recommendations for the 2025-2026 Faculty Council Membership Lists and Faculty Council Vice-Chair nominations. She advised that these processes are now finalized for the year and that the corresponding lists and nominations were included on the Consent Agenda.

#### **9. Research Committee**

L. Jacobs reported on several key institutional research achievements. These included the University being chosen as a regional DRIVE technology readiness site by the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN) in partnership with the City of Oshawa and Town of Whitby, supported by \$4.9 million in provincial innovation funding through the Ontario Centre of Innovation to advance technology development and entrepreneurship; creation of a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre; and a four-year renewal of the International Atomic Energy Agency Collaborating Centre, which was now expanded to include AI and cybersecurity; a \$1 million National Cybersecurity Consortium grant awarded to Brilliant Catalyst and its partner to enhance startup supports; and the launch of a new early-career mentorship program by the Women in Research Council, led by Dr. Janette Hughes.

In response to a Member's question regarding the rising costs of the Student Training Assistantships in Research (STAR) Awards, L. Jacobs explained that the change reflects the University's commitment to ensuring students funded in summer research positions earn at least minimum wage. He also noted that as wages rise, supervisor contributions are adjusted accordingly. Through this approach, L. Jacobs reported that participation in summer undergraduate research programs at the university has expanded from approximately twenty (20) to nearly ninety (90) funded students annually.



Responding to additional questions regarding the increase in course release costs for research which appear higher than other universities, L. Jacobs explained that the rate used was based on benchmarking with other research-intensive universities and is consistent with or slightly below comparable universities. He noted that the higher benchmark strengthens faculty grant applications by increasing the value of in-kind institutional support and helps attract external funding. A Member requested consideration be given to incorporating in-kind support and indirect costs into the Budget Approach Strategic Conversation noted for November's AC Meeting.

#### **10. Consent Agenda:**

The Chair confirmed that contents of the Consent Agenda were approved and received under Agenda Item# 2 save for Item #'s 10.1, 10.2, and 10.4, respectively.

##### **10.3 For Information from USC\* (I):**

- i) Bachelor of Arts - Legal Studies - New Pathway with Teesside LLB, Middlesbrough, UK Articulation Agreement\* (I)**

##### **10.5 Conferral of Degrees – Fall 2025\* (M)**

##### **10.6 Faculty Council Vice-Chair Appointments\* (M)**

##### **10.7 Faculty Council Membership Lists\* (M)**

#### **Items pulled from Consent Agenda:**

##### **10.1 Minutes of the Meeting of September 23, 2025\* (M)**

Two Members expressed a range of concerns including: the content and format of minutes where they requested more details on discussions from September's AC meeting, such as the School of Ethical Artificial Intelligence (SEAI) item and specific speaker identification in certain instances; as well as, the handling of business arising from outstanding or follow-up items, where they emphasized the importance of tracking and addressing these matters to ensure continuity in decision-making.

N. Crow referred to the comments she made at September's AC meeting regarding minutes' content and format and reiterated that the University Secretary is satisfied that the minutes fulfill expectations as outlined in the Democratic Rules of Order. She again noted that as per the Democratic Rules of Order, minutes should include all major events and motions; and minutes should contain all motions exactly as passed and a very brief description of all major actions. She also noted the Latin derivation for minutes which reflects the concise nature of minutes.

Another Member noted that the extensive discussion on the minutes during meetings detracts from substantive agenda items and suggested consideration be given to a more efficient approach on this issue.

The Chair highlighted the need for Members to clearly identify business arising, distinguishing it from routine agenda items, and emphasised the importance for AC to focus on substantive discussions based on University strategic priorities, while respecting prior governance decisions and processes together with maintaining cohesion as a governing body.

*Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by L. Banks, the Minutes of the meeting of September 23, 2025 were approved as presented.*

One (1) Objection  
Three (3) Abstentions

#### **10.2 2025-2026 AC & Committee Workplans\* (I)**

The Chair noted a point of order as a Member's remarks extended beyond the item under discussion. The Chair emphasized the importance of remaining focused on the Agenda and on AC's defined role as regards particular agenda items.

A Member suggested that the Steering Committee revisit the AC Workplan to include further consultation in the coming months regarding SEAL.

#### **10.4 Cyclical Program Reviews from GSC\* (I)**

- i) Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Bioscience - Executive Summary, Implementation Plan and Program Learning Outcomes\* (I)**
- ii) Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Materials Science - Executive Summary, Implementation Plan and Program Learning Outcomes\* (I)**

A Member enquired as to how the Graduate Program Handbooks and supervisor forms are developed and approved. Dean K. Wilson replied that the Faculty of Science (FSci) is developing them internally and will provide updates per the 18-month cyclical program review.

### **11. Other Business**

Members asked a range of questions regarding the policy instrument consultation process and how Academic Council feedback is captured and considered. During the course of the ensuing discussion, N. Crow and J. MacInnis explained the basis of the AC written consultation process as part of the University's Policy Framework and confirmed the means of providing this feedback as AC Members. J. MacInnis also noted that in the context of the Respectful Campus Policy and certain other policies set out in the collective agreement with the Faculty Association, an additional, separate consultation occurs with the Faculty Association, which is a confidential process.

Several Members called for stronger consultation on key policies and expressed a view that many written submissions do not get fully addressed. The Chair and J. MacInnis acknowledged the importance of consultation pathways balanced with associated legal and regulatory parameters and the value of ensuring transparency and meaningful engagement.

The Chair emphasised the importance of ensuring Academic Council's time is focused on the University's most important strategic priorities, which currently is institutional sustainability. A Member also asked for respectful and collegial tone and language during Academic Council meetings. The Chair acknowledged this request and accordingly reiterated and emphasised AC's goal to function collaboratively and from a strategic perspective.

### **12. Termination**

There being no other business, and upon a motion to terminate by S. Nokleby, the AC meeting terminated at 4:13 p.m.

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary