Board of Governors 141st Regular Meeting

Minutes of the Public Session of the March 5, 2026, Meeting
Hybrid
In-Person Location:
The Dixon/Alger Fireside Reading Room LIB200
North Campus Library, 2000 Simcoe Street North Oshawa, Ontario, L1G 0C5
12:01 p.m. - 12:42 p.m.

Governors Present:
Laura Elliott, Board Chair
Eric Agius, Vice-Chair
Ahmad Barari
Nolan Bederman
Frank Carnevale
Joe DeSario
Cynthia Domjancic
Mitch Frazer, Chancellor
Lorraine Gray
Matthew Mackenzie
Laura Money
Lisa McBride
Steven Murphy, President and Vice-Chancellor
Michael Rencheck
Hannah Scott
Alveena Shrestha
Gaurav Singh
Jeff Spiegelman
Dwight Thompson
Emily Whetung-MacInnes
Susanna Zagar

Regrets:
Carla Carmichael
Neeraj Grotra
Roger Poirier

Staff and Guests:
Kirstie Ayotte
Jamie Bruno
Nicola Crow, Board Secretary
Sandra Grouette (Secretary)
Krista Hester
Les Jacobs
Lori Livingston
Jennifer MacInnis
Brad MacIsaac
Scott Nokleby
Joe Stokes
Sarah Thrush

1. **Welcome and Call to Order**
The Chair called the Public Session of the Board of Governors Meeting to order at 12:01 p.m. and M. Mackenzie provided their personal Land Acknowledgement.

2. **Agenda (M)**
Upon a motion duly made by J. DeSario and seconded by N. Bederman, the Agenda was approved as presented, including approving and receiving the Consent Agenda and its contents.

3. **Conflict of Interest Declaration**
None Declared.

4. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed Governors to the 141st Board of Governors' Meeting.

The Chair encouraged Governors to participate in the Chancellor's Challenge on October 3, 2026, an annual University community-building fundraising event in support of students. The Chair also noted International Women's Day on March 8, and the milestone of 50 years of federal action on gender equality in Canada, with the Chair also reflecting on progress in leadership representation. Additionally, they provided an update on their attendance at the groundbreaking for Ontario Tech's first University-only student residence, The Ridge, which they recognized as a significant milestone that will enhance the on-campus student experience and strengthen the University community.

5. President's Report

The President reported on the recent provincial funding announcement including the tuition changes, noting the $6.4B sector-wide funding as a short-term stabilization with the unfreezing of tuition after seven years, now capped at 2% annually. He advised that the University is reviewing the impacts of this announcement as well as continuing discussions with the Province.

The President advised that enrollment momentum remains strong, with undergraduate applications up 5.3% year over year with Ontario Tech again leading the province in per-capita first-choice applications. The President also shared recent international engagement efforts, including a recent delegation visit to the Philippines and Indonesia focused on nuclear skills training, workforce development, and long-term strategic partnerships in high-growth regions.

Finally, he reaffirmed progress on The Ridge student residence, with opening anticipated in September 2027. He noted that the project will house approximately 2,000 students and expand affordable, on-campus housing integrated with athletics facilities.

6. Academic Council Report* (I)

In J. Tam's absence, D. Thompson provided the Academic Council Report from the Meetings held on January 27, 2026 and February 24, 2026, respectively. He shared that across these meetings, Academic Council approved 19 major program modifications and received 15 minor program adjustments, alongside several institutional quality assurance reports. D. Thompson remarked that collectively, this work reflects strong faculty engagement and a continued focus on academic quality, innovation, and student success, to ensure programs remain responsive, forward-looking, and aligned with the University's priorities.

6.1. New Program Proposal: Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Graduate Diploma in Railway Engineering* (M)

During the discussion on the proposed railway engineering program, Governors heard from Dr. Scott Nokleby, Interim Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, that the initiative is industry-driven, responding to significant and growing demand for engineers trained in rail and transit systems. It was further noted that the sector has identified substantial workforce shortages, including unfilled engineering positions, and anticipates continued growth due to increased freight activity and major transit and infrastructure projects. Governors also learned that the program was developed in partnership with industry and aligns with the University's mission to meet workforce needs. Governors were advised that Ontario Tech is currently the only English-language institution in Canada offering comprehensive undergraduate and graduate programming in this area. It was also reported that the program is open to qualified domestic and international applicants with an engineering background, with early undergraduate interest already demonstrating strong enrollment demand.

Upon a motion duly made by N. Bederman and seconded by S. Zagar, and pursuant to the recommendation of Academic Council, the Board of Governors hereby approves the establishment of the Type 3 Graduate Diploma in Railway Engineering, as presented.

7. Audit & Finance Committee (A&F) Report

S. Zagar provided the A&F Report from the February 19, 2026 Meeting, noting that the only item to report on will be addressed under Agenda Item 7.1.

7.1. 2026-2027 Tuition & Ancillary Fees* (M)

In relation to 2026-2027 Tuition Fees, S. Zagar highlighted that the newly announced 2% domestic tuition increase is now reflected in the proposed 2026-2027 tuition fees. Further, she outlined the proposed increases to the previously approved anomaly adjustments for select programs, with engineering tuition having reached its anomaly fee threshold and the regular tuition increase now applies. Additional proposed changes include a 5% increase to out-of-province tuition, a 3% increase in international undergraduate tuition consistent with the University's annual increase cap, a freeze on research-based graduate tuition, modest increases to course-based master's programs, and an inflationary adjustment to co-op fees.

S. Zagar noted that Academic Council was informed of the proposed changes and received updates following the provincial announcement. S. Zagar confirmed that the proposed increases align with sector practices, remain within provincial parameters, and ensure Ontario Tech's tuition rates continue to be competitive and below the provincial average, with bursaries in place to support student access and affordability.

A discussion ensued regarding the proposed tuition adjustments, during which Governors sought clarification on the rationale for anomaly increases in certain programs, trends in out-of-province tuition practices, and measures to support affordability for students from lower-income backgrounds. S. Thrush responded by outlining sector-based benchmarking, provincial policy context, and planned enhancements to student financial support.

Upon a motion duly made by F. Carnevale and seconded by J. Spiegelman, and pursuant to the recommendation of the Audit & Finance Committee, the Board of Governors hereby approves the 2026-2027 tuition fees, as presented in Appendix 1.

S. Zagar shared the proposed ancillary fee adjustments, noting an aggregate increase of 3%, which remains within the 3.2% Consumer Price Index limit set out under the fee protocol. She also noted that minor reallocations among existing fees were made to streamline fee categories. S. Zagar advised that albeit technology-related costs contribute to higher ancillary fees, it is to be noted that when considered alongside tuition levels that remain at or slightly below the provincial average, the University continues to be competitively positioned.

Upon a motion duly made by E. Agius and seconded by J. Spiegelman, and pursuant to the recommendation of the Audit & Finance Committee, the Board of Governors hereby approves the 2026-27 ancillary fees as presented.

8. **Governance, Nominations & Human Resources (GNHR) Report**
G. Singh presented the February 3, 2026 GNHR Report. He noted that the key items are within the Consent Agenda.

9. **Strategy & Planning (S&P) Report**
E. Agius presented the February 5, 2026 S&P Report. He highlighted the annual update on the University's digital strategy which confirmed that the five-year enterprise project remains on schedule and on budget, with the test environment established and implementation planned for March 2027 with further details within the Reports in the Consent Agenda. E. Agius also provided an update on the Critical Nuclear Assembly project, including confirming that the necessary operating licence application to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission had been submitted and the ongoing engagement with provincial, federal, and industry partners in this regard. The update also noted a significant increase in applications to the nuclear engineering program, reflecting investments in facilities, industry engagement, and faculty expertise as part of Ontario Tech's expanding nuclear research and training ecosystem.

9.1. Student Recruitment, Retention & Success * (I)
E. Agius shared the annual report on student recruitment, retention, and success, noting a 5.3% year over year increase in undergraduate applications, outperforming many provincial peers.

He advised that S&P heard that recruitment success was attributed to a coordinated, data-driven strategy combining in-person and digital outreach. He also highlighted ongoing international recruitment efforts and a range of initiatives supporting student retention and success, including enhanced academic advising, digital literacy programming, targeted upper-year supports, and initiatives to support international and rural students.

The Chair recognized and commended the collective efforts of faculty, staff, and the broader University community in advancing student success and retention through a coordinated, student-centred approach that fosters engagement, belonging, and academic achievement.

10. **Consent Agenda:**
The Chair confirmed that the contents of the Consent Agenda were approved and received under Agenda Item # 2.

10.1. Public Session Minutes of the December 4, 2025 * (M)
10.2. Public Session Minutes of the November 20, 2025 A&F Meeting* (I)
10.3. Public Session Minutes of the October 30, 2025 GNHR Meeting* (I)
10.4. Public Session Minutes of the June 12, 2025 S&P Meeting* (I)

A&F Public Reports:
10.5. Annual Privacy Report* (I)
10.6. Annual Student Mental Health Report* (I)
10.7. Credit Rating Update* (I)

GNHR Public Reports:
10.8. 2026 Elections – Key Dates & Process* (I)
10.9. 2025-2026 Board/Committee Practices Assessment* (I)

S&P Public Reports:

10.10. Annual Digital Strategy Update* (I)

11. Adjournment

There being no other business, and upon a motion duly made by N. Bederman, the Public Session of the Board of Governors Meeting adjourned at 12:42 p.m.

Nicola Crow, University Secretary