



ACADEMIC COUNCIL
GRAUDATE STUDIES COMMITTEE (GSC)

**Minutes of the Public Session of the March 25, 2025, Meeting
via Videoconference
9:05 a.m. - 9:32 a.m.**

PUBLIC SESSION

Graduate Studies Committee Agendas, Materials and Minutes 2024-2025

Present: C. Cesaroni (Chair), J. Abbas Dick, J. Arcand, A. Azim, R. Bailey, D. Bonetta, K. Clarke, C. Davidson, F. Gaspari, L. Harkins, S. Jackson, O. Marques, C. McGregor, P. Mirza Babaei, D. Papke, F. Quereschi, A. Slane, J. Stokes, A. Tokuhiko, R. Van Oostveen, N. Wattie, K. Wilson

Regrets: A. Cooper, L. Jacobs, A. Kiani, L. Livingston, S. Marsh, L. VanVeen

Staff & Guests: K. Ayotte (Secretary), N. Crow, A. Kassaris, H. MacPherson, K. McCartney, T. Mirrlees, J. Pereira, B. Tranter, S. Windsor, A. Wingate

1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement

The Chair called the Public session of the GSC meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and read aloud the Land Acknowledgement.

2. Agenda (M)

D. Papke requested to remove Item 5.2: New Course ENGR5980G Digital Devices and Techniques for Smart Grid Automation and Protection, from the Consent Agenda advising members that it was already approved by GSC during the February meeting with the Major Program Adjustment (MPA) for Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Upon a motion duly made by N. Wattie and seconded by F. Gaspari, the Agenda was approved as amended, including approving and receiving the Consent Agenda and its contents.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed the attendees and highlighted the recent successful 3MT Thesis Competition in which 17 students participated this year, noting the winner will be going onto Regionals this summer.

4. New Program Proposal (Approval)

4.1 Faculty of Social Science and Humanities: Master of Social Media Communication in Online Creators* (M)

A. Slane presented the new program proposal from Faculty of Social Science and Humanities and welcomed T. Mirrlees to provide additional information.

T. Mirrlees shared that Ontario Tech is launching a Professional Master's program focused on the influencer/creator economy, distinct from a traditional Master of Arts. The program spans social media professions like advocacy, branding, government relations and entrepreneurship, and has global appeal. He noted that it received very positive feedback during the external review process from a leader in this field, which highlighted its future-focused approach. It was also the first program of its kind in North America. Set for launch in 2026–2027, it will be fully online, accessible to students from fields like media, business, social sciences, and computer science. The program will equip students with skills in content creation, coding, marketing, and social sciences, serving both recent graduates and professionals looking to upskill. It aligns with Ontario Tech's strategic goals to stay at the forefront of this rapidly growing field.

T. Mirrlees highlighted the potential for cross-faculty collaboration and access pathways for students.

In response to a question regarding library resources, T. Mirrlees noted that existing library resources are sufficient, as relevant journals are already available. While the program is practice-focused, it incorporates theory and research to support professional skills, including algorithm analysis and content genres.

The discussion highlighted broad agreement on the program's relevance across disciplines. Members recognized the importance of the program and its ability to support learning in ethical communication and countering misinformation to align with broader societal challenges.

There was also consensus that the program should remain open to applicants from diverse fields, including engineering, energy, and sciences, even without prior social media expertise. Its accessible design ensures professionals across sectors can develop essential digital communication skills, reflecting the growing influence of social media in industries such as healthcare, government, and advocacy.

Upon a motion duly made by A. Slane and seconded by O. Marques, the GSC hereby recommends to Academic Council the approval of the Master of Social Media Communication in Online Creators program and the subsequent recommendation of the program to the Board.

5. Consent Agenda* (M)

5.1 Public Minutes of the February 25, 2025, Meeting* (M)

5.2 Memo:

[MBAI 5600G - editorial change in calendar description](#)

5.3 Faculty Reports* (I)

- a) Faculty Reports
- b) Graduate Student Report
- c) Library Report

5.4 Associate Graduate Faculty

- Mechanical Engineering and Software Engineering, Taufiq Rahman, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science
- Mechanical Engineering, Holly Jones Taggart, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Mechanical Engineering, Sheldon Williamson, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science
- Mechatronics Engineering, Rickey Dubay, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science
- Automotive Engineering, Jing Ren, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science
- Nuclear Engineering, Fedor Naumkin, Faculty of Science
- Health Sciences, Michael Holmes, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Health Sciences, Derek Manis, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Health Sciences, Susanna Mak, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Applied Bioscience, Vaughn Mangal, Faculty of Science
- Applied Bioscience, Eve Gilroy, Faculty of Science
- Applied Bioscience, Kirk Atkinson, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science
- Forensic Psychology, Tanya Karam-Zanders, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities

Emeritus Graduate Faculty

- Education, Bill Hunter, Faculty of Education

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

6. Volunteer for April Land Acknowledgement

P. Mirza Babaei volunteered to provide the April Land Acknowledgement.

7. Adjournment (M)

There being no other business, and upon a motion duly made by F. Quereshi, the Public session of the GSC meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

The GSC moved into a Non-Public Session to finalize housekeeping items and upon a motion duly made by J. Arcand, the meeting terminated at 9:32 a.m.

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary