

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Minutes of the Public Session of the May 27, 2025, Meeting
via [Videoconference](#)
2:34 p.m. - 4:18 p.m.

PUBLIC SESSION

[Academic Council Committee Agendas, Materials and Minutes 2024-2025](#)

Present:

Steven Murphy (Chair)
Asifa Aamir
Scott Aquanno
Wendy Barber
Mihai Beligan
Mary Bluechardt
Toba Bryant
Krystina Clarke
Amanda Cooper
Nicola Crow
Catherine Davidson

Ana Duff
Mikael Eklund
Shanti Fernando
Mitch Frazer
Mehdi Hossein Nejad
Hossam Kishawy
Lori Livingston
Janet McCabe
Fedor Naumkin
Scott Nokleby
Carol Rodgers

Robyn
Ruttenberg Rozen
Peter Stoett
Joe Stokes
Jemma Tam
Dwight Thompson
Shannon Vettor
Tega Ubor
Ken Wilson

Staff & Guests:

Kirstie
Ayotte (Secretary)
Laura Banks
Chelsea Bauer
Jamie Bruno
Stephanie Callahan
Alison Carruthers
Jennifer Freeman
Karla Gomez

Barbara Hamilton
Krista Hester
Rayan Khalil
Clarissa Livingstone
Jennifer MacInnis
Brad MacIsaac
Matthew Mackenzie
Kimberley McCartney
Janice Moseley

Amy Neil
Niall O'Halloran
Melissa Ramirez
Danna Reeson
Gabby Resch
Sarah Thrush
Lisa Townsend
Becky Tranter
Adam Wingate

Regrets:

JoAnne Arcand
Robert Bailey
Ahmad Barari
Nawal Elshamiy
Jessica Hogue
Sayyed Ali Hosseini

Brenda Jacobs
Les Jacobs
Breanne McAlpin
Carolyn McGregor
Denina Simmons
Gillian Slade

1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement

The Chair called the Public Session of the Academic Council (AC) meeting to order at 2:34 p.m. and J. Stokes read aloud the Land Acknowledgement.

2. Agenda (M)

Members requested that Agenda items 12.3 and 12.5 respectively, be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by H. Kishawy, the Agenda was approved as amended, including approving and receiving the Consent Agenda and its contents as amended.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair highlighted that Convocation is next week, and that there's a shared sense of excitement and purpose as the University prepares to celebrate its graduates, along with their families and friends. He encouraged members to get involved if they have not already volunteered for Convocation activities.

In other updates, he noted that a full briefing on the Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA4) will be presented at the June Academic Council meeting, which will include annual reports and a performance summary for SMA3. The University is currently working with the Ministry to finalize and validate data for key performance metrics. Advocacy efforts are underway for growth funding and corridor adjustments, though the sector is still waiting for the SMA4 technical handbook to confirm final metric weightings. The finalized narrative and metrics sign-off is expected by mid-June.

Additionally, the Chair advised that the recent provincial budget included a \$750 million allocation to STEM across all Ontario universities and colleges over five years. Ontario Tech is set to receive \$500,000 annually from this fund, which is below institutional expectations. Funding for teacher education spaces was also announced, and while Ontario Tech has received some of it, the exact amount has yet to be confirmed.

4. Inquiries and Communications

The Chair invited J. MacInnis to provide a high-level update on the recent student group appeal, noting that while the matter is confidential, it is also of concern to the community. He emphasized that, due to potential legal implications, there are limits to what can be shared publicly.

4.1 COU Academic Colleague Report

R. Ruttenberg-Rozen reported on the recent Council of Ontario Universities (COU) meeting held on May 13-14, noting how quickly developments in the sector are evolving, as by May 15, responses to the Ontario budget had already emerged. She referenced a [statement](#) from COU President and CEO, Steve

Orsini, responding to the 2025 Ontario Budget, and highlighted a useful resource, [QP Briefing](#), for ongoing provincial budget analysis.

She summarized a presentation by Barbara Fallon, "Impact Storytelling," noting that it is an approach that highlights the real-world outcomes of research to better engage the public and government. As part of the Advancing Research Impact in Society (ARIS) initiative, it helps researchers communicate their works' broader impact, boosting engagement and grant success. Despite funding challenges, the strategy was seen as a promising way to strengthen public support for university research.

5. Provost's Remarks

L. Livingston looked ahead to Convocation, calling it one of the most meaningful days of the academic year as students officially become graduates and expressed excitement about celebrating with the community. She also congratulated Salma Bafagih, a Master of Health Sciences student, who won silver at the Provincial 3-Minute Thesis competition for her presentation on Food Literacy Among Canadian Adults noting that she will go on to compete at the national showcase in Ottawa this coming November.

5.1 Senior Academic Administrator Search Update (I)

L. Livingston provided an update on the search for the new Dean of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS), noting that presentations by the two finalist candidates took place last week. She thanked attendees and those who submitted feedback through the confidential portal and advised that the Committee is in the final stages of the process.

6. Academic Programs Update

6.1 2024-2025 Quality Assurance & Program Annual Report* (I)

- L. Livingston presented the 2024–2025 Quality Assurance Process and Program Annual Report, highlighting extensive academic activity, including new programs, about 250 minor modifications, and 30 major ones, and noted a clerical correction for FBIT undergraduate reviews. Questions arose regarding streamlining online/hybrid course approvals, with concerns about triggering major program changes. S. Thrush clarified that Faculty Councils can approve delivery mode changes under our IQAP, while surpassing 50% online delivery requires formal review. K. McCartney emphasized this threshold pertains to scheduling, not availability, and that faculties must track delivery modes to ensure compliance. S. Thrush added that multiple delivery modes are optional and under program control. Some members stressed preserving in-person teaching for certain courses, called for oversight and safeguards, and urged balancing innovation with quality and student flexibility. Another member, in turn, encouraged a more forward-thinking perspective.

6.2 2024-2025 Continuous Learning Annual Report* (I)

L. Livingston presented the 2024-2025 Continuous Learning Annual Report and noted that there was a detailed report included in the material package.

A member requested that Academic Council revisit its role in overseeing Continuous Learning and micro-credentials, suggesting the topic be discussed before the next annual report. The Chair took the request under advisement.

7. 2025-26 Activity Based Budget Model* (I)

L. Livingston introduced the 2025–26 Activity-Based Budget (ABB) modelling exercise, highlighting its purpose of evaluating program and Faculty financial health by analyzing revenue and expense data. Following the Auditor General's report, there is now a requirement to share this financial analysis at Academic Council down to the program level. S. Thrush gave a high-level overview of the ABB model, emphasizing its for information purposes only. She explained that the model allocates tuition and grant revenue based on teaching activity and enrollment trends, applies support unit and faculty expenses, and includes a strategic tax for institutional rebalancing. While the data includes program-level views, it is not designed to be precise at that level of granularity but helps identify financial pressures and opportunities.

Discussion covered issues such as the appearance of zero costs in some programs, which were clarified as outcomes of strategic financial balancing rather than an absence of expenses. A member asked whether a reported \$5.3 million surplus indicated institutional profit; S. Thrush explained this figure reflects operating budget savings allocated to reserves. Additional questions addressed the relationship between ABB and academic decisions such as program suspensions. S. Thrush clarified that suspensions of admissions are informed by enrollment trends, not ABB data. The Chair reiterated that not all Faculties are expected to generate revenue, with cross-subsidization being common. Both she and L. Livingston emphasized that ABB data is valuable for guiding sustainable decisions but does not drive actions in isolation. As the sector faces growing financial pressures, there is a need for transparent data sharing to support collegial, informed planning without fostering competition. Due to time constraints, further inquiries into program-level details were invited to be addressed offline with the administrative lead.

8. Undergraduate Studies Committee

The Chair invited M. Bluehardt to provide the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) update.

M. Bluehardt noted that at the April 15, 2025 (USC) meeting, the Committee endorsed two new programs for Academic Council approval and received updates on auditing and Learning Management System (LMS) access improvements. She thanked faculties and staff for their efforts responding to student needs.

8.1 New Program Proposal: Faculty of Health Sciences: Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Honours) Second Entry* (M)

M. Bluechardt presented the Faculty of Health Sciences: Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Honours) Second Entry new program proposal noting that it is a new accelerated program for students with prior university credit, distinct from existing partnerships. She highlighted that the program includes Indigenous health education and offers a competitive streamlined alternative to the traditional degree path.

A question was raised about the University's commitment to ensuring successful recruitment and adequate support for a new program. In response, L. Livingston emphasized that the program is in high demand, with strong expected enrollments. Resources will be allocated accordingly in response to enrollment.

Upon a motion duly made by M. Eklund and seconded by T. Bryant, and pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Honours) Second Entry program and recommends approval of the program to the Board of Governors.

8.2 New Program Proposal: Frazer Faculty of Education and Faculty of Social Science and Humanities: Bachelor of Arts Educational Psychology* (M)

M. Bluechardt presented the Frazer Faculty of Education and Faculty of Social Science and Humanities: Bachelor of Arts Educational Psychology new program proposal noting that this four-year program in Educational Psychology, developed through faculty collaboration, is the first of its kind at the undergraduate level in Canada. She highlighted that the program offers a unique blend of education and psychology, with pathways to graduate studies and specializations like mental health, technology and inclusive education. She noted that it received positive feedback for its innovation, interdisciplinary approach and student-centered design.

A question was raised about recruitment plans for a new program. L. Livingston emphasized that early approval allows full participation in the recruitment cycle starting in September. She also noted that over the past five years the Registrar's Office has a strong demonstrated track record of increasing applications, and recruitment includes coordinated efforts like open houses with faculty and staff.

J. Stokes added that the University has led the province in recruitment success over the past five years. He noted that program popularity can fluctuate due to industry trends. Recruitment success is influenced not only by marketing but also by industry demand and student interests, which vary annually. He also expressed that, data shows faculty engagement with students, through labs and

direct interaction, is the most significant factor influencing student enrollment decisions, with programs excelling in faculty-student interaction seeing higher recruitment yields.

Upon a motion duly made by P. Stoett and seconded by S. Vettor, and pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the Bachelor of Arts – Educational Psychology program and recommends approval of the program to the Board of Governors.

9. Graduate Studies Committee

The Chair invited J. Stokes to provide the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) update.

J. Stokes advised that the April 2025 meeting was not held due to no business arising.

10. Research Committee

The Chair invited J. Freeman to present the Strategic Research Plan.

10.1 Strategic Research Plan* (I)

J. Freeman noted that the current Strategic Research Plan (SRP) expires June 30, 2025, and the new plan, covering 2025 to 2030, has been developed with extensive consultation throughout the 2024–2025 academic year, including input from the Academic Council's Research Committee and all faculties. She noted that the plan is presented for information and is near finalization by Communications and Marketing, with a public version pending. It outlines eight strategic attributes, six existing research strengths, and six strategic priorities designed to guide future investments, partnerships, and research directions aligned with the Integrated Academic-Research Plan (IARP).

A question raised concern about the perceived reduction of explicit focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in the new SRP compared to the previous version. J. Freeman explained that rather than treating EDI as a separate or add-on component, the plan intentionally integrates inclusive research excellence throughout all aspects. This approach aims to embed EDI fully within the plan's framework to reflect a comprehensive commitment, rather than isolating it in brief statements, ensuring inclusivity is central to how research is defined and pursued.

11. Policy Consultation

The Chair invited J. Freeman to present the Research Involving Human Participants Policy & REB Terms of Reference.

11.1 Research Involving Human Participants Policy & REB Terms of Reference* (C)

J. Freeman noted that the policy and Terms of Reference are being presented for consultation, discussion and direction as per By-Law 2 and the University's Policy

Framework and confirmed the extensive consultation it has received to date. She noted that the policy name is being changed from the “Research Ethics Policy” to the “Research Involving Human Participants Policy” to modernize it, improve clarity and ensure alignment with the current Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (TCPS2) standards. Additionally, she noted that the updated Terms of Reference, last revised in 2007, have been appended within the Policy and is provided for informational purposes, reflecting current compliance requirements and procedures.

12. Consent Agenda:

The Chair confirmed that the contents of the Consent Agenda were approved and received under Agenda Item #2, save for Agenda items 12.3 and 12.5.

- 12.1 Minutes of the Meeting of April 22, 2025* (M)
- 12.2 Bachelor of Health Sciences – Kinesiology to Durham College – Massage Therapy Pathway Articulation Agreement Schedule* (I)
- 12.4 Approved Exception to Residency Requirement – Faculty of Health Sciences* (I)

*** Consent agenda items pulled for discussion as noted in item #2**

12.3 Graduation Notwithstanding a Deficiency* (I)

A member requested clarification as to whether the current approval pathway is correct, and whether this item should be presented for approval and open discussion rather than an item for information.

J. Stokes reviewed and acknowledged an oversight, confirming that a formal motion is required to finalize the process.

Upon a motion duly made by M. Eklund and seconded by P. Stoett, the Academic Council approved the Graduation Notwithstanding a Deficiency as presented.

12.5 2025-2026 – Graduate Academic Schedule – Amendment* (I)

J. Stokes requested that this item be stricken from the May agenda due to additional edits required and confirmed that it would be brought back to the June Academic Council.

13. Other Business

13.1 Land acknowledgement for June Academic Council Meeting

J. Tam volunteered to provide the June land acknowledgement.

14. Termination

There being no other business, and upon a motion to terminate by S. Nokleby, the Academic Council meeting terminated at 4:18 p.m.

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary