

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Minutes of the Public Session of the May 26, 2026 Meeting via Videoconference 2:32 p.m. - 3:53 p.m.

Academic Council Committee Agendas, Materials and Minutes 2025-2026

Present:

Steven Murphy (Chair)	Catherine Davidson	Scott Nokleby
Asifa Aamir	Mikael Eklund	Gabby Resch
Scott Aquanno	Shanti Fernando	Carol Rodgers
Rachel Ariss	Jessica Hogue	Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen
Laura Banks	Brenda Jacobs	Denina Simmons
Ahmad Barari	Les Jacobs	Gillian Slade
Mihai Beligan	Lori Livingston	Joe Stokes
Mary Bluechardt	Janet McCabe	Jemma Tam
Toba Bryant	Thomas McMorrow	Dwight Thompson
Krystina Clarke	Pejman Mirza-Babaei	Ken Wilson
Amanda Cooper	Fedor Naumkin	

Regrets:

JoAnne Arcand	Hossam Kishawy (on leave)	Carolyn McGregor
Wendy Barber	Shahram Heydari	Aliza Rizwan
Rupinder Brar	Sayyed Ali Hosseini	Shannon Vettor
Ana Duff	Mehdi Hossein-Nejad	
Mitch Frazer	Venuga Kariharan	

Staff and Guests:

Kirstie Ayotte	Krista Hester	Sarah Thrush
Nicola Crow	Jennifer MacInnis	
Sandra Grouette (Secretary)	Brad MacIsaac	

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 G. Resch provided their personal Land Acknowledgement.

2. Agenda (M)

Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by R. Ruttenberg-Rozen, the Agenda was approved as presented, including approving and receiving the Consent Agenda and its contents.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair encouraged Members to attend upcoming Convocation Ceremonies and thanked faculty, staff, student volunteers, and campus partners for their contributions to creating a

meaningful experience for graduates and their families. Congratulations were also extended to the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities on the launch of Canada's first-of-its-kind graduate program, the Master of Social Media Communication in Online Creators, designed with flexible delivery options to support evolving learner and industry needs. In addition, the Chair highlighted a recent \$5 million federal investment in the University's ACE Climatic Aerodynamic Wind Tunnel facility to expand the capabilities of ACE into a leading Canadian defence technology hub aligned with military standards.

4. Inquiries and Communications

None.

4.1 COU Academic Colleague Report* (I)

R. Ruttenberg-Rozen provided updates from recent Council of Ontario Universities (COU) meetings, including discussions on the impact of AI in post-secondary education and the forthcoming COU AI Task Force Report addressing institutional responses to AI integration. She also highlighted discussions on future higher education models, partnerships, experiential learning, and the evolving role of universities. In addition, she reflected on her participation in Science Meets Parliament and the value of interdisciplinary collaboration and policy engagement opportunities.

In response to R. Ruttenberg-Rozen sharing that this will be her last report as the COU Academic Colleague, the Chair thanked her for her contributions at COU and for promoting engagement initiatives such as Science Meets Parliament. The Chair also highlighted the value of recent COU discussions on AI in higher education, noting the importance of addressing concerns around AI while advancing responsible integration into university teaching, learning, and curriculum development.

5. Provost's Remarks

5.1 Senior Academic Administrator Search Update (I)

The Provost provided updates on the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities search process, including the launch of the position's advertisement and the anticipated timelines for reviewing candidates and interviews. She also advised that Dr. Eric Rapos had been appointed as the University's Teaching Scholar in Residence, with a focus on pedagogical practices related to the use of AI in the classroom. In addition, she noted that the recent Canvas cybersecurity incident had been contained and that at this point in time, there was no indication that Ontario Tech data had been accessed.

In response to a question, J. MacInnis noted that Ontario Tech's Canvas system had remained operational following the incident.

6. Academic Programs Update

6.1 2025-2026 Continuous Learning Annual Report* (I)

The Provost presented the Continuous Annual Report and highlighted increased program enrollments, corporate training offerings, and summer camp registrations during the reporting period. They also noted the growth in new partnerships and clients, recognition of the Nuclear Career Accelerator program and its recent national recognition from the CAUCE, and the continued expansion of micro-credential offerings.

The Provost also confirmed that continuous learning activities contribute to overall institutional growth as part of the broader enrollment target of 20,000 students by 2030, as well as representing an important revenue-generating component supporting University operations.

6.2 2025-2026 Quality Assurance Annual Report* (I)

The Provost introduced the Annual Report which provided an overview of quality assurance activities, including new program development, external approvals, and cyclical program reviews.

S. Thrush highlighted the significant contributions of faculty members, program committees, Academic Council, and CIQE staff in supporting ongoing program innovation, quality assurance, and continuous improvement processes across the University.

7. 2026-2027 Activity Based Budget Model* (I) ¹

S. Thrush presented an overview of the University's Activity Based Budget (ABB) Model, explaining how the model is used to inform budget allocations based on enrollment, tuition, grants, and institutional cost drivers. She highlighted the relationship between enrollment trends and faculty budget performance, the role of strategic allocations in supporting balanced budgets, and the importance of continued innovation and diversification of academic offerings to support long-term financial sustainability. She also noted that additional discussions with faculty councils would occur to provide further detail and context regarding the model and its application.

Responding to questions, S. Thrush explained that the ABB Model is used to support enrollment planning, revenue forecasting, and strategic investment decisions. She confirmed that graduate enrollment and related revenue drivers are fully incorporated. She further noted that positive balances indicate revenues exceeding associated costs, while negative balances indicate revenues that do not fully cover allocated program and institutional costs.

S. Thrush advised that in relation to program admissions and sustainability, decisions are informed by multiple factors, including financial projections, service teaching contributions, application demand, and program innovation considerations with additional clarification on certain accounting details being provided separately.

8. Undergraduate Studies Committee

M. Bluehardt reported on the April 21, 2026 Undergraduate Studies Committee ("USC") Meeting, noting the Committee's continued student-first approach in its work, which in April included amendment recommendations to the Examination and Grading Policy, and a new FBIT program proposal, both of which were on AC's agenda.

She also provided an update on proposed revisions to three (3) IQAP Procedures which were being presented to both USC and Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) for approval in accordance with the established governance pathway. She advised that the Committee had a fulsome dialogue on the proposed revisions, which are intended to support a more responsive and efficient student-focused framework benefitting students, faculty and staff, with approval deferred to May. M. Bluehardt also shared that USC received editorial updates to the IQAP Policy and a related Procedure for information.

¹ Since the May 26 Academic Council Meeting there have been revisions to the supporting materials for this item see: [AC and Board ABB Budget Allocation Model Program Summary May 2026.pdf*](#)

8.1 New Program Proposal: Faculty of Business and Information Technology: Bachelor of Business Analytics and Artificial Intelligence* (M)

M. Bluechardt reported that the new program proposal is designed to integrate business analytics and artificial intelligence in an innovative response to emerging industry and workforce needs. In terms of resources for this new program, she advised that in accordance with the University's standard approach, program resourcing will align with enrollment growth.

G. Resch further noted that faculty hiring and program development activities are already underway to support program resource needs, including new tenure-track and limited-term appointments, with significant preparatory work already completed to support the program's planned launch and anticipated enrollment growth.

Upon a motion duly made by M. Bluechardt and seconded by S. Nokleby, that pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the Bachelor of Business Analytics and Artificial Intelligence program and recommends approval of the program to the Board of Governors.

One (1) Abstention.

8.2 New Program Proposal: Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Bachelor of Engineering (Hons), Artificial Intelligence Engineering* (M)

M. Bluechardt shared the new program was developed to address growing demand for AI professionals and is distinguished by its engineering-focused curriculum. The program will combine foundational AI theory, experiential learning, industry collaboration, and work-integrated learning opportunities to prepare graduates for careers across engineering and technology sectors.

It was noted that with the proposal's engineering focus, this is a key strength differentiating it from other AI specialization options with enrollment projected at 30 students in 2027 and planned growth to 50 students within three years.

With respect to resource allocation, S. Nokleby noted that recent faculty hiring in software and AI engineering areas, combined with anticipated redistribution of teaching resources and future hiring aligned with enrollment growth, are intended to support successful program implementation and delivery.

Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by M. Bluechardt, that pursuant to the recommendation of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the Bachelor of Engineering (Hons), Artificial Intelligence Engineering program and recommends approval of the program to the Board of Governors.

One (1) Abstention.

9. Graduate Studies Committee

P. Mirza-Babaei reported on the April 28, 2026 GSC Meeting, which included recognition of Ontario Tech's success at the provincial 3MT® competition, where the University's representative placed third. He also noted that like USC, GSC reviewed and discussed the proposed revisions to the IQAP Procedures and the Examination and Grading Policy. He also shared that GSC approved revisions to the Outstanding Thesis Award to improve equity,

transparency, and consistency across faculties, and received for information a new thesis completion process designed to reduce student stress, simplify administrative procedures, and provide greater flexibility for thesis completion and examination timelines.

P. Mirza-Babaei noted that implementation details for the new thesis completion and tuition process were in the GSC materials and faculty communications.

10. Research Committee

10.1 Strategic Research Plan Annual Report* (I)

L. Jacobs presented the first annual report on the 2025-2030 Strategic Research Plan, providing baseline data and updates on research growth and performance indicators. He highlighted increases in research initiatives, grant applications, funding, partnerships, and research intensity, as well as improvements in national research rankings. He also emphasized growth in graduate and undergraduate research engagement, entrepreneurship and commercialization activities, and equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives.

L. Jacobs noted in response to a question, that broader indicators such as publications and citations could be reflected more explicitly in future reports, while acknowledging disciplinary differences and limitations in available data sources. With respect to the co-relation between the Strategic Research Plan and the Integrated Academic-Research Plan (IARP), L. Jacobs explained that the Strategic Research Plan provides a five-year framework aligned with external research funding requirements, while the IARP serves as a broader institutional planning document, with areas of overlap but distinct purposes and reporting functions.

11. Policy Instruments

11.1 Examination and Grading Policy Amendments* (M)

J. Stokes explained that the proposed amendments clarify that secondary deferred examinations would generally not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances, and that the late withdrawal process would serve as the alternative process for students unable to complete a deferred examination.

Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by R. Ruttenberg-Rozen, that Academic Council hereby approves the amended Examination and Grading Policy.

12. Consent Agenda:

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

12.1 Public Minutes of the April 28, 2026 Meeting* (M)

12.2 Conferral of Degrees – Spring/Summer 2026* (M)

12.3 Outstanding Thesis Award Amendments* (I)

13. Termination

There being no other business, and upon a motion to terminate by S. Nokleby, the AC Meeting terminated at 3:53 p.m.

Sandra Grouette, Assistant University Secretary