
**Minutes of the Public Session of the March 24, 2026, Meeting
via Videoconference
2:32 p.m. - 3:26 p.m.**

Academic Council Committee Agendas, Materials and Minutes 2025-2026

Present:

Steven Murphy (Chair)	Mikael Eklund	Fedor Naumkin
Asifa Aamir	Shanti Fernando	Scott Nokleby
JoAnne Arcand	Shahram Heydari	Gabby Resch
Rachel Ariss	Jessica Hogue	Aliza Rizwan
Laura Banks	Mehdi Hossein-Nejad	Carol Rodgers
Wendy Barber	Sayyed Ali Hosseini	Robyn
Mihai Beligan	Brenda Jacobs	Ruttenberg-Rozen
Mary Bluechardt	Les Jacobs	Denina Simmons
Rupinder Brar	Venuga Kariharan	Gillian Slade
Toba Bryant	Lori Livingston	Joe Stokes
Krystina Clarke	Janet McCabe	Dwight Thompson
Amanda Cooper	Carolyn McGregor	Shannon Vettor
Catherine Davidson	Thomas McMorrow	Ken Wilson
Ana Duff	Pejman Mirza-Babaei	

Regrets:

Scott Aquanno	Mitch Frazer	Jemma Tam
Ahmad Barari	Hossam Kishawy (on leave)	

Staff and Guests:

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

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 D. Simmons provided their personal Land Acknowledgement.

2. Agenda (M)

Upon a request from a Member, Agenda items 9.1, 9.2(i) and 9.4(i) were removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Some Members commented on and enquired about the provision for discussion opportunities within the agenda with the Chair confirming the role and responsibilities of the Steering Committee in this regard.

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

One (1) Abstention
Two (2) Objections

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair opened his remarks by thanking the Faculty Association and University Bargaining teams for their work leading to a renewed ratified agreement, noting it as positive for the campus community. He also highlighted recent student successes, including the Women's Hockey Team reaching the OUA semifinals for the first time in program history, and encouraged Members to attend the upcoming Student Athletics Gala to celebrate the accomplishments of student-athletes.

He also shared highlights from the recent Three Minute Thesis competition, featuring six graduate students that showcased strong research and communication skills, with the winner advancing to the Provincial finals. He also drew attention to the Teaching and Learning Conference and associated awards ceremony, emphasizing its role in celebrating innovation, leadership, and impact in teaching practices across the University.

In closing, the Chair reminded Members of the upcoming elections for Academic Council and Board of Governors, with candidate statements available on the University Secretariat website, and encouraged participation in governance through voting.

4. Inquiries and Communications

4.1 COU Academic Colleague Report* (I)

R. Ruttenberg-Rozen reported on two COU meetings from February. The first included a presentation on a draft paper addressing the future of post-secondary education, which focused on themes such as financial sustainability, modernization of learning, work-integrated learning, research and industry partnerships, student supports, and sustainability. The second meeting included a presentation on the Quality Assurance Framework and its processes. She noted that some attendees expressed concerns about the extent to which existing quality assurance processes may limit institutional responsiveness.

In response to these discussions, it was shared that the Quality Council is currently undergoing an external review to examine its processes and consider opportunities for streamlining. It was also noted that the Council is composed of volunteers, and Members were informed that opportunities to participate are available through calls posted on the Council's website.

During discussion, R. Ruttenberg-Rozen clarified that the concerns raised were directed toward processes and systems rather than the principle of quality assurance itself, and that there continues to be ongoing tension between the need for responsiveness and existing structural requirements within the sector.

5. Provost's Remarks

L. Livingston noted that the University was approaching the end of the academic term and acknowledged the efforts of faculty, staff, and students. She also highlighted the recent Three Minute Thesis competition, identifying the winners, and recognizing the participation of students and volunteer judges.

5.1 Senior Academic Administrator Search Update (I)

L. Livingston provided an update regarding the search for the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities (FSSH), confirming that the Search Advisory Committee had been finalized and announced, and that the next step of coordinating schedules for committee meetings was in progress.

6. Undergraduate Studies Committee

M. Bluehardt reported on the Undergraduate Studies Committee February meeting. She noted that an item requiring Academic Council approval had already been approved at the previous meeting and that the Committee had also reviewed and approved minor program adjustments across several faculties, which were included on the Consent Agenda for information. These adjustments were described as student-centered and aligned with quality, accessibility, and responsive to industry needs.

7. Graduate Studies Committee

P. Mirza-Babaei reported that the Graduate Studies Committee in February continued to engage in discussions related to maintaining academic quality in graduate programs. Several items had been reviewed and approved at the committee level and were included on the Consent Agenda for information. He also noted that a link to the Three Minute Thesis presentations would be shared for those interested in viewing the presentations.

8. Research Committee

L. Jacobs began by recognizing a graduate student selected as a finalist in the SSHRC Storytellers competition. He then continued with updates for several Research Chair initiatives, including the submission of a nomination for a CANDU Research Excellence Chair, progress in Canada Research Chair searches in Education and AI and Advanced Nuclear Engineering, and the initiation of a new search in Artificial Intelligence and Business Analytics.

In addition, he reported that the University is on track for a record level of research funding, supported by a high volume of applications, multiple large grant successes, external funding secured by Brilliant Catalyst, and a finalized federal investment to support research infrastructure.

9. Consent Agenda:

The Chair confirmed that contents of the Consent Agenda were approved and received under Agenda Item # 2 (save for item #s 9.1, 9.2(i), and 9.4(i)).

9.2 Minor Program Adjustments from USC* (I)

- (ii) Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Electrical Engineering* (I)
- (iii) Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Manufacturing Engineering* (I)
- (iv) Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Mechatronics Engineering* (I)
- (v) Faculty of Science: Co-operative Education in the Faculty of Science* (I)
- (vi) Faculty of Science: Bachelor of Arts and Science (Hons), Sustainability* (I)
- (vii) Faculty of Business and Information Technology: Entrepreneurship Minor* (I)
- (viii) Frazer Faculty of Education: Bachelor of Education – Primary/Junior and Intermediate/Senior options* (I)
- (ix) Faculty of Social Science and Humanities: Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Criminology and Justice* (I)

9.3 Minor Program Adjustments from GSC* (I)

- (i) Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Electrical and Computer Engineering, MAsc/MEng/PhD* (I)
- (ii) Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Nuclear Design Engineering, Graduate Diploma* (I)
- (iii) Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Software Engineering, MAsc and MEng* (I)

Items Pulled from Consent Agenda:

9.1 Public Minutes of the February 24, 2026 Meeting* (M)

A discussion focused on clarification aspects of the previous meeting. N. Crow confirmed that the Minutes reflected the discussion that took place.

Broader questions were raised regarding opportunities for discussion and the handling of other items, with the Chair reiterating Steering Committee's role in this regard.

No formal amendments were proposed.

Upon a motion duly made by C. McGregor and seconded by A. Cooper, the Public Minutes of the February 24, 2026 Meeting were approved as presented.

Two (2) Objections

9.2 Minor Program Adjustments from USC* (I)

- (i) Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Automotive, Industrial, and Mechanical Engineering* (I)

A Member requested clarification regarding the statement that no additional resources were required for changes to Capstone courses. It was explained that the current structure of multiple Capstone courses would be consolidated into a common course delivered over two semesters, and that overall resourcing would remain the same, with adjustments made through course sections rather than reductions.

9.4 Cyclical Program Review from GSC* (I)

- (i) 18-Month Follow-up Report: Modelling and Computational Science, PhD and MSc*(I)

A Member enquired about graduate student funding as referenced in the follow-up report and asked whether actions beyond monitoring were being considered. P. Mirza-Babaei stated that graduate funding was a key area of focus and that proposals were being developed in collaboration with the Graduate Studies Committee, colleagues, and deans, with the intention of bringing them forward at a later stage.

10. Termination

There being no other business, and upon a motion to terminate by S. Nokleby, the AC Meeting terminated at 3:26 p.m.

Kirstie Ayotte, Secretary