ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Minutes of the Public Session of the April 28, 2026, Meeting
via Videoconference
2:30 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.

Academic Council Committee Agendas, Materials and Minutes 2025-2026

Present:

Steven Murphy (Chair)	Amanda Cooper	Carolyn McGregor
Asifa Aamir	Catherine Davidson	Thomas McMorrow
Scott Aquanno	Ana Duff	Pejman Mirza-Babaei
JoAnne Arcand	Mikael Eklund	Fedor Naumkin
Rachel Ariss	Shanti Fernando	Gabby Resch
Laura Banks	Mitch Frazer	Carol Rodgers
Ahmad Barari	Jessica Hogue	Denina Simmons
Wendy Barber	Mehdi Hossein-Nejad	Gillian Slade
Mihai Beligan	Brenda Jacobs	Joe Stokes
Rupinder Brar	Les Jacobs	Dwight Thompson
Toba Bryant	Lori Livingston	Shannon Vettor
Krystina Clarke	Janet McCabe	Ken Wilson

Regrets:

Mary Bluechardt	Venuga Kariharan	Aliza Rizwan
Shahram Heydari	Hossam Kishawy (on leave)	Robyn Ruttenberg-Rozen
Sayyed Ali Hosseini	Scott Nokleby	Jemma Tam

Staff and Guests:

Kirstie Ayotte	Randy Fortier	Christopher O'Connor
Nicola Crow	Krista Hester	Sarah Thrush
Sandra Grouette (Secretary)	Jennifer MacInnis	
	Brad MacIsaac	

1. **Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement**
   The Chair called the Public Session of the Academic Council (AC) Meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. and C. McGregor provided their personal Land Acknowledgement.

2. **Agenda (M)**
   Upon a request from a Member, Agenda item 11.4 was removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

   Some Members commented on and enquired about the process for submitting and reviewing agenda item requests including opportunities for dialogue on AI initiatives. The Chair reiterated the process for establishing Academic Council agendas and noted that AI specific agenda items that are within Academic Council's purview will be brought forward at the appropriate time.

Upon a motion duly made by G. Resch and seconded by C. McGregor, the Agenda was approved as amended, including approving and receiving the Consent Agenda and its contents as amended.

Six (6) Abstentions

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair provided institutional updates, including the preparations for June's Convocation Ceremonies.

The Chair also acknowledged the recent announcement of the Provost's decision to step down from the role and extended sincere appreciation for their leadership and many contributions to the University. Academic Council Members also expressed their appreciation and gratitude to the Provost, including recognizing their mentorship and support. Members were advised that the call for expressions of interest to serve on the Provost and Vice-President, Academic Search Advisory Committee has been released.

3.1 2026 Honorary Degree Recipients (I)

The Chair announced the 2026 Honorary Degree recipients as follows:

- Tabatha Bull, recognized for leadership in economic reconciliation and Indigenous entrepreneurship;
- Mark and Vanessa Mulroney, recognized for contributions to business, philanthropy, and community development;
- Ralph Lean, recognized for service to Canadian legal, corporate, and educational communities;
- Nitin Jain, recognized for leadership in Canada's health and seniors' sectors; and
- Nick Eaves, recognized for leadership and community engagement through sport.

4. Inquiries and Communications

None

5. Provost's Remarks

5.1 Senior Academic Administrator Search Update (I)

The Provost provided an update on the search process for the next Dean of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, including community consultation activities and survey engagement opportunities.

5.2 Teaching Award Recipients (I)

The Provost recognized and congratulated the recipients of the 2026 Celebrate Teaching! Awards and thanked faculty, instructors, teaching assistants, and staff for their contributions to teaching, research, and student success throughout the academic year. She invited Members to join her in celebrating the following major award recipients' achievements:

- Natalie Rajack (FSSH) - Teaching Assistant Award,
- Shannon Vettor (FSSH) - Tim McTiernan Student Mentorship Award,
- Eric Rapos (FSci) - Learning Reimagined Award,
- Brandon Carson (FEd) - Open Education Award,
- Laura Morrison (FEd) - Early Career Teaching Award, and
- Paula Di Cato (FSci) - Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Congratulations were also extended to all nominees.

6. **2026 - 2029 Budget* (I)**
L. Livingston, S. Thrush, and B. MacIsaac, provided a high-level overview of the University's 2026-2029 multi-year operating budget, including enrollment projections, and long-term financial planning priorities. During the presentation, the impact of the recent provincial funding announcement, projected tuition and enrollment growth, investments in student support and instructional resources, and planned capital and infrastructure initiatives were highlighted.

Key updates were also provided on plans for future campus development, student housing projects, renewal of academic and student engagement spaces, and continued strategic investments intended to support institutional growth, operational sustainability, and evolving teaching and learning needs. It was emphasized that the budget was developed within a context of this being a defining moment for the University as the institution positions itself to manage future growth and long-term financial stability, amidst ongoing economic and geopolitical uncertainty.

In response to questions regarding investments in AI initiatives, Banner transformation projects, student financial supports, graduate student funding, and future campus expansion planning, B. MacIsaac advised that the Banner transformation is part of a previously approved multi-year initiative, with separate funding allocated for AI pilot projects and future strategic planning. He also noted that the budget includes enhanced financial aid and graduate student support measures, and that future campus planning and space allocation will be guided through consultation with faculties and alignment with enrollment growth, academic priorities, and future teaching and research needs.

During the discussion, it was also noted that dedicated funding has been allocated for academic priorities and strategic initiatives, while future infrastructure, staffing, and capital requirements will continue to be assessed and aligned with institutional priorities. With respect to EDGE at Ontario Tech, it was confirmed that it was operating under a different model from Ontario Tech Talent with limited start-up funding currently budgeted.

S. Thrush and B. MacIsaac further advised that staffing and resource planning considers a range of institutional and program-specific factors beyond direct enrollment ratios. It was also clarified that the 2026 budget for staffing allocations have focused primarily on faculty and then frontline and support positions.

7. **Undergraduate Studies Committee**
R. Fortier presented the March Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) report in M. Bluechardt's absence. He shared that USC reviewed and approved a recent minor program adjustment included in the Consent Agenda, highlighting the importance of responsiveness to student needs and collaboration between Faculties and the Cooperative Education Program in supporting student success. A Member commented on April's USC Meeting where USC discussed proposed changes to the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) Policy and associated Procedures.

8. **Graduate Studies Committee**
There was no report as the Graduate Studies Committee did not meet in March.

9. Governance & Nominations Committee

9.1 2026 Nominations and Election Results Update* (M)

L. Livingston reported that the Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC) met on April 21. She advised that the 2026 Election process is expected to conclude in June, including expressions of interest for applicable positions. It was noted that all but one teaching staff position on Academic Council will be filled through the 2026 Academic Council election process.

The strong level of participation in the election process overall was acknowledged, with nearly all teaching staff positions successfully filled. The importance of volunteer participation in Academic Council governance activities was also noted along with the contributions of individuals standing for election. In response to enquiries on the status of vacant positions within specific Faculties, it was confirmed that through the 2026 Elections, there was one vacant teaching staff position within the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities due to a limited number of nominations received.

Upon a motion duly made by K. Wilson and seconded by C. McGregor, that pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance & Nominations Committee, Academic Council hereby approves the following appointments to the Academic Council and its Committees:

Teaching Staff positions on Academic Council for the term of September 1, 2026 to August 31, 2029:

- *Frazer Faculty of Education: Wendy Barber*
- *Faculty of Health Sciences: Ginny Brunton*
- *Faculty of Science: Denina Simmons*
- *Faculty of Science: Eric Rapos*
- *Faculty of Social Science and Humanities: Shannon Vettor*
- *Faculty at Large: Andrew Hogue*
- *Faculty at Large: Atef Mohany*
- *Faculty at Large: Amirkianoosh Kiani*
- *Faculty at Large: Robert Bailey*
- *Faculty at Large: Natalie Oman*

Teaching Staff positions on the Academic Appeals Committee for the term of September 1, 2026 to August 31, 2029:

- *Pariss Garramone*
- *Atef Mohany*

9.2 Academic Council Meeting Format* (M)

L. Livingston shared the GNC's recommendation to increase in-person Academic Council meetings to strengthen governance, collegiality, and networking opportunities. She advised that GNC was proposing that starting in 2026-2027, Academic Council would meet in-person except for virtual meetings in January and February, with the option for a virtual meeting in March if there is inclement weather. She noted the possibility of hosting meetings at the North and Downtown campuses, subject to space availability and logistical considerations. L. Livingston also reported that a phone-in option would continue to be available for Members facing emergency situations that prevent in-person attendance.

The ensuing discussion included coordinating teaching schedules with meeting times, balancing meeting locations across campuses, and maintaining accessible participation while supporting collegial engagement through in-person meetings, such as offering a hybrid option. In response, it was noted that efforts will continue to coordinate teaching schedules as much as possible, a teleconference option rather than a hybrid option, will continue to be available to only Academic Council Members due to logistical considerations, with public attendees able to attend in-person at the designated meeting locations, subject to space availability.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Banks and seconded by L. Livingston, that pursuant to the recommendation of the Governance & Nominations Committee, Academic Council hereby approves a change to its meeting format beginning in the 2026-2027 Academic Year, whereby meetings will be held in person from September to June, except for virtual meetings in January and February, with the option of a virtual meeting in March if there are inclement weather conditions.

10. Research Committee

10.1 Centre of Police Science, Education and Training* (M)

L. Jacobs introduced the proposal to establish the Centre of Police Science, Education and Training as an interdisciplinary initiative involving faculty members from all six Faculties. He outlined that the proposed Centre was an unique university-based initiative focused on advancing research, partnerships, student learning opportunities, and professional education related to policing, public safety, and emerging technologies within the sector.

Members asked questions regarding startup funding, long-term institutional support, and oversight processes associated with the proposed Centre of Police Science, Education and Training. The ensuing discussion focused on how future funding and resource allocations for research centres may be addressed following Board approval, as well as clarification regarding faculty participation and credential review processes connected to the proposal.

L. Jacobs noted that the proposed Centre had already secured external start-up funding, which could be leveraged to support future funding opportunities and matching arrangements. He also shared that the University also contributes indirectly through existing funding mechanisms and supports. L. Jacobs further clarified that specific University funding commitments are typically not finalized until proposals have completed the institutional approval process, including Board approval.

Upon a motion duly made by K. Wilson and seconded by M. Ekland, that pursuant to the recommendation of the Research Committee, Academic Council hereby recommends the establishment of the Centre of Police Science, Education, and Training for approval by the Board of Governors, as presented.

11. Consent Agenda:

The Chair confirmed that contents of the Consent Agenda were approved and received under Agenda Item # 2 (save for Item #11.4).

11.1 Public Minutes of the March 24, 2026 Meeting* (M)

11.2 Minor Program Adjustments from USC* (I):

(i) Faculty of Social Science and Humanities: Co-operative Education in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities* (I)

11.3 Approved Exception to Residency Requirement:

11.3.1 Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities* (I)

11.3.2 Faculty of Business and Information Technology* (I)

Item pulled from Consent Agenda:

11.4 Conferral of Posthumous Degree* (M)

C. McGregor advised that following the posthumous credentialing process, and in keeping with the family's wishes for privacy, this item was purposely placed in the Consent Agenda. The impact of the student's passing on the Faculty and program community was acknowledged, and Academic Council observed a moment of silence in remembrance of the student.

Upon motion duly made by C. McGregor and seconded by L. Jacobs, that pursuant to the recommendation of the Registrar, Academic Council hereby authorizes the conferral of a posthumous degree to [redacted]. [1]

12. Termination

There being no other business, and upon a motion to terminate by C. McGregor, the AC Meeting terminated at 4:15 p.m.

Sandra Grouette, Assistant University Secretary

[1] Out of respect for the family's wishes, the student's name has been redacted.