

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Minutes of the Public Session of the October 28, 2025 Meeting via Videoconference 2:32 p.m. - 4:13 p.m.

Academic Council Committee Agendas, Materials and Minutes 2025-2026

Present:

Steven Murphy, Chair
Asifa Aamir
Scott Aquanno
JoAnne Arcand
Rachel Ariss
Laura Banks
Wendy Barber
Mihai Beligan
Rupinder Brar
Toba Bryant
Krystina Clarke
Amanda Cooper
Ana Duff

Mikael Eklund
Shanti Fernando
Shahram Heydari
Jessica Hogue
Mehdi Hossein-Nejad
Sayyed Ali Hosseini
Brenda Jacobs
Les Jacobs
Venuga Kariharan
Lori Livingston
Janet McCabe
Carolyn McGregor
Pejman Mirza-Babaei

Fedor Naumkin
Scott Nokleby
Gabby Resch
Aliza Rizwan
Carol Rodgers
Robyn
Ruttenberg Rozen
Gillian Slade
Peter Stoett
Joe Stokes
Jemma Tam
Dwight Thompson
Ken Wilson

Regrets:

Ahmad Barari
Mary Bluechardt
Catherine Davidson

Mitch Frazer
Hossam Kishawy
Denina Simmons

Shannon Vettor

Staff and Guests:

Kirstie
Ayotte (Secretary)
Chelsea Bauer
Stephanie Callahan
Nicola Crow
Karla Gomez

Barbara Hamilton
Krista Hester
Jennifer MacInnis
Brad MacIsaac
Kimberley McCartney
Amy Neil

Lisa Townsend
Becky Tranter
Sarah Thrush
Adam Wingate

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 T. Bryant provided their personal Land Acknowledgement.

2. Agenda (M)

Upon a request from a Member, Agenda item 10.1 was removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Upon a request from a Member, Agenda item 10.2 was removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Upon a request from a Member, Agenda item 10.4 was removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

A Member requested that the Policy Instrument Written Consultation, referenced under the Agenda, be added to Other Business.

Upon a motion duly made by J. Tam and seconded by D. Thompson, the Agenda was approved as amended, including approving and receiving the Consent Agenda and its contents as amended.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair expressed appreciation for the many accomplishments across the University and extended gratitude to faculty, staff and students for their contributions to the recent Fall Convocation ceremonies. The Chair highlighted the success of Convocation with all Faculties celebrating together and the diversity this represented.

The Chair also noted the launch of the School of Ethical AI (SEAI) and the Mindful Artificial Intelligence Research Institute (MAIRI), as well as strengthened partnerships following a visit to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He also referenced the ongoing energy related initiatives to promote the University's work and expertise in this sector, including a ministry roundtable and the collaboration with OPG and the Ontario Science Centre on the *Watt Next* youth education tool.

The Chair concluded by encouraging continued support for campus athletics and upcoming home openers.

4. Inquiries and Communications

None Received.

5. Provost's Remarks

The Provost highlighted Ontario Tech rower Kierstyn Hawke, a student who recently earned a bronze medal at this year's Ontario University Athletics (OUA) Championships, as well as the Women's Novice Fours team which captured silver.

She also extended her congratulations to Dr. Manon Lemonde, who was awarded an Honorary Degree of "Fun" at the recent Fall Convocation ceremonies, in recognition of over 20 years of service as Chief Marshal. Noting her upcoming retirement on December 31, 2025, she encouraged members to reach out to Manon and offer their thanks and congratulations.

Members reflected on Dr. Lemonde's kindness, noting the impact she had both within the University and the broader community, while emphasizing the importance of the compassion she consistently exemplified and championed.

6. Undergraduate Studies Committee

M. Hossein-Nejad provided the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) report on M. Bluehardt's behalf. He provided brief remarks noting that at the September 2025 USC meeting, the Committee conducted its annual Terms of Reference review, reaffirming its mandate for oversight of program development, curriculum changes, program reviews, admissions and

related policy recommendations. He also noted that the Committee reviewed the 2025-2026 USC Workplan which is a flexible guide to support upcoming activities and track submission timelines.

A Member raised a question regarding the sharing and retention of USC materials on the University Secretary website. K. Ayotte clarified that while the matter had been discussed informally at USC, it was not an agenda item. She noted that the University website is not intended to serve as a long-term repository for materials and that archival records beyond five years remain accessible upon request. She confirmed that the Secretariat follows the University's Records and Retention policies and procedures and is considering approaches for requesting archived material.

Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by J. Tam, Agenda Item #9 was moved forward for consideration next on the Agenda, following which Members returned to former Agenda item #7.

7. Graduate Studies Committee

P. Mirza-Babaei reported that the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) met in September 2025 and conducted its annual Terms of Reference review, confirming its role in overseeing the governance of graduate programs, course changes, and policies. He advised that the Committee also reviewed its 2025-2026 GSC Workplan, which is a flexible guide to support upcoming activities and track submission timelines.

8. Governance & Nominations Committee

L. Livingston reported on the Governance & Nominations Committee (GNC) October 2025 meeting, noting that the Committee reviewed its flexible 2025-2026 GNC Workplan and completed its review and recommendations for the 2025-2026 Faculty Council Membership Lists and Faculty Council Vice-Chair nominations. She advised that these processes are now finalized for the year and that the corresponding lists and nominations were included on the Consent Agenda.

9. Research Committee

L. Jacobs reported on several key institutional research achievements. These included the University being chosen as a regional DRIVE technology readiness site by the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN) in partnership with the City of Oshawa and Town of Whitby, supported by \$4.9 million in provincial innovation funding through the Ontario Centre of Innovation to advance technology development and entrepreneurship; creation of a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre; and a four-year renewal of the International Atomic Energy Agency Collaborating Centre, which was now expanded to include AI and cybersecurity; a \$1 million National Cybersecurity Consortium grant awarded to Brilliant Catalyst and its partner to enhance startup supports; and the launch of a new early-career mentorship program by the Women in Research Council, led by Dr. Janette Hughes.

In response to a Member's question regarding the rising costs of the Student Training Assistantships in Research (STAR) Awards, L. Jacobs explained that the change reflects the University's commitment to ensuring students funded in summer research positions earn at least minimum wage. He also noted that as wages rise, supervisor contributions are adjusted accordingly. Through this approach, L. Jacobs reported that participation in summer undergraduate research programs at the university has expanded from approximately twenty (20) to nearly ninety (90) funded students annually.

Responding to additional questions regarding the increase in course release costs for research which appear higher than other universities, L. Jacobs explained that the rate used was based on benchmarking with other research-intensive universities and is consistent with or slightly below comparable universities. He noted that the higher benchmark strengthens faculty grant applications by increasing the value of in-kind institutional support and helps attract external funding. A Member requested consideration be given to incorporating in-kind support and indirect costs into the Budget Approach Strategic Conversation noted for November's AC Meeting.

10. Consent Agenda:

The Chair confirmed that contents of the Consent Agenda were approved and received under Agenda Item# 2 save for Item #'s 10.1, 10.2, and 10.4, respectively.

10.3 For Information from USC* (I):

- i) Bachelor of Arts - Legal Studies - New Pathway with Teesside LLB, Middlesbrough, UK Articulation Agreement* (I)**

10.5 Conferral of Degrees – Fall 2025* (M)

10.6 Faculty Council Vice-Chair Appointments* (M)

10.7 Faculty Council Membership Lists* (M)

Items pulled from Consent Agenda:

10.1 Minutes of the Meeting of September 23, 2025* (M)

Two Members expressed a range of concerns including: the content and format of minutes where they requested more details on discussions from September's AC meeting, such as the School of Ethical Artificial Intelligence (SEAI) item and specific speaker identification in certain instances; as well as, the handling of business arising from outstanding or follow-up items, where they emphasized the importance of tracking and addressing these matters to ensure continuity in decision-making.

N. Crow referred to the comments she made at September's AC meeting regarding minutes' content and format and reiterated that the University Secretary is satisfied that the minutes fulfill expectations as outlined in the Democratic Rules of Order. She again noted that as per the Democratic Rules of Order, minutes should include all major events and motions; and minutes should contain all motions exactly as passed and a very brief description of all major actions. She also noted the Latin derivation for minutes which reflects the concise nature of minutes.

Another Member noted that the extensive discussion on the minutes during meetings detracts from substantive agenda items and suggested consideration be given to a more efficient approach on this issue.

The Chair highlighted the need for Members to clearly identify business arising, distinguishing it from routine agenda items, and emphasised the importance for AC to focus on substantive discussions based on University strategic priorities, while respecting prior governance decisions and processes together with maintaining cohesion as a governing body.

Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby and seconded by L. Banks, the Minutes of the meeting of September 23, 2025 were approved as presented.

One (1) Objection
Three (3) Abstentions

10.2 2025-2026 AC & Committee Workplans* (I)

The Chair noted a point of order as a Member's remarks extended beyond the item under discussion. The Chair emphasized the importance of remaining focused on the Agenda and on AC's defined role as regards particular agenda items.

A Member suggested that the Steering Committee revisit the AC Workplan to include further consultation in the coming months regarding SEAL.

10.4 Cyclical Program Reviews from GSC* (I)

- i) Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Bioscience - Executive Summary, Implementation Plan and Program Learning Outcomes* (I)**
- ii) Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Materials Science - Executive Summary, Implementation Plan and Program Learning Outcomes* (I)**

A Member enquired as to how the Graduate Program Handbooks and supervisor forms are developed and approved. Dean K. Wilson replied that the Faculty of Science (FSci) is developing them internally and will provide updates per the 18-month cyclical program review.

11. Other Business

Members asked a range of questions regarding the policy instrument consultation process and how Academic Council feedback is captured and considered. During the course of the ensuing discussion, N. Crow and J. MacInnis explained the basis of the AC written consultation process as part of the University's Policy Framework and confirmed the means of providing this feedback as AC Members. J. MacInnis also noted that in the context of the Respectful Campus Policy and certain other policies set out in the collective agreement with the Faculty Association, an additional, separate consultation occurs with the Faculty Association, which is a confidential process.

Several Members called for stronger consultation on key policies and expressed a view that many written submissions do not get fully addressed. The Chair and J. MacInnis acknowledged the importance of consultation pathways balanced with associated legal and regulatory parameters and the value of ensuring transparency and meaningful engagement.

The Chair emphasised the importance of ensuring Academic Council's time is focused on the University's most important strategic priorities, which currently is institutional sustainability. A Member also asked for respectful and collegial tone and language during Academic Council meetings. The Chair acknowledged this request and accordingly reiterated and emphasised AC's goal to function collaboratively and from a strategic perspective.

12. Termination

There being no other business, and upon a motion to terminate by S. Nokleby, the AC meeting terminated at 4:13 p.m.

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary