



**ACADEMIC COUNCIL  
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE (USC)**

**Minutes of the Public Session of the October 15, 2024 Meeting  
via Videoconference  
9:02 a.m. – 9:34 a.m.**

**Meeting Materials:**  
[USC – October 15, 2024 Agenda and Materials](#)

**Present:** Mary Bluechardt (Chair), Wendy Barber, K. Clow, Ana Duff, Janet McCabe, Mehdi Hossein Nejad, S. Nokleby, Darryl Papke, Jemma Tam, Adam Wingate,

**Regrets:** Randy Fortier, Tega Ubor

**Staff and Guests:** Kirstie Ayotte (secretary), Jessica Boswell, Nicola Crow, Michelle Heslip, Andrea Kassaris, Kimberley McCartney, Holly McPherson, P. Stoett

**Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:02 am and A. Duff provided the Land Acknowledgement.

**1. Approval of Agenda**

*Upon a motion duly made by A. Duff, and seconded by K. Clow, the Undergraduate Studies Committee approved the Agenda, as presented.*

**2. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of September 17, 2024**

*Upon a motion duly made by J. McCabe and seconded by W. Barber, the Undergraduate Studies Committee approved the September 17, 2024 Minutes, as presented.*

Two abstentions noted.

**3. Business Arising from the Minutes**

None noted

**4. Chair's Remarks**

The Chair began by hoping everyone had a good Thanksgiving long weekend and reflected on a successful start to the Fall semester, including positive feedback from orientation. She thanked volunteers and faculty for their efforts and noted the emergence of new program proposals, which are the key to the Institution's growth.

## 5. New Program Proposal

### 5.1 Faculty of Social Science and Humanities; BA – Sociology, Technology and Innovation

#### **Motion:**

*Upon a Motion duly made by K. Clow and seconded by A. Duff, USC hereby recommends to Academic Council the approval of the Bachelor of Arts – Sociology, Technology and Innovation and the subsequent recommendation of the program to the Board.*

It was clarified that the proposal had not been previously presented to the Undergraduate Studies Committee but was discussed at the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities Faculty Council. During that meeting, and at the suggestion of the Provost, it was decided to rename the program to highlight its complexity and its focus on technology and innovation, aligning with Ontario Tech's priorities.

K. Clow noted that the change aims to highlight innovative aspects, critical thinking and technology components of the sociology program, which were not previously showcased, especially in its applied sociology specialization.

Regarding concerns about the Fall 2025 start date, P. Stoett stated that full Ministry approval and funding are unlikely by then, but a soft launch may allow current students to transition into the program. A full launch, with appropriate advertising, is more likely for 2026.

P. Stoett acknowledged that while the program doesn't currently include access to technology and innovation courses outside the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities (FSSH), students could explore electives from other faculties.

In response to a concern raised regarding the creation of new programs without upfront investment, P. Stoett explained that the Criminology program is currently underutilized due to a decline in student numbers. Many professors in the program have sociology degrees, allowing the faculty to develop the new sociology program quickly without needing additional expertise.

While investment is important for long-term growth, he believes the current staff is well-equipped to handle the new program and doesn't foresee significant staffing concerns unless the program becomes more popular than expected.

## 6. For Information

### 6.1 Revisions to the 2024-2025 Undergraduate Academic Schedule

In addition to the revisions presented, several Committee members requested a review of the Orientation schedule, which coincides with the Labour Day long weekend, placing a strain on employees and their families and potentially deterring attendees. The Chair agreed to present these concerns to the Provost for consideration. A. Wingate noted that schedules are currently planned in draft form through 2028, based on a rollover from the previous year, and any



changes would need careful consideration to ensure the University maintains the appropriate number of instructional days.

In response to concerns about exam scheduling conflicts with major events, A. Wingate acknowledged the issue, noting that large events are typically planned in advance, which allows for proper notification of their dates. Some conflicts may arise unexpectedly, he expressed a willingness to collaborate and provide advance notice for significant events to help avoid scheduling problems. Additionally, he mentioned that the scheduling team has met to discuss booking and confirming midterm schedules earlier than in previous years.

## **6.2 2024-2025 Draft USC Work Plan**

### **6.3 Minor Curricular Change**

**[KINE 1030U](#)**

## **10. Volunteer for November Land Acknowledgement**

R. Fortier volunteered to provide the November meeting's Land Acknowledgement

## **11. Termination**

*Upon a motion duly made by S. Nokleby, the October 15, 2024 USC meeting adjourned at 9:34 a.m.*

**Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary**