



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SENATE

October 17, 2025

The meeting was held at 1:35 at the Great Hall, Somerville House.

SENATORS:

Y. Al-Ani	M. Green-Barteet	P. Pexman
A. Ali	R. Gros	T. Rajan
J. Antonelli	N. Harney	R. Ramachandran
A. Awawdeh	J. Herrera	S. Roland
K. Backtash	A. Hearn	J. Redden
C. Barteet	B. Hill	B. Rubin
G. Beckett	M. Joanisse	S. Schmid
B. Begg	M. Khimji	L. Shahin
K. Big-Canoe	H. Kirk	A. Shepard
J. Birkinshaw	D. Kotsopoulos	S. Sibbald
S. Boe	S. Knabe	K. Siddiqui
A. Bryson	T. Layton	N. Silvester
N. Campbell	H. Li	D. Smith
K. Choi	M. Lebo	M. Stahl
C. Chung	L. Logan	F. Strzelczyk
K. Coley	B. Lovie	J. Walsh
L. Davis	A. Lukawski	X. Wang
M. Davison	T. Mantler	L. Weller
M. El-Sakka	M. Mills	J.H. Wright
D. Ferri	M. Modeski	K. Yeung
R. Forrester-Jones	Z. Nadeem	N. Zabian
R. Gillis	D. Neufeld	
J. Gemson	A. Nocilla	
C. Giannacopoulos	V. Parsa	
L. Graham	I. Paul	
L. M. Gribble	A. Pero	

Observers:

C. Bressette, R. Chelladurai, S. Hayne Beatty, S. Hendrixx,
K. Henricus, J. Hutter, S. Lewis, E. Marshall, M. McGlynn,
V. Sarkany, M. Yenson

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A. Ali offered a Land Acknowledgement.

MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING

ITEM 2.0 – Minutes of the Meeting of September 19, 2025

A. Bryson, University Secretary, advised Senate on a correction to the meeting Minutes with respect to the report of the Nominating Committee, amending that Laura Melnyk Gribble was acclaimed to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA) for a term ending June 30, 2027.

It was moved by R. Gros, seconded by P. Pexman,

That the minutes of the meeting of September 19, 2025, be approved as amended.

CARRIED

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

In addition to the written report provided in advance of the meeting, A. Shepard, President & Vice-Chancellor, opened his verbal remarks by highlighting the success of Peter Howitt, Western graduate, and former and honorary professor, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics.

A. Shepard continued his report with information on the upcoming Fall Open House, an event for prospective students taking place on November 16, and expressed his appreciation to the students, faculty, and staff who volunteer their time and support.

Additionally, the President provided an overview highlighting EDID Awareness Month at Western and current government relations, with attention to the forthcoming federal budget and its potential impacts for the University.

A. Shepard concluded his report commenting on the launch of Western's new All-In fundraising campaign.

REPORT OF THE PROVOST

In addition to the written report provided in advance of the meeting, F. Strzelczyk, Provost & Vice-President (Academic), reported that Western and Navitas have signed an agreement to establish Western International College, which will be located on the University's west campus (formerly Brescia).

F. Strzelczyk continued her report with a presentation on teaching and learning strategic action areas and advised Senators on ways to engage in these initiatives.

F. Strzelczyk concluded her report announcing that the nominations are open for both the Distinguished University Professors and the Faculty Scholars Awards and are being solicited

by the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Planning, Policy & Faculty).

REPORT OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT (RESEARCH)

In addition to the pre-circulated report, P. Pexman, Vice-President (Research) presented a brief update on recent initiatives and projects under her portfolio, highlighting the importance of application pressure as a factor contributing to successful research grant outcomes.

Additionally, P. Pexman commented on the progress achieved within the Horizon Europe granting program, noting the first results are expected in spring 2026.

P. Pexman concluded her report by acknowledging the outstanding achievements of Western's researchers and thanked members of the Western community whose contributions helped move nominations and applications forward.

REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS / AGENDA COMMITTEE (OAC)

On behalf of the Operations/Agenda Committee (OAC), S. Roland presented the report of the Committee.

ITEM 6.1 – Revisions to the Terms of Reference of the Senate Committee on University Planning (SCUP)

It was moved by S. Roland,

That on the recommendation of the Operations/Agenda Committee, Senate approve that effective October 17, 2025, the terms of reference of the Senate Committee on University Planning be revised as shown in Item 6.1.

CARRIED

ITEM 6.2 – Questions for Senate

S. Roland presented the Chair's report on the questions for Senate received by OAC in advance, in accordance with the process established in the Adopted Policies and Procedures. She advised Senate that questions routed to Senate will be addressed at the Question Period and those questions that were not forwarded to Senate were identified as being addressed by the appropriate unit, as outlined in the report.

REPORT OF THE SENATE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Senate Nominating Committee, A. Nocilla (Vice-Chair) provided the Nominating Committee report.

ITEM 7.1 – Membership – Operations/Agenda Committee (OAC)

Susanne Schmid was acclaimed to the Operations/Agenda committee as a Senate member for a term ending June 30, 2026.

ITEM 7.2 – Membership – Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA)

No nominations were received for the vacant positions on the SRBA.

ITEM 7.3 – Membership – Selection/Review Committee for Associate Vice-Presidents (Research)

Kate Choi, Amanda Grzyb and Dale Laird were acclaimed to the Selection/Review Committee for Associate Vice-Presidents (Research).

There were two nominations from the floor of Senate for the student seat on the Committee. Only one student confirmed their nomination. Jack Webb was acclaimed to the Selection/Review Committee for Associate Vice-Presidents (Research).

REPORT OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC POLICY

On behalf of the Senate Committee on Academic Policy, K. Yeung presented the Policy report.

ITEM 8.1 – Implementation of the Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs

S. Lewis, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs), provided a presentation on the implementation of the “Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs” with a review of data from the 2024- 2025 Fall/Winter Term. She highlighted the key differences between the previous policy, discussed the impact of the changes, and provided an update on the implementation of the new central portal for managing requests. S. Lewis noted that since the introduction of the new policy, there has been a reduction in the overall number of approved requests, although the volume of requests coming forward remains high.

S. Lewis addressed a question of clarification from a Senator, commenting on the distinctions between accommodations provided through Accessible Education and the short-term or unexpected circumstances that are managed under the Policy on Academic Consideration.

In response to a question regarding the denied requests and the role of faculty instructors in reviewing and granting academic consideration requests, S. Lewis advised on the roles of instructors and academic advisors in the academic consideration approval process.

Additionally, S. Lewis advised on the steps that have been taken to ensure the consistent and fair implementation of the new process across all Faculties and commented on the cases in which students may submit multiple requests, explaining how these are monitored and tracked.

REPORT OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC CURRICULUM AND AWARDS

On behalf of ACA, A. Johnson presented the report of the Committee.

ITEM 9.1 – School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Introduction of a Collaborative Specialization in Mental Health and Addictions Research

It was moved by R. Gros, seconded by S. Schmid,

That on the recommendation of ACA, Senate approve that effective September 1, 2025, a Collaborative Specialization in Mental Health and Addictions Research be introduced as shown in Item 9.1.

CARRIED

ITEM 9.2 – Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry: Revisions to the Policy on “Progression Requirements – MD Program”

It was moved by R. Ramachandran, seconded by B. Rubin,

That on the recommendation of ACA, Senate approve that effective September 1, 2025, the policy on "Progression Requirements – MD Program" be revised as shown in Item 9.2.

CARRIED

REPORT OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY PLANNING

On behalf of SCUP, S. Schmid presented the report of the Committee.

ITEM 10.1 – Update on University Budget Planning Process

F. Strzelczyk, Provost & Vice-President (Academic), provided a verbal update on the budget planning process, noting that this year marks the conclusion of the three-year budget cycle. The Provost advised that the next budget cycle will be a two-year planning period, reflecting the overall financial constraints and declining revenues that are expected to continue for the next two years.

In response to a question regarding revenue sharing, F. Strzelczyk clarified how the growth in teaching could be measured in terms of the number of majors and overall enrollment numbers.

Ruban Chelladurai, Associate Vice-President (Institutional Planning & Budgeting), responded to a question concerning the policy of guaranteeing courses for first-year students, providing an explanation of how the University ensures this commitment is fulfilled.

REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH BOARD (URB)

On behalf of the University Research Board (URB), P. Pexman presented a summary of the URB's recent activities and discussions at its first 2025-26 meeting, including an update on

core research facilities and the establishment of an agreement for sharing access to core research facilities between Western University and McMaster University.

Additionally, P. Pexman commented on the two new Indigenous allyship guides that Western has launched.

Academic Colleague Report

The written report was provided as part of the agenda for the meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

REPORT FROM THE OPERATIONS/AGENDA COMMITTEE (OAC)

Information Items Reported by OAC on Unanimous Consent:

- Revisions to the Terms of Reference of the University Research Board (URB)
- Appointment of Officers of Convocation
- Senate Membership – Vacancies Filled by Appointment

REPORT FROM THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC CURRICULUM AND AWARDS (ACA)

ITEM 13.2(a)(i) – School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Major Modification to the Master of Arts (MA) in Classics

It was moved by K. Yeung seconded by P. Pexman,

That on the recommendation of ACA, Senate approve that effective January 1, 2026, the Master of Arts (MA) in Classics, be revised as shown in Item 13.2(a)(i).

CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

ITEM 13.2(a)(ii) – School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Major Modification to the Master of Engineering (MEng) in Electrical and Computer Engineering

It was moved by K. Yeung seconded by P. Pexman,

That on the recommendation of ACA, Senate approve that effective January 1, 2026, the Master of Engineering (MEng) in Electrical and Computer Engineering be revised as shown in Item 13.2(a)(ii).

CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

ITEM 13.2(a)(iii) – School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Major Modification to the Master of Science (MSc) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

It was moved by K. Yeung seconded by P. Pexman,

That on the recommendation of ACA, Senate approve that effective September 1, 2025, the Master of Science (MSc) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine be revised as shown in Item 13.2(a)(iii).

CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

ITEM 13.2(a)(iv) – School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Major Modification to the Master of Environment and Sustainability (MES)

It was moved by K. Yeung seconded by P. Pexman,

That on the recommendation of ACA, Senate approve that effective September 1, 2025, the Master of Environment and Sustainability (MES) be revised as shown in Item 13.2(a)(iv).

CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Information Items Reported by ACA on Unanimous Consent:

- ITEM 13.2(b) – Report of the Subcommittee on Program Review – Undergraduate (SUPR-U): Cyclical Reviews of the Undergraduate Programs in Economics (Huron University College), Management and Organizational Studies (Huron University College), and French (King's University College)
- ITEM 13.2(c) – New Donor-Funded Scholarships, Awards and Prizes

REPORT FROM THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY PLANNING

Information Items Reported by SCUP on Unanimous Consent:

- ITEM 13.3(a) – McIntosh Gallery Annual Report

QUESTION PERIOD

Question related to the Western International College location

In response to a question regarding the Western International College location, F. Strzelczyk commented on the decision-making process and advised that the west campus is planned to be used as a space for extended student support, which will also include Western Continuing Studies and the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Programs).

Additionally, the Provost indicated that the west campus could effectively accommodate small-sized classes for the Western International College.

In response to a follow up question, the Provost confirmed that the main Programs involved in the Western International College were consulted.

Question related to Essay Courses

S. Lewis addressed a question regarding plans to review the criteria for essay courses as outlined in the Policy on “Course Numbering Policy, Essay Courses, and Hours of Instruction”, particularly considering growing concerns about AI (Appendix A). S. Lewis commented that steps have been taken to address the concerns raised and provided remarks on future plans to enhance the teaching and learning experience, emphasizing that this work is within the purview of the Senate Committee on Academic Policy.

Question related to Western’s emergency communication system

Bill Chantler, Director, Campus Safety & Emergency Services, provided a detailed report on the incident that occurred on August 25, 2025, at Weldon Library, outlining the circumstances and immediate measures taken in response to ensure safety of the broader campus community. He also commented on the emergency protocol that was followed and provided observations on its effectiveness. Additionally, B. Chantler commented on the challenges that were identified during the incident and stated that measures will be implemented to address them.

Question regarding minimum class size requirements for graduate programs

In response to a question regarding minimum class size requirements, F. Strzelczyk clarified that currently the Curriculum Planning Framework does not pertain to graduate courses as it was designed primarily for undergraduate program planning, acknowledging the distinct nature of graduate classes.

Question regarding transcript release fees for graduate students

Marisa Modeski, University Registrar, stated that submission of an up-to-date transcript is an official requirement of the Tri-Agency scholarship application process. The fees are associated with the service provided by MyCreds, Canada’s official digital credential platform, managed by the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC).

Discussion regarding financial pressures and the quality of higher education

A Senator proposed a discussion, focusing on how financial pressures may affect the quality of higher education, including resource allocation, student experience, and the implications of AI use on assessment and learning outcomes. The Provost commented on the financial challenges facing the higher education sector across the country, including the large budget deficits at some U6 institutions. Additionally, she noted that Faculties are reshaping and restructuring their budgets to address these challenges.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Notice of Motion

M. Green-Barteet presented the following Notice of Motion:

Whereas, the University of Western Ontario Act (1982, amended 1988) states that Senate may “pass resolutions and make recommendations to the Board with respect to any matter connected with the administration of the University and the promotion of its affairs but this clause shall not be construed to subtract from the powers and duties conferred on the Board.”

Whereas, Western University became a signatory to the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investing (UNPRI) on 19th December 2023, in which Principle 1 states: “We (the signatory) will incorporate Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) issues into investment analysis and decision-making processes.”

Whereas, Western University’s own Official Responsible Investing Beliefs state: “A Responsible Investing approach and consideration of ESG issues can enhance long-term performance” & “Responsible Investing (RI) is a journey that requires continuous learning, innovation, and a dynamic and adaptive approach.”

Whereas, On 2nd May 2024, the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights presented a report “urging investors to integrate human rights considerations into their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and sustainability approaches, to align them with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.”

Whereas, Western maintains investments in weapons manufacturers and corporations complicit with international illegal occupations, such as Lockheed Martin, a company explicitly condemned by UN experts as of 2024 for arming groups that may be complicit in crimes against humanity.

Whereas the United Nations and International Labour Organization’s (ILO) evidence of forced labour and resource exploitation, requires robust investor due diligence to avoid complicity.

Whereas, Section 7.6 (Divestment) of Policy 2.26 states: “Divestment will be considered where engagement has failed or is not feasible.”

Whereas, on December 4, 2024, Western University’s Student Council (USC), on January 30, 2025, the Western Universities’ Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) and on May 22, 2025, Western University’s Faculty Association (UWOFA) passed motions urging Western University to implement human rights considerations into its responsible investing policy and to divest from weapons manufacturers and companies that engage in or are complicit in human rights abuses.

Whereas, Western University actioned divestment from corporations complicit with the South African Apartheid Regime, after the President’s Advisory Committee published its

Whereas, The Senate of Western University passed a motion on 16th May 2008 to provide advice to the Board of Governors, through the President & Vice-Chancellor that the Board of Governors divest and remain divested from companies complicit with the Sudanese government in response to the Darfur Genocide.

Whereas Western University currently lacks a holistic and comprehensive human-rights investment policy that applies across contexts, beyond conflict-specific precedents.

Be it resolved that, the Senate of Western University discuss the issue of Responsible Investing & Human Rights at the November 2025 senate meeting with the intent of referring a recommendation to the Board of Governors on this issue, and, that the President and the Vice-Chancellor be charged with the task of presenting the opinion of the Senate to the Board of Governors at the February 2026 Board of Governors meeting.

In accordance with Senate's rules of order, the Chair noted that the notice would be referred to the Operations/Agenda Committee for consideration at its October 29 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:28 p.m.

A. Shepard
Chair

A. Bryson
University Secretary

Essay Courses (Undergraduate Degrees)

The guidelines for the minimum written assignments refer to the cumulative amount of written work in a course.

An essay course must normally involve total written assignments (i.e., essays or other appropriate prose composition) as follows:

Full course (1000 to 1999):	at least 3000 words
Half course (1000 to 1999):	at least 1500 words
Full course (2000 and above):	at least 5000 words
Half course (2000 and above):	at least 2500 words

and must be so structured that the student is required to demonstrate competence in essay writing to pass the course.

Essay Courses (Undergraduate Degrees)

Depending on the course, the language of the essay may be English, French, or any of the foreign languages, but artificial and/or machine languages do not meet this requirement.