



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SENATE

October 14, 2022

The meeting was held at 1:30 p.m. in Room 1R40, Arts & Humanities Building.

SENATORS:

M. Adler	A. Hodgson	A. Pyati
G. Arku	S. Hodgson	A. Robin
K. Arora	M. Joannis	C. Robinson
P. Barmby	E. Kalaydjian	S. Roland
A. Baxter	K. Kirkwood	B. Rubin
M. Bordignon	D. Kotsopoulos	H. Samson
C. Burucúa	J. Lacefield	M. Sanita Lima
E. Chamberlain	Y. Laforet-Fliesser	G. Santos
K. Choi	D. Laird	J. Schermer
M. Cleveland	J. Langille	A. Schuurman
K. Coley	L. Latif	A. Shepard
S. Constas	L. Lewis	Z. Sinel
M. Davison	C. Marshall	D. Smith
G. De Viveiros	M. Milde	C. Steeves
R. DeKoter	L. Miller	F. Strzelczyk
D. Ferri	S. Morrison	J. Sutton
A. Fremeth	I. Namukasa	J. Toswell
J. Garland	B. Neff	R. Ventresca
A. Haque	A. Nelson	J. Watson
L. Henderson	T. Orchard	J. Welch
K. Henricus	M. Patel	S. Whitehead
R. Heydon	S. Powell	

Observers: C. Bressette, J. Doerksen, K. Dufresne, E. Gardner, R. Isard,
S. Lewis, M. McGlynn, O. Oloya, H. Perinpanayagam, N. Narani

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

J. Watson offered a Land Acknowledgement.

The President noted that the Office of Indigenous Initiatives released a new brochure which aims to recruit Indigenous students and their families to Western University.

S.22-228 **MINUTES OF PRIOR MEETING**

It was moved by M. Milde, seconded by S. Roland,

That the minutes of the meeting of September 16, 2022, be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

S.22-229 **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

F. Strzelczyk, Provost and Vice-President (Academic), provided an update on faculty hires and ongoing leadership searches in the academic portfolio. The presentation is attached to the minutes as Appendix "A".

Additionally, she expressed gratitude to leaders who continue to serve and provided a short overview of some upcoming hiring and some searches in progress. The Provost commented on the number of hired positions and added that it includes different types of hires.

In response to the concern regarding hiring with a limited term, the difference between limited term and limited duty was noted. Limited duty hires are not included in the compiled data

In response to a question about the use of PARF-style hiring in the future and particularly regarding the centralized approach without devolving through the Faculty, F. Strzelczyk shared that a decision has not yet been made and she will let Senators know once decided.

A Senator admitted there were concerns previously expressed about the centralized approach to hiring without sufficiently involving the Faculties and departments in timely ways. Responding to that question, the Provost confirmed that they are reviewing the policy, and feedback will be provided as soon as it is finalized.

A Senator expressed concern with a lack of individuals from other equity-seeking groups, including disability and LGBTQIA2S+, and highlighted the Indigenous equity-seeking group. The Senator requested information regarding the male/female ratio in the upcoming report.

S.22-230 **REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

The Report of the President, distributed with the agenda, contained information on the following topics: Western Academy for Advanced Research, new scholarships for Black and Indigenous students, minor in Black studies, Western Heads East, recent accolades, and Leadership update.

The President additionally commented on the following items:

- Details of the meeting with Paul Davenport, the ninth president of Western
- Upcoming in-person convocation for 2022 graduates
- Launching of the Memegwaanh Indigenous Learning Honour
- Introduction of John Doerksen, appointed Vice-Provost (Students)
- Introduction of Bryan Neff, appointed Acting Vice-President (Research)

In addition, the President welcomed Senate to attend the Hanny and Najet Hassan Lecture by Dr. Oludamini Ogunnaike at Conron Hall, University College following Senate.

REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS / AGENDA COMMITTEE

S.22-231 ITEM 5.1 – Nominating Committee Membership

Matheus Sanita Lima was nominated from the floor of Senate and was acclaimed to the Nominating Committee as a graduate student member of Senate for a term from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

Margi Patel was nominated from the floor of Senate and was acclaimed to the Nominating Committee as an Alternate student member of Senate for a term from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

S.22-232 ITEM 6.1 Membership – Selection Committee for the Vice-Provost (Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies)

Matt Davison was acclaimed to the Selection Committee for the Vice-Provost (Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies) as a Dean.

Yousuf Hasan was acclaimed to the Selection Committee for the Vice-Provost (Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies) as a graduate student

Janis Cardy, Lorraine Davies, and Jayshri Sabarinathan were nominated by the Nominating Committee and Christopher Alcantara was nominated from the floor of Senate to the Selection Committee for the Vice-Provost (Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies). An election was held following the Senate meeting and Janis Cardy, Lorraine Davies, and Jayshri Sabarinathan were elected to the Selection Committee for the Vice-Provost (Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies).

S.22-233 ITEM 6.2 – Membership – Electoral Board for Chancellor

Godwin Arku, Laretta Frederking, Donna Kotsopoulos, Gildo Santos, and Shawn Whitehead were acclaimed to the Electoral Board for Chancellor.

S.22-234 ITEM 6.3 – Membership – Operations/Agenda Committee (OAC)

Matheus Sanita Lima was acclaimed to the Operations/Agenda Committee as a student

Senator for a term to June 30, 2023.

S.22-235 **ITEM 6.3 – Membership – Senate Committee on Academic Curriculum and Awards (ACA)**

Kristi MacDonald was acclaimed to the Senate Committee on Academic Curriculum and Awards as a graduate student for a term from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

S.22-236 **ITEM 6.5 – Membership – Subcommittee on Western Approved Micro-credentials (SWAM)**

Emmanuel Akanbi was acclaimed to the Subcommittee on Western Approved Micro-credentials as an undergraduate student for a term from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

REPORT OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC POLICY

S.22-237 **ITEM 7.1 – Draft Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs**

M. Milde presented a new draft Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences for discussion. The new policy will provide a mechanism to alleviate the process of obtaining medical notes or compassionate documentation in case of short-term absences.

M. Milde noted the need for a diversity of views on this matter and provided a short background to the discussion. He pointed out that the process would ensure wide consultation and transparency for the new policy.

M. Milde invited S. Lewis to outline the main paths of the new approach for this draft policy. She focused attention on the critical shifts from a former policy around a self-reported absence to a newly declared absence without documentation which includes a “one per course” model rather than all courses within a 48-hour period. This was suggested to provide professors with flexibility in the assessment process.

Senators submitted questions in advance of the meeting, the full text of which are included in the Agenda. Questions and concerns raised mainly centered on the following:

- Additional workload imposed on faculty and staff in managing undocumented absences, particularly by permitting one per course, which gives rise to a significant increase in email among faculty, students and staff, and requires the creation of additional assessments (exams, quizzes, etc.)
- Seeking more specifics regarding what assessments could be exempt and why
- Uneven impact on those who teach large classes versus small and on half versus full year courses
- Impact on exam schedules and space limitations to administer multiple assessments
- Impact on students in group work assessments

S. Lewis reported that the main concerns were around the faculty agency and the workload. In addition, she raised a concern regarding the challenges that students may face in obtaining medical documentation.

The discussion included consideration of the workload and pedagogical issues concerning the draft policy. M. Milde noted the Committee did discuss both issues and it attempted to mitigate the workload while saving good pedagogical results.

A Senator raised a concern regarding the work of faculty with the specific practice of group projects and provided examples where absence could affect many people rather than one student with a declared absence without documentation.

M. Milde advised that the new policy has gone through a broad consultation process and the Committee is still reviewing those suggestions.

A Senator, on behalf of students, suggested a practice to override the workload concerns by providing students with a 48-hour grace period for assessments without reporting the absence.

A Senator raised ethical concerns as this policy suggests only one absence per course, but in case of illness, it seems impossible to be able to do the other work in that period. Regarding this concern, it was suggested that the new policy could be used by students as an opportunity to manage their workload.

Senators highlighted the administrative and organizational challenges undocumented absences create.

Concerns were expressed regarding teaching students professionalism in meeting deadlines, a perceived rise in absenteeism and reputation issues for the University.

Faculty member Senators pointed out that in addition to the volume of extra work imposed on individual faculty members, pedagogical issues were also significant. There would be a perverse incentive for faculty members to make it harder for students to use DAWDs or to arrange courses so as to reduce the number of total assignments, thereby reducing the amount of upheaval in the course. Others suggested that the problem with medical certificates could be overcome with the addition of more physicians or nurse practitioners, or even with the use of attestations, the legal force of which would mean that students submitting an improper attestation would face Code of Conduct violations if this were discovered.

Several student Senators drew Senate's attention to the fact that the policy might help undergraduate students, who may have a lack of life experience with the transition to becoming university students.

The President concluded the discussion by encouraging senators to send any follow up questions and suggestions on this matter to M. Milde. He noted that he would want to see a redraft brought forward to a Senate meeting for further discussion, with a vote only in an ensuing meeting.

REPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH BOARD

S.22-238 **ITEM 10.0 – Announcement of a Vice-Chair of the University Research Board**

B. Neff announced the Vice-Chair of the University Research Board, Oana Branzei, for a term from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

B. Neff presented a short verbal report about ongoing research and funding activities at Western over the past few months.

A Senator asked the Senate to express appreciation to Lesley Rigg, previous Vice-President (Research). On behalf of the Senate, A. Shepard noted that he had extended his appreciation to Lesley Rigg for her successful work at Western on numerous occasions.

S.22-239 **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

REPORT FROM THE OPERATIONS / AGENDA COMMITTEE

S.22-240 **ITEM 12.1(a) – Revisions to the Senate Election Procedures**

It was moved by M. Davison, seconded by D. Kotsopoulos,

That on the recommendation of OAC, Senate approve that effective October 14, 2022, the Senate Election Procedures be revised as shown in Item 12.1(a).

CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

REPORT FROM THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC CURRICULUM AND AWARDS

S.22-241 **ITEM 12.2(a)(i) School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Revisions to the Master of Engineering Science (MESc) and PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering**

It was moved by M. Davison, seconded by D. Kotsopoulos,

That on the recommendation of ACA, Senate approve that effective September 1, 2023, the Master of Engineering Science (MESc) and PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering be revised as shown in Item 12.2(a)(i).

CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

S.22-242 **ITEM 12.2(a)(ii) – School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Revisions to the Master of Environment and Sustainability (MES)**

It was moved by M. Davison, seconded by D. Kotsopoulos,

That on the recommendation of ACA, Senate approve that effective September 1,

2022, the Master of Environment and Sustainability (MES) be revised as shown in Item 12.2(a)(ii).

CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

S.22-243 **Information Items Reported by the Senate Committee on Academic Curriculum and Awards**

The following items reported by the Senate Committee on Academic Curriculum and Awards were received for information by unanimous consent:

- ITEM 12.2(b) – Revisions to the Terms of Reference of the Subcommittee for Western Approved Micro-credentials (SWAM)
- ITEM 12.2(c) – Annual Report of the Subcommittee for Western Approved Micro-credentials (SWAM)
- ITEM 12.2(d) – Faculty-Specific Undergraduate Sessional Dates (2022-23)
- ITEM 12.2(e) – New Scholarships, Awards and Prizes

S.22-244 **Information Items Reported by the Senate Honorary Degree Committee**

The following item was reported by the Senate Honorary Degree Committee:

- ITEM 12.3(a) – Honorary Degree Recipients- Autumn 2022

S.22-245 **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

The following item reported through Announcements and Communications was received for information by unanimous consent:

- ITEM 12.4(a) – Election Results – Senate Committees and Selection Committee for the Vice-President (Research)

S.22-246 **DISCUSSION AND QUESTION PERIOD**

The full text of questions submitted in advance of the meeting were posted in the Agenda at Item 14.0 prior to the meeting. Those questions submitted in advance were addressed through the discussion at Item 7.1. Additional questions and responses are summarized below.

As November 1, 2022 is the lock day for enrollment, a Senator asked if updates on the enrollment could be provided at the next Senate meeting. She was specifically interested in the averages of the first-year entrance group: international, domestic, male, and female.

A. Shepard highlighted the success that the University had in enrollment for September. The President noted that an update regarding enrollment would be provided.

A Senator asked if the President planned to provide an update on the vaccination policies. A. Shepard noted that changes to the policy would be implemented based on the guidance of

public health officials and they are getting close to a decision.

In follow-up, a Senator asked whether there had been progress with the mask policy.

A. Shepard responded that the administration is reviewing its options by involving many professionals from medical faculty, public health, and student health services, but there is no firm decision yet.

A Senator provided information regarding a generous donation made at the last football game.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

A. Shepard
Chair

A. Bryson
University Secretary