



The Senate of York University – Minutes

Meeting: Thursday, December 11, 2025, 2:30 pm
Via Zoom

L. Sergio (Chair)	M. Giudice	A. Maxwell	T. Tasnim
P. Burke-Wood (Vice-Chair)	A. Glasbeek	K. McPherson	T. Taylor
S. Willey-Thomas (Secretary)	J. Goodyer	B. Meisner	P. Theophanidis
G. Alboiu	K. Gray	A. Moradi	J. Thienpont
O. Alexandrakis	R. Green	M. Morrow	N. Timotewos
M. Baljko	M. Hamadeh	Y. Munro	J. Trevett
L. Bay-Cheng	E. Hamm	Y. Murugarajan	S. Trivedi
S. Benmahbous	M. Herbert	R. Nasrazadani	R. Tsushima
D. Berbecel	R. Hili	O. Olofe	E. Tungohan
M. Biehl	S. Hillier	R. Ophir	A. Valeo
S. Blake	W-M. Ho	A. Ouedraogo	C. van Daalen-Smith
S. Brooke	A. Horkova	P. Park	J. van Wijngaarden
M. Bunch	T. Kelly	S. Peacock	B. Vickerd
C. Burton	R. Kenedy	E. Perkins	V. Vuong
S. Bury	A. Kimakova	D. Peters	R. Wellen
A. Chinael	T. Kirchner	S. Pisana	B. Weobong
E. Clements	N. Kishinchandani	M. Podolsky	R. Whiston
N. Couto	T. Kubiseski	M. Poirier	M. Winfield
C. Cowdy	M. Lambert-Drache	S. Rehaag	S. Winton
A. Czekanski	F. Latchford	T. Remmel	
S. Datta	R. Lenton	N. Ruest	
A. Dawson	M. Longford	P. Safai	
S. Day	P. Luthra	C. Sánchez-Rodríguez	
J. Eastwood	P. Lynch	R. Savage	
D. Ellis	W. Maas	S. Scialdone	
C-E. Enete	M. Macaulay	T. Shanahan	
T. Farrow	A. MacLachlan	A. Solis	
M. Fiola	A. Mapp	B. Spotton Visano	
S. Gajic-Bruyea	N. Martineau	J. Sufrin	

1. Chair’s Remarks

The Chair welcomed Senators to the 723rd meeting of Senate and thanked the President for her service to the University and highlighted the President’s accomplishments. The Vice-Chair in turn thanked the Chair for her service and commitment to good governance.

Two appendices inadvertently overlooked for the Executive Committee report were added to the updated agenda package posted in advance of the meeting.

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The Chair addressed a question from the November meeting regarding the decision to move from an in-person to a virtual meeting due to a disruption. Senate Executive reaffirmed the established practice of shifting to virtual format when circumstances disrupt proceedings or create an unsafe environment. The decision in November was made in response to a Senator reporting to the Chair feeling unsafe in the Chamber.

As no requests were received to remove the item from the consent agenda, it was deemed approved.

2. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

3. Inquiries and Communications

a. Report of the Academic Colleague to COU

The report from the Academic Colleague to the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) was received for information.

b. Senators on the Board of Governors: 1 December 2025 Meeting of the Board

Senator Jennifer van Wijngaarden reported that the December 1 Board meeting included a closed-session discussion on the Principles for the Presidential Search. She noted that the Senate Chair's memo regarding the Senate's recommendation was reviewed by the Board Chair, and matters considered by committees before reaching the full Board. It was noted that there was a discussion by the full Board in closed session, presenting concerns raised within Senate on both sides of the issue. Senator van Wijngaarden confirmed that the memo from the Board Chair was an accurate reflection of the Board's discussion.

In the subsequent Senate discussion, concerns were raised about governance and process. Some Senators questioned why the Senate motion, passed with a two-thirds majority, did not appear on the Board's agenda and was not subject to an open vote. Senators expressed concerns that: a decision that was reached by consensus in closed session does not replace a vote in open session; a lack of transparency and documentation, noting that the rationale provided for the closed session decision appeared insufficient and did not consider Senate's compromise proposal for the change to the Principles; and reporting of the discussion under approvals in the Board synopsis.

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Concerns were expressed about the implications for trust between Senate and the Board, with calls for improved communication, respect for established governance procedures for proposed revisions to the shared Board-Senate Principles, and to find ways to improve the working relationship, particularly given reputational and financial challenges facing higher education. Some Senators suggested a formal request for reconsideration, however, the Chair indicated that she would express concerns back to the Board.

4. President's Items

The President delivered her final Senate presentation, outlining major external and internal challenges and opportunities for the University. She emphasized the provincial government's focus on efficiency, limited funding prospects, and the uncertainty surrounding future grants and tuition increases. Broader trends were highlighted, including demographic shifts, global economic changes, and the impact of AI on education. She stressed the need for universities to lead conversations in a number of areas, including new funding models, governance structures, and flexible learning approaches, while maintaining York's commitment to innovation and interdisciplinarity. Updates were provided on the YorkU Forward Action Plan and Efficiency and Accountability Fund review, including key themes and forthcoming website content. Despite financial pressures, she concluded by highlighting York's positive enrolment trajectory and history of doing things differently and driving change.

The subsequent discussion included questions about the implications of Bill 33 for admissions and student services, with concerns voiced about government-defined merit and ancillary fees. The President confirmed advocacy efforts through COU in opposition to the Bill, and noted that strategies around implementation are forthcoming. Questions also focused on internal budget models, the "Faculties of the Future" proposal, and how collegial governance processes. The President reassured that any structural changes would follow governance processes and cautioned that revisions to the SHARP budget model would not resolve the overall funding gap. The discussion closed with concerns about transparency and student involvement in decisions affecting services and fees.

5. Executive Committee

- a. Nomination and Selection Guidelines for Designating Senate's Nominees for the Next Presidential Search Committee

The Vice-Chair spoke to the recommendation for the proposed groupings of Faculties to guide the nomination of full-time faculty members to the Presidential Search Committee. Senate Executive had an extended discussion on how to balance

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representation across faculties given differences in size and number. The proposed grouping model was presented as the best available option, acknowledging that perfect proportional representation was not possible. Senate Executive will act as the nominating committee in this exercise and apply Senate's nomination guidelines, including equity and diversity considerations.

During the discussion, concerns were raised about the academic rationale for the proposed groupings. Suggestions included reconsidering alignments such as grouping Glendon with Liberal Arts and Professional Studies and pairing Health with Science rather than professional faculties. A Senator asked why only full-time faculty were eligible, and for the rationale to be recorded. It was clarified that eligibility reflects established principles for presidential searches and confirmed that comments would be documented.

It was seconded and *carried* that **Senate approve the following grouping of Faculties for the purpose of nominating four of the full-time faculty members to the next Presidential Search Committee, supplemented by one at-large full-time faculty member to fill the full complement of five full-time faculty members to be elected to the Presidential Search committee:**

- **Group A: Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (35% of complement; 1 nominee)**
- **Group B: Science / Lassonde (22% of complement; 1 nominee)**
- **Group C: Osgoode / Schulich / Health (23% of complement; 1 nominee)**
- **Group D: Arts, Media, Performance and Design / Education / Environmental & Urban Change / Glendon / Librarians (20% of complement; 1 nominee)**
- **Group E: At-large full-time faculty member (1 nominee)**

b. Information Items included:

- An update on the status of the revision to the *Principles Governing a Presidential Search* (the Principles) that Senate approved at its meeting in October, and the decision to include the report from the Senators on the Board on the regular agenda, so it could be discussed and spoken to by the faculty members elected to serve on the Senate and Board. Communications between the Chair of Senate and the Chair of the Board regarding the Principles were also addressed and included in the Senate agenda package.
- Appointment of a faculty member to a Senate committee for the 2025-2026 governance year.

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- A communication from Glendon Faculty Council on the Faculties of the Future initiative, circulated and provided as an additional appendix.

6. Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committee (APPRC)

a. Information Items

The Committee reported on the following information items:

- The University Academic Plan renewal, noting progress toward updating the Plan and outlining steps for consultation to ensure alignment with institutional priorities.
- Concurrence with the recommendation of the Provost jointly with the Interim Dean of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, to establish *The Irving Abella Chair in the Social Scientific Study of Diaspora Jewry in Canada* within LAPS, emphasizing adherence to governance processes and academic objectives.
- An update on Faculties of the Future advising that the Office of the Provost is reviewing the Faculty reports submitted on possible directions and collaborations to be explored in the next phase of the initiative..
- Investment Opportunities for research from federal funding, identifying emerging opportunities to leverage federal programs and strategies to strengthen York's research profile through targeted investments.

A question was raised regarding APPRC's ongoing monitoring of the Faculties of the Future report, including a communication with Senate in the November meeting agenda package. It was clarified that where recommendations would require APPRC input or action, they would come through an APPRC agenda.

7. Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy Committee (ASCP)

- #### a. Establishment of Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree type, housed in the York University School of Medicine, Faculty of Health

It was moved, seconded and *carried* **that Senate approve the establishment of the undergraduate degree of Doctor of Medicine as a new degree type be housed in the York University School of Medicine, Faculty of Health, effective Summer 2028.**

- #### b. Establishment of Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree program, housed in the York University School of Medicine, Faculty of Health

The Committee Chair introduced the motion and noted that the agenda package included an update to Appendix 17, the summary list of York faculty members engaged in health-related research, to better reflect research at York related to health topics. The Chair also noted that the School of Medicine has emphasized that these are still

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early days and that opportunities for collaboration with other faculties on research, teaching, and learning will continue to be explored.

It was moved, seconded and *carried* **that Senate approve the establishment of an undergraduate Doctor of Medicine degree program to be housed in the York University School of Medicine, Faculty of Health, effective Summer 2028.**

- c. Establishment of Master of Engineering degree type, Lassonde School of Engineering

It was moved, seconded and *carried* **that Senate approve the establishment of the degree of Master of Engineering as a new degree type to be housed in the Lassonde School of Engineering, effective F2026.**

- d. Establishment of Master of Engineering in Sustainable Energy Systems program, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Lassonde School of Engineering

The Committee Chair introduced the motion to approve the establishment of the program. Questions were raised regarding the need for clarity in the program proposal, including how program learning objectives are to be achieved. The meaning of sustainable energy systems and interdisciplinarity within an engineering context was shared.

APPRC's support for the proposal was noted, noting opportunities for students to take courses from other faculties and that the program will continue to be monitored.

Concerns were raised regarding resource allocation, including faculty capacity, laboratory infrastructure, and potential overlap with existing programs. Some members emphasized the importance of ensuring clear differentiation from other graduate offerings and maintaining high academic standards. Questions were also posed about projected enrollment numbers, financial viability, and the ability to attract qualified students domestically and internationally.

Supporters of the proposal stressed the interdisciplinary nature of the program and its relevance to emerging energy challenges. They maintained that graduates would be well-positioned for careers in industry, government, and research, contributing to Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy. The discussion also touched on opportunities for collaboration with external partners and integration of experiential learning components.

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It was moved, seconded and *carried* that **Senate approve the establishment of the Master of Engineering degree program in Sustainable Energy Systems to be housed in the Lassonde School of Engineering, effective F2026.**

e. Information Items

The Committee reported on the following items:

- Minor modifications to degree requirements and minor edits in programs housed in the faculties of AMPD, Glendon, and Health.
- An update on the Committee’s priorities, including revisions to the Undergraduate Degree Framework, guardrails on the weighting of final examinations, reviewing the Undergraduate Certificate Guidelines and Graduate Diploma Guidelines, and developing a framework for student reservist leave.
- Additional updates included launch of the Co-op and Career Centre, provincial grant received to create a new, and large active learning classroom.
- A request for volunteers to participate in two working groups focused on modes of delivery and AI in teaching and learning.

8. Senate Appeals Committee (SAC)

Due to time constraints, the presentation and discussion of the 2024–2025 Annual Report on Petitions and Appeals was deferred to the January meeting of Senate.

9. Other Business

A Senator acknowledged that the approval of the new MD degree at York is a major milestone for the University and expressed gratitude to all who contributed to the extensive work involved in achieving this long held academic aspiration.

Consent Agenda Items

10. Minutes of the November 2025 Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2025 were approved by consent.

Lauren Sergio, Chair _____

Sarah Willey-Thomas, Secretary _____