



# VANCOUVER SENATE

## MINUTES OF 21 JANUARY 2026

### Attendance

**Present:** B.-A. Bacon (Chair), R. Ng (Secretary), A. Adibi, M. Adshade, S. Anandasabapathy, F. Andrew, G. Averill, E. Baniassad, S. Bates, S. Bredin, B. Britton, A. Chui, J. Cool, J. Cragg, C. Crowston, A. d'Entremont, P. Englezos, A. Esteves, D. Evans, D. Fontana, N. Ford, B. Forster, S. Forwell, J. Fox, J. Gilbert, T. Gill, S. Gopalakrishnan, S. W. Graham, S. Hagerman, J. Hare, P. Harrison, K. Hassib, M. Hirst, A. Ivanov, D. Kitts, R. Kozak, F. Lalji, K. Lo, J. Lorien, M. MacLachlan, C. W. Marshall, S. McElduff, S. McGillivray, L. Moss, Z. Nawar, W. Norman, C. Overall, S. Parker, S. Pelech, J. Phelps, N. Pindell, I. Price, M. Prost, L. Raman-Wilms, S. Singh, R. Spencer, J. Stewart, G. Tsiakos, A. Uzama, H. von Bergmann, D. Warburton, J. Xu, J. Xue, S. Yi-Kieran

**Regrets:** B. Agafitei, B. Bhandar, L. Burr, Y. Chen, D. Dahl, C. Dai, C. Desjarlais, K. Doering, A. Dulay, A. Fisher, C. Godwin, A. Gupta, E. Jenkins, R. Kim, C. Lim, C. Menzies, J. Olson, A. Pratap-Singh, J. Rogers, P. Spilsbury, R. Topping, G. Turcotte, A. Wang

**Clerk:** C. Eaton

### Call to Order and Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair of Senate, Dr Benoit-Antoine Bacon, called the fifth meeting of the Senate for the 2025/2026 academic year to order at 6:00 pm and he provided an acknowledgement of the land.

### Minutes of Previous Meetings

Wendy Norman  
Zarifa Nawar

*That the minutes of the meeting of 17 December  
2025 be approved.*

Approved



## Remarks from the Chair

The President, Dr Benoit-Antoine Bacon, thanked attendees for attending the annual Senate reception held the previous day and expressed appreciation for those who were able to attend. He reflected on the beginning of the new academic term as an opportunity to review past work and focus on priorities ahead, noting that despite ongoing challenges in the post-secondary sector, the University continued to demonstrate strength across its core mission. He referred to the launch of the refreshed *UBC Strategic Directions 2025-2030*, acknowledged the contributions of those involved, highlighted the celebration of the largest graduating class in the University's history in 2025, reported that research activity had increased in both funding and impact, and noted the completion of several major capital projects.

The President identified the cap on international students as the most significant ongoing challenge, particularly due to its impact on enrolment. He reported that the Province had provided the University with sufficient letters of attestation to admit all students wishing to attend, despite reductions in the number of letters issued by the federal government. He observed that application numbers for 2026, both domestic and international, exceeded those of 2025. He commented that continued strong interest from international students reflected sustained demand for the University's programs.

The President commented that the Province had launched a post-secondary system sector review and reported that he had met with the Minister and with Mr Don Avison, who was leading the review. He indicated that the University was engaging with the Province, with the objective of emphasizing the importance of the University as a world-class institution while also supporting a resilient, cohesive, and well differentiated provincial system. He noted that the review was in its early stages, with completion expected in April, and that a further meeting with Mr Avison was anticipated.

The President also referred to a federal budget initiative to fund Canada Impact+ Research Chairs, describing it as a significant national investment in research talent. He indicated that approximately 100 chairs were expected to be created across Canada and that, based on Tri-Council funding share, the University could anticipate hosting approximately 15 of these positions. He reported that a call for expressions of interest had generated more than 900 responses from researchers worldwide and that the selection process was underway. He thanked members of Senate and the University community for their efforts in supporting this initiative and noted that further updates would follow as the process advanced.

Senator Amin Adibi asked whether the University would consider accommodations for prospective Iranian applicants affected by a government-imposed internet blackout in Iran. He noted that Iran ranked among the top four countries of origin for international students at the



University, alongside China, India, and the United States, according to the most recent annual enrolment report. He referred to measures announced by other Canadian universities, including case by case deadline extensions, and asked whether a similar approach would be considered to support applicants from Iran.

The Provost and Vice-President, Academic, Dr Gage Averill, responded that application deadlines had already been extended in recognition of global events and ongoing issues with the provincial enrolment software. He advised that the current deadline had been set for January 26, 2026 and that rolling admissions would continue after that date. He indicated that, while specific discussions had not yet occurred, he would raise the question of possible exceptions. He noted that late applications could face challenges if a Faculty or department had already reached capacity and indicated that further discussions would take place to ensure that Faculties remained attentive to applications from Iran submitted after the deadline.

Senator Adibi asked whether deadlines for graduate programs had been extended and inquired whether discussions were underway regarding potential flexibility for graduate applicants.

Dean Shannon Hagerman responded that the Director, Student Academic Support had written the previous week to all heads of graduate programs to work with them on a case-by-case basis in addressing unanticipated consequences affecting students, including those experienced by applicants in Iran. She indicated that a range of measures was available to support prospective students and to ensure appropriate support for current graduate students.

Senator Martin Hirst raised comments regarding the Canada Impact+ Research Chairs program and expressed appreciation for the federal government's \$1.3 billion investment in Canadian research excellence, noting that it occurred during a period of fiscal constraint and reflected recognition of the importance of research as well as sustained advocacy efforts across the sector. He identified equity concerns arising from the program, particularly for Canadian researchers who had long contributed to the research ecosystem, and noted that the accelerated timeline limited opportunities for a rigorous and measured hiring process. He observed that institutions located closer to government may have been better positioned to respond quickly and noted the importance of ongoing, proactive engagement with federal partners. He situated the discussion within the broader and continuing underfunding of Canada's research ecosystem, underscoring the need for adequate support for existing research personnel and operating grant funding, and referred to longstanding challenges documented in national reviews. He noted that, while the investment was significant and welcomed, it should align with a coherent, equitable, and sustainable national research funding strategy supported by clear and coordinated messaging.



The President responded by acknowledging both the generosity and ambition of the federal program, while recognizing that aspects of its implementation could have differed. He reflected on the realities of advocacy, noting that not all objectives could be achieved in full, and indicated that he received the comments in that context. He agreed on the importance of sustained operating funding through the Tri-Council, including support for indirect costs of research, and reiterated that concerns regarding the aggressive implementation timeline, particularly in the first phase, had been communicated to the federal government.

### **From the Board of Governors**

The President confirmed that affiliation agreements, as approved by the Senate and by the Council of Senates, were subsequently approved by the Board of Governors, and that materials from the following meetings, as approved by Senate, were subsequently approved by the Board of Governors as required under the *University Act*:

UBC Faculty of Medicine and EUROLIFE Network Collaboration

UBC and Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) | UBC and Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE) | UBC and University of Cape Coast (UCC)

17 September 2025

Awards: New and revised awards

Seat Expansion: Seat expansions for the Master of Occupational Therapy program and the Master of Physical Therapy program

Establishment of Chair: Establishment of the Dr. Connie Eaves Chair in Cancer Stem Cell Research at UBC in the Faculty of Medicine

Renaming of Faculty: Renaming of Faculty of Forestry to Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Stewardship

15 October 2025

Curriculum: Curriculum proposals from the Faculties of Arts, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (Education), and Pharmaceutical Sciences



## Candidates for Degrees

The President advised that an exceptional request had been received from the Faculty of Applied Science and the UBC Sauder School of Business to grant a degree and a diploma, respectively, to two students who required their credentials for immigration purposes. He observed that such requests had become more frequent.

Jasper Lorien  
Amin Adibi

*That the candidates for degrees and diplomas, as recommended by the Faculties of Applied Science, and Commerce and Business Administration, be granted the degree or diploma for which they were recommended, effective January 2026, and that a committee comprised of the Registrar, the Dean of the relevant Faculty, and the Chair of the Senate be empowered to make any necessary adjustments.*

Approved

## Academic Policy Committee

The Chair of the Senate Academic Policy Committee, Dr Kin Lo, presented.

**REVISED ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR ACADEMIC RECOGNITION, PROMOTION, AND CONTINUATION FOR THE FACULTY OF ARTS: BACHELOR OF ARTS, BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS, BACHELOR OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS, AND BACHELOR OF MEDIA STUDIES;**

**REVISED ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR THE FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION: BACHELOR OF COMMERCE;**

**REVISED ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR THE FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION: PROFESSIONAL MASTER'S DEGREES;**

**REVISED ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION: BACHELOR OF EDUCATION;**

**REVISED ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION: BACHELOR OF KINESIOLOGY; AND**

**REVISED ACADEMIC REGULATIONS FOR RECOGNITION OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE: BACHELOR OF SCIENCE**



Senator Lo requested leave from the Senate to present six reports as an omnibus motion.

Kin Lo  
Sathish Gopalakrishnan

*That Senate approve the amendments to the Faculty of Arts academic recognition, promotion, and continuation requirements regarding Additional Period Honours for the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of International Economics, and Bachelor of Media Studies, effective 2026 Winter Session and thereafter, as set out in the attached proposal;*

*That Senate approve the amendments to the Faculty of Arts academic recognition, promotion, and continuation requirements regarding Additional Period Honours for the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of International Economics, and Bachelor of Media Studies, effective 2026 Winter Session and thereafter, as set out in the attached proposal;*

*That Senate approve the amendments to the Faculty of Commerce and Business Administration Professional Master's Degrees academic regulations relating to course repeats, effective 2026 Winter Session and thereafter, as set out in the attached proposal;*

*That Senate approve the amendments to the Faculty of Education academic policies and regulations relating to the Written and Oral English Requirement, effective 2026 Winter Session and thereafter, as set out in the attached proposal;*

*That Senate approve the amendments to the Faculty of Education, School of Kinesiology, Bachelor of Kinesiology academic regulations regarding Academic Standing, Additional Period Honours, and Class Standing, effective 2026*



*Winter Session and thereafter, as set out in the attached proposal; and*

*That Senate approve the amendments to the Faculty of Science Academic Calendar section on recognition of academic achievement, effective 2026 Summer Session and thereafter, as set out in the attached proposal.*

Approved

The President expressed commendation to the Committee for the quality of the proposals.

### **Admissions Committee**

The Chair of the Senate Admissions Committee, Dr Joanne Fox, presented.

### **REVISED ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS: DOCTOR OF MEDICINE**

Joanne Fox  
Wendy Norman

*That Senate approve the proposed changes to admission requirements for admission to the Doctor of Medicine program, effective for admission to the 2027 and 2028 Winter Sessions, and the 2029 Winter Session and thereafter as outlined, and that the list of courses eligible to satisfy the Indigenous Studies pre-requisite requirement be reviewed and updated annually by the Faculty of Medicine.*

Senator Kareem Hassib expressed support for the proposal. He asked a question regarding students who completed their undergraduate degrees outside of Canada. He inquired whether there was a pathway for these students to meet the course requirement and whether alternatives had been considered.

Senator Fox responded that the Committee had reviewed a list of approved courses, which included both online and in-person options.

With permission of Senate, Dr Hannah Carolan, Associate Dean of M.D. Admissions, added that the matter also arose with the English requirement. She explained that sometimes students needed to complete additional courses after their degree. She added



that a broad list of courses had been proposed to make the requirement achievable for students who had not completed their undergraduate studies in Canada. Dr Carolan noted that 50% of the course content must cover Canadian Indigenous material, which must be completed within Canada.

Senator Steven Pelech explained that some incoming students may not have had the opportunity or prior knowledge to take the proposed course. He noted that most students entering medical school at the University were likely domestic and would have completed the Canadian high school system, including English 12, which had been updated to incorporate content on Indigenous history. He suggested that many students from British Columbia and other provinces may already have familiarity with this content.

Senator Pelech expressed concern that introducing the course as a requirement could reduce students' opportunities to take electives during their undergraduate studies due to the limited enrolment in medical school. He suggested that other undergraduate courses such as biochemistry and physiology could be considered as prerequisites.

He also commented on the diversity of Indigenous nations across Canada and questioned how course content could consistently reflect this diversity. He recommended prioritizing courses that prepared students to respond to the specific medical needs of Indigenous patients.

Senator Fox responded that the change was planned to be phased in gradually to allow students time to plan their course selections, with the full requirement of three credits in English and three credits in Indigenous Studies coming into effect after 2029.

Dr Carolan added that approximately 50% of Doctor of Medicine students had not completed high school in British Columbia, highlighting the need to provide foundational knowledge prior to beginning the course in medical school. She explained that the initiative was informed by data on inequities in healthcare and the guidance of Indigenous colleagues and students. She added that the committee responsible for developing the requirement included community members and elders, with James Andrew, Associate Director, Indigenous Initiatives contributing to its original design.

Dean Jan Hare noted that in the Bachelor of Education, there was no comparable requirement for entry, though a foundational course in Indigenous education was offered for prospective teachers. She suggested that having similar coursework available prior to entry could enhance the preparation of students for their professional practice. Dean Hare observed that other professional programs were adopting similar requirements, particularly for educators entering practice in British Columbia.



Senator Wendy Norman explained that, based on observations, it became evident that students were not adequately prepared for the content delivered in medical school and required foundational knowledge beforehand. She added that all other medical schools in Western Canada had already implemented similar measures. Senator Norman explained that adopting the requirement would better prepare students to become healthcare providers and strengthen the healthcare system.

Senator HsingChi von Bergmann referenced the report *“In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care”* and noted that it provided context on the importance of addressing cultural change in health sciences education. Senator von Bergmann suggested that similar initiatives were appropriate for other professional schools as well as undergraduate programs.

Senator Bruce Forster acknowledged the comments regarding grade 12 courses but observed that, based on input from Indigenous members of the Faculty, the existing curriculum did not provide sufficient preparation. He noted the importance of a course under the University’s direct oversight to ensure quality control of content and assessment.

Dean Clare Crowston noted that the proposed course would affect the Faculty of Arts, particularly with respect to the reduction in English credits. She noted the importance of maintaining foundational writing education to support students as citizens and future members of the workforce. She indicated that the Faculty of Arts supported the proposal and had been informed early on by the Faculty of Medicine about the rationale for developing the course.

Dean Crowston explained that a gap existed between the content of the British Columbia grade 12 curriculum and the more advanced course delivered in the Faculty of Medicine, and that the proposed course would help bridge this gap. She reported that the Faculty of Arts had consulted with its Indigenous Advisory Council, composed of Indigenous faculty and staff, to explore the possibility of developing a course to meet anticipated demand. She highlighted the Faculty’s expertise across social sciences, humanities, and the creative and performing arts, involving both Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues.

Senator Pelech observed that the proposed requirement could have implications for the Faculty of Arts. He noted that, given the number of applicants for medical school, students might seek to maintain flexibility in their course selections, and that implementing the requirement could entail additional resources to offer the course. He requested clarification on whether a course currently existed and on the anticipated timeline for its development.



Senator Fox responded that a list of courses eligible to satisfy the Indigenous Studies prerequisite had already been reviewed in detail by the Committee. She explained that the review had considered factors such as seat capacity and delivery options.

Approved

## Nominating Committee

The Chair of the Senate Nominating Committee, Dr Ben Britton, presented.

### **PROGRESS UPDATES: EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE UBC VANCOUVER SENATE AND THE 2023-2026 TRIENNIAL REVIEW**

Senator Britton summarized the external review, which had been presented to the Senate earlier in the triennium. He explained that the review produced a comprehensive report addressing governance, operations, planning, committee structures, methods to improve Senate efficiency, ways to increase engagement with the university community, and strategies to enhance governance structures.

Senator Britton reported that the review included multiple recommendations and implementation strategies. He conveyed that his initial review, alongside input from committees, indicated significant progress on several activities, although such progress may not have been formally recognized. As an example, he noted ongoing engagement by the Provost and Vice-President, Academic, and the Vice-President, Research and Innovation regarding the strategic plan refresh and planning process, which directly addressed a recommendation from the external review.

Senator Britton highlighted that the report contained numerous items, including recommendations regarding governance structures, roles and responsibilities of the Nominating Committee and Agenda Committee, and operational matters intended to enhance efficiency, transparency, and role clarity.

Senator Britton noted that multiple committees, including Tributes, Teaching and Learning, Awards, Agenda, Curriculum, Library, and Research and Scholarship, had provided feedback on the review. He invited additional committee reports.

Senator Britton addressed the ongoing discussion regarding the Senate's start time and highlighted efforts to engage students on related issues. He described a joint meeting of the Agenda and Nominating Committees to consider restructuring suggestions and expressed the expectation of another joint meeting in the near future to continue progress.



Senator Britton anticipated producing a report summarizing completed activities and highlighting areas not yet addressed, including strategic reasons for any delays. He planned to meet with the Chair of the Agenda Committee to discuss these items further, with the goal of presenting a comprehensive report to the wider Senate before the end of the triennium.

Senator Britton then introduced the triennial review, noting that it occurred every triennium and involved external contributors. He explained that guidance documents and questions had been shared with committees to outline suggestions and procedures for submitting responses.

Senator Britton clarified that feedback from the respondents would remain anonymized unless contributors chose to be identified. Committee reports would be submitted on behalf of the Committee to allow candid input. He noted that not all questions required responses, as prompts were designed to guide actions and inform a report back to the Senate.

Senator Britton highlighted that key considerations included agenda planning, refreshed committee operations and constitutions, and engagement of senators. He noted the experience and capabilities of returning senators and recognized challenges related to participation and engagement, particularly for individuals historically and systematically marginalized by university systems and processes.

Senator von Bergmann inquired about strategies to encourage Faculty-wide engagement and to increase interest among faculty members in serving as senators from various Faculties. She contrasted this with the student senator selection process, noting that student senators participated in public debates. She asked whether collective strategies or ideas existed to entice more faculty members to participate.

The Clerk, Mr Christopher Eaton, responded that if there were many candidates for Senate positions, debates could be considered; however, most seats were currently filled by acclamation, making debates less practical. He explained that the broader challenge was how to encourage faculty member involvement in academic governance. He explained that faculty members faced numerous service responsibilities across their Faculties and society, and highlighted the difficulty of demonstrating the value of governance participation to those who had not chosen to engage. He acknowledged that the Nominating Committee had discussed this matter and welcomed suggestions from the Senate.

Senator Wendy Norman responded by drawing attention to the external review and the data collected from the wider community. She reported that feedback indicated some respondents found the Senate meeting hours challenging and felt unable to participate fully due to the timing. She linked these scheduling concerns to attrition and decreased faculty interest in Senate participation, noting that early campus responsibilities and long days contributed to the challenge. Senator Norman highlighted that one of the top governance recommendations from the



review was to schedule Senate meetings within regular working hours to attract capable senators and enhance the University's governance and success.

### **Other Business**

The President indicated that if senators chose to serve another triennium, their contributions would continue to be recognized by the University. He encouraged members who felt it was time for others to participate to invite colleagues to consider joining the Senate. He noted that the Senate was the highest academic body of the University and was responsible for decisions across a wide range of strategic and operational academic matters.

### **Adjournment**

Seeing no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:54 pm.