



VANCOUVER SENATE

MINUTES OF 15 JANUARY 2025

DRAFT

Attendance

Present: B.-A. Bacon (Chair), R. Ng (Secretary), M. Adshade, F. Andrew, G. Averill, E. Baniassad, S. Bates, S. Bredin, B. Britton, L. Burr, J. Cool, C. Crowston, C. Dai, A. d'Entremont, A. Dulay, A. Esteves, G. Faulkner, D. Fontana, N. Ford, S. Forwell, J. Fox, J. Gilbert, B. Goold, S. Gopalakrishnan, S. W. Graham, G. Guo, J. Hare, P. Harrison, M. Hirst, M. Hunt, A. Ivanov, X. Jiang, K. Kanji, D. Kelleher, D. Kitts, R. Kozak, F. Lalji, S. Lavallee, K. Lo, J. Lorien, M. MacLachlan, C. W. Marshall, S. McGillivray, L. Moss, W. Norman, J. Olson, C. Overall, S. Parker, S. Pelech, J. Phelps, N. Pindell, A. Pratap-Singh, I. Price, D. Qi, L. Raman-Wilms, C. Rawn, Ka. Rogers, Ky. Rogers, T. Shaikh, S. Sherif, S. Singh, R. Spencer, R. Topping, G. Tsiakos, G. Turcotte, H. von Bergmann, J. Xue, S. Yi-Kieran,

Regrets: J. Al Rahmani, B. Bhandar, D. Dahl, K. Doering, P. Englezos, A. Fisher, B. Forster, C. Godwin, S. Grayston, J. Greenman, K. Hassib, E. Jenkins, R. Kim, C. Menzies, M. Prost, M. Reid, J. Rogers, S. Rout, A. Uzama, W. Zhu, E. Zusman

Clerk: C. Eaton

Call to Order

The Chair of Senate, Dr Benoit-Antoine Bacon, called the fifth meeting of the Senate for the 2024/2025 academic year to order at 6:01 pm.

Minutes of Previous Meetings

Kamil Kanji
Sue Forwell

*That the minutes of the meeting of 11 December
2024 be approved.*

Approved

Business Arising from the Minutes

The President noted that a matter arising at the last meeting of the Senate pertaining to the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Science's grading practices relating to GPA and per cent was being considered by the Senate Academic Policy Committee.



Remarks from the Chair

The President acknowledged the wildfires in the greater Los Angeles area. This reminded the President of the fires that affected the Okanagan campus, and the President expressed thoughts for all those impacted by the recent fires.

The President thanked all senators who attended the reception at Norman Mackenzie House the previous evening, describing the event as enjoyable and well-attended. The President emphasized that 2024 had been a successful year, with notable achievements such as the largest graduating class in UBC's history, record research funding and historic funding for the student housing complex at St. John's College, which included 1,500 new beds.

The President acknowledged the financial and political challenges facing the University, including evolving international student policies, budgetary pressures and geopolitical issues. Despite these challenges, the President expressed confidence that UBC was well-positioned to navigate them successfully.

The President provided an update on the refresh of the University's Strategic Plan. He noted that while the existing plan, Shaping UBC's Next Century, would remain in effect until 2028, that many changes had occurred since its approval. The strategic plan refresh aimed to define new priorities and goals for the next three to five years, focused primarily on the academic and research missions of UBC.

The President acknowledged that the strategic plan refresh team had gathered substantial input from the UBC community through various engagement methods, including workshops, surveys, emails and special sessions for the Senate. In total, 1,691 participants contributed over 5,900 qualitative data points, which have been analyzed to identify 16 emerging themes grounded in the voices of the community. The President thanked all those who participated.

The next phase of the refresh would focus on defining and validating the University's priorities and aims for the next three to five years, as well as metrics for measuring progress. Engagement with various university groups, including Senate, would continue to shape these priorities. A draft of the refreshed strategic plan was expected to be presented later in 2025, with the finalized version slated for completion before the end of the current academic cycle, likely in June 2025.

The President encouraged all members of the UBC community to participate in an upcoming survey to provide feedback on the emerging themes and ensure they align with the collective vision for UBC's future. This feedback would help refine the themes before moving forward with the identification of specific priorities and actions.



In closing, the President thanked everyone for their dedication to UBC, expressed appreciation for the work done by Senate over the past year, and looked forward to a successful year in 2025.

From the Board of Governors

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

18 September 2024

Curriculum: Curriculum proposals from the Faculties of Arts, Education, and Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (Applied Science).

Establishment of Seaspan Chair in Robotics for Marine Vessels: Seaspan Chair in Robotics for Marine Vessels in the Faculty of Applied Science.

New Program: Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy, Ts"kel: Indigenous Educational Leadership and Resurgence Sub-specialization.

16 October 2024

Curriculum: A curriculum proposal from the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (Forestry).

Awards: New and revised awards.

Candidates for Degrees

The President noted that there were two candidates from the Faculty of Applied Science who are being considered as an “off-cycle request.” The students had completed all the degree requirements and needed their physical degrees for immigration purposes.

Ben Britton
Jasper Lorien

That the candidates for degrees, as recommended by the Faculty of Applied Science, be granted the degree or diploma for which they were recommended, effective January 2025, and that a committee comprised of the Registrar, the Dean of the Faculty, and the Chair of the Senate be empowered to make any necessary adjustments.



Approved

Admissions Committee

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

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE: UBC FACULTY OF MEDICINE UNDERGRADUATE DISTRIBUTED PROGRAM

Senator Fox proposed friendly amendments to the proposal, with the goal of improving clarity. The amendments included replacing “campuses” with “sites” in paragraph 1, changing “cohort of students” to “group of students” in paragraph 2, removing a comma in paragraph 3, and replacing “either” with “one of” in the same paragraph to reflect more than two choices.

Joanne Fox
Paul Harrison

That Senate approve the revised Calendar Entry on the ‘UBC Faculty of Medicine Undergraduate Distributed Program’ for the 2025 Winter Session and thereafter.

Senator Lo raised two questions: first, regarding the scope of the term “community” in the Fraser site and how it would be defined, and second, whether the proposal applied solely to Vancouver Fraser or to other sites as well.

The Chair of the Committee invited Dr Cary Cuncic, from the Faculty of Medicine, to respond to the questions.

Dr Cuncic explained that the Vancouver Fraser site is geographically large and encompasses three health authorities. She clarified that the proposal would see students admitted into geographically distinct learning communities within the Vancouver Fraser region, where they would conduct the majority of their training and build relationships with peers, faculty, and community members.

Senator Lo asked for clarification regarding the term “learning community,” which is not used in the program, and whether the proposal applied only to the Vancouver Fraser site.

Dr Cuncic confirmed that it applied only to Vancouver Fraser, which includes three distinct learning communities, and offered to adjust the language for clarity.

Dr. Fox emphasized that while the committee would work on the language offline, approval could proceed.



Conditionally
Approved

Nominating Committee

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

COMMITTEE ADJUSTMENTS

Senator Britton proposed a friendly amendment to the motion in response to discussions with the Student Caucus. The revisions included striking the changes related to the Teaching and Learning Committee and to appoint Jasper Lorien to the Senate Curriculum Committee until March 31, 2025, and thereafter, until replaced, to replace Kareem Hassib.

Ben Britton
Solomon Yi-Kieran

That Kai Rogers and Tony Jiang be appointed to the Senate Committee on Student Appeals of Discipline until 31 March 2025 and thereafter until replaced, to replace Jasper Lorien and David Qi;

That Jasper Lorien be appointed to the Senate Curriculum Committee until 31 March 2025 and thereafter until replaced, to replace Kareem Hassib; and

That Kyle Rogers be appointed to the Council Elections Committee until 31 March 2025 and thereafter until replaced, to fill a vacancy.

Approved

AMALGAMATION OF ACADEMIC BUILDING RESPONSIBILITIES WITH BUDGET SUB-COMMITTEE

Senator Britton noted that the External Review of the Vancouver Senate and previous Triennial Reviews recommended merging the Academic Building Needs Committee with the Vancouver Sub-Committee of the Council of Senate Budget Committee. This proposed merger aligned with the existing committee structure for the Okanagan Senate.



Ben Britton
Kamil Kanji

That the Academic Buildings Needs Committee be disestablished; and

That a new committee, to be named the “Budget and Academic Buildings Committee” be established, with the understanding that:

- 1) *Its membership be the members of the Vancouver Sub-Committee of the Council Budget Committee as appointed from time to time;*
- 2) *That it only meet concurrently with Vancouver Sub-Committee of the Council Budget Committee; and*
- 3) *That it have the following terms of reference in addition to those assigned by the University Act and by the Council of Senates to the Council Budget Committee:*
 - *Preparing an annual report outlining the work of the Committee and the general state of physical and budget resources available for the development and maintenance of the campus;*
 - *Reviewing, raising issues, and monitoring the implementation of any Campus Plans or similar planning documents;*
 - *Recommending priorities for academic buildings with consideration for the needs of academic and non-academic buildings, balance between type of teaching spaces, and relationship to physical plant and planning;*
 - *Reviewing and raising issues regarding the impact of every development, whether building or landscape, on the total teaching and academic resource, including but not limited to impacts on teaching spaces, campus wellbeing, accessibility and sustainability; and*



- *Making such recommendations as necessary to the Board of Governors:*
 - *to maintain and keep in proper order and condition the real property of the university,*
 - *to erect and maintain the buildings and structures, and*
 - *to make rules respecting the management, government and control of the real property, buildings and structures.*

Approved

Report from the Provost

The Provost, Dr Gage Averill, presented.

ANNUAL REPORT ON REVIEWS OF ACADEMIC UNITS

The Provost explained that, following requirements from the Provincial Quality Assurance Board, universities regularly assess the quality of their programs and administration. UBC follows Policy J-305, which was first introduced in 1977 and last reviewed in 2014, with an updated version still under review. This policy ensured continuous improvement in the University's academic mission and student services. The Provost noted that program reviews occur every 5 to 7 years for most units, with Faculties being reviewed in the penultimate year of a Dean's first term.

The process starts with a self-study by the unit, followed by an external review team that conducts an on-site review with students, faculty and staff. A report is then produced, which is shared with the unit's leadership to confirm any factual inaccuracies. Within three months, the unit responds to the report, and the Provost's Office compiles these responses for Senate review. This year, a variety of units, including departments, schools, institutes and centres, were reviewed, though no Faculties were included.

The Provost explained that these reports are internal documents meant for the units themselves. He mentioned that if full reports were released, they might influence the nature of the responses from students, faculty and staff, as well as the recommendations made. However, the reports can be requested through a Freedom of Information (FOI) process. The Provost clarified that reviews



by accrediting bodies typically occur on different timelines, though coordination between the two could be possible when appropriate.

The Provost noted that over the years, the reviews had become less likely to result in significant changes. He also emphasized that follow-up was crucial to ensure that units acted on the recommendations.

Senator von Bergmann asked about the decline in Ph.D. enrolment for the Faculty of Education.

In response, the Provost noted that the drop in Ph.D. students appeared to be more specific to certain Faculties, such as the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Arts, rather than being university-wide. The decline was attributed to changes in the funding model, where Ph.D. students were guaranteed \$24,000 per year, but the funds available for these students had not increased, particularly in Faculties with fewer external research funding sources. As a result, the University could support fewer students.

The Provost explained that the University's long-term goal is to increase the funds available for graduate students, which is a key aspect of the University's Strategic Plan.

Dean Hare acknowledged the concern about the declining trend in graduate studies, especially in Ph.D. programs. She noted that the Faculty had made increasing graduate enrolment a priority and was reviewing its practices to better support new students.

Dean Hunt agreed and provided additional context regarding the overall data. He pointed out that while there was a small drop in Ph.D. enrolment, overall graduate admissions remained stable, particularly in certain programs like curriculum and pedagogy. He cautioned against drawing broad conclusions based on the data, as the decrease of seven students in the Faculty of Education programs was not significant in the larger context.

Senator Britton asked about the communication of funding strategies to potential students. He suggested that the University should be clearer about the available funding for graduate students.

In response, the Provost acknowledged the concern and noted that a high-level review of graduate and postdoctoral functions was underway to improve communication regarding funding.

Senator Britton followed-up by asking whether the University was addressing the financial risks outlined in the reports.

In response, the Provost noted that although the reviews had not addressed these matters in detail, there would likely be some adjustments to previously made commitments due to financial constraints, and discussions on these issues would continue.



Dean Hunt confirmed that the data on graduate funding and student numbers were available on the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website, though better visibility was needed.

Senator Gilbert complimented the reviews and stated that they were very useful and reassuring, as they confirmed that the University remained one of the best.

The President agreed with this sentiment.

Report from the Registrar

The Registrar, Dr Rella Ng, presented.

2025-2026 TERM DATES

The Registrar explained that the Senate Office planned the Academic Year seven years in advance on a rolling schedule, with confirmation each January for the upcoming academic year. The dates were set in accordance with Senate Policy V-125. It was noted that the optimal 63 teaching days were achieved in each term and that the start date for each term was the earliest possible, but that these dates could not be changed without pushing exams.

Other Business

MOTION ON INSTITUTIONAL NEUTRALITY

Senator Harrison noted that at the December Senate meeting, the motion to establish an ad hoc committee to consider the concept of institutional neutrality was discussed. It was noted that insufficient background information had been provided for Senators to make an informed decision. Over the break, consultations began but had not been completed by the time of the meeting. Senator Harrison also noted that the agenda for the February Senate meeting would likely be full, therefore he recommends that the discussion happen at the March Senate meeting.

Paul Harrison
Jasper Lorien

That the motion on institutional neutrality be postponed to the March 2025 Senate meeting.

Approved

Adjournment

Seeing no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:51 pm.