KING'S
Western University · Canada

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING
JUNE 18, 2025

The meeting was held at 2:35 p.m. in Labatt Hall, Room 103, and via Zoom.

COUNCILORS:
Laura Béres *
Aidan Bobkowicz 🌐
Nonie Brennan *
Graham Broad 🌐
Arashdeep Chahal *
Claudia Clausius *
Adrienne Co-Dyre
John Dool *
Russell Duvernoy
Jeannette Eberhard *
Jordan Fairbairn 🌐
Josephine Gemson
Eunice Gorman (for C. Traher)
Chaya Halberstam
Erin Hannah *
Joe Henry
Peter Ibbott
Liam Kennedy
Allyson Larkin
Miriam Love
Braedan Lovie
Donna Maynard
Alison Meek 🌐
Laura Melnyk Gribble
Jacquie Newman 🌐
Loretta Norton (for M. Penner)
Brian Patton
Jeff Preston *
Felipe Rodrigues
Pat Ryan
Jane Sanders
Jennifer Silcox
Derek Silva
Natalie Spruce
Karen Thomson
Thomas Tieku
Joseph Turnbull
Robert Ventresca
Corinne Walsh 🌐
Paul Wilton
Mark Yenson *

OBSERVERS: Karen Gingrich, Tom Gray, Krista Lysack. Carri Rodgers-Rowley, Linda Whidden.

MINUTE TAKER: Ann Hoffer

R. Ventresca, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed new members.

1.0 Land Acknowledgment

B. Lovie offered a land acknowledgement.

2.0 Opening Prayer

J. Gemson opened with a prayer.

3.0 Committee Reports

3.1 Scholarship and Bursary Committee

J. Gemson, Committee Chair, provided an overview of the background and rationale for the following three motions.

Motion 1: That Academic Council approve a revision to the policies and amounts for the Automatic Entrance and Continuing Scholarships for Domestic Fee-Paying Students.
Moved and seconded by Scholarship and Bursary Committee
Vote: CARRIED

A 14-minute discussion preceded the vote:

- **Effect of increasing admission average to 85%**: Raising the average from 82% would reduce the student count from 477 to 416.

- **Comparator Data**: Huron's admission average starts at 90%.
- **International scholarships:** Unrelated to the motion at hand, the 4-year International Excellence Award is designed to support recruitment and conversion efforts.
- **Continuing scholarships for part-time students**: As these funds have not been utilized recently, they are being reallocated to full-time students.
- **Clarification on students impacted by award changes**: The price sensitivity studies, along with input from subject matter experts, guided the decision to optimize both incentive and merit-based funding to better attract and retain students. It was suggested that future reports include the dollar value and number of students impacted.
- **Scholarship Application**: If full-time students meet the 4.0 credit threshold, no application is required. It was noted that part-time students have a 3.5 credit threshold, while the average course load for full-time students is 4.2 credits.
- **Impact of increasing Entrance and Other scholarships**: There are a number of bursaries available to any student no longing eligible for the scholarship.

Motion 2: That Academic Council approve a revision to the policies and amounts for the Automatic Entrance and Continuing Scholarships for International Fee-Paying Students.
Moved and seconded by Scholarship and Bursary Committee
Vote: CARRIED

A 2-minute discussion preceded the vote.

- **Price sensitivity and Award Impact:** Studies indicated the current award level had limited influence on student decisions, with even smaller scholarships capable of affecting behaviour.

Motion 3: That Academic Council approve a revision in the International Experiential Learning Awards from $1500 to $1000, effective September 2025
Moved and seconded by Scholarship and Bursary Committee

An 11-minute discussion ensued.

- **General Bursary**: There is a general bursary available for any King's student in financial need, with applications adjudicated by J. Henry.
- **Bursary Reimbursement**: Bursary funds are provided via reimbursement, requiring students to submit receipts rather than directly receiving the funds.
- **International Experiential Learning**: A $1K bursary is considered generous for international experiential learning; students are also encouraged to seek external support and fundraise.
- **Sliding Scale Proposal**: Consideration of a sliding scale for bursaries, as some experiential learning trips have lower costs.
- **Previous Research**: Research was conducted years ago to increase the award to $1.5K to better support equitable educational opportunities. Given the current financial situation, approval may be necessary to sustain the program.
- **EPC Referral to Committee**: The issue of experiential learning and international travel was referred to the Teaching and Learning Committee at EPC last week, due to concerns about travel agency pricing compared to Expedia. It was proposed that we receive the committee's recommendation before voting.
- **Student Impact**: While the estimated savings of $30K are appreciated, a clearer understanding of the impact on students, is requested.
- **Point of Order**: The KUCSC President asked for clarification on the timeline, noting that experiential learning is a key factor in recruitment for September 2025. T. Gray confirmed that the Viewbook is set to go to print next month.

MOTION: To table this motion until further research an be provided.
Moved by P Ibbott, seconded by A Larkin
Vote: TABLED *(20 in favour, 3 opposed, 2 abstentions)*

4.0 Reports

4.1 President

R. Ventresca, President (Interim), provided a verbal report:

Enrolment Update as at June 3, 2025: Rob noted that domestic targets are projected to be exceeded, while international enrolment is expected to fall short. These projections are based on acceptances, not actual registrations. A new tracking tool has been implemented to monitor real-time registrations over the summer. The enrolment numbers reflect the residual strength of the institution's brand, though there is some risk international acceptance as PALS now transition to study permits. He also acknowledged the collaborative efforts of multiple groups, including task forces and the faculty phone call campaign, and mentioned that some summer melt is anticipated, which is typical. Enrolment Services received a round of applause for these great numbers. A 17-minute discussion ensued.

- **Residence:** Expected to be at near capacity.
- **US Market:** Reports indicate many parents want to move students out of the US due to the political climate. Efforts to break into the US market have faced challenges, similar to those experienced by Western and Huron. Preliminary inquiries are underway, but it's late in the cycle to make a significant impact this year.
- **Intent to Register vs Course Registration:** To assess enrolment for years 2, 3, and 4, we must wait until students register. Level 1 registration opens next week, and Level 2 in July. After priority registration, students who have not registered for a full courseload (necessary for scholarship eligibility) will be prompted to do so. We will also reach out to encourage registration for those still pending.
- **Enrolment Targets**: This year, targets are set using pessimistic, realistic, and optimistic scenarios, reflecting the shrinking TVSB and growing LDCSB. Three task forces have introduced new tactics for attraction, retention, and conversion. Domestic tactics have been effective, and the next round of offers will be sent once final grades are in.
- **Enrolment Projection Model**: A new task force is launching, with the first phase focused on developing a more sophisticated enrolment projection model. The goal is to establish a unit contribution (dollars per student) to cover fixed costs. Once the projection tool is in place institution-wide, academic units can plan at the program level. It was noted that each student's contribution includes tuition and Ministry grants.

Navitas update

Senate approved a proposed partnership with Navitas to create a private international college offering a separate first-year entry pathway for international students, pending Board of Governors approval. Western's ambitious international growth plan aims to increase international students from 7.5% to 20%. Concerns have been raised about its impact on affiliate partners. A 2-minute discussion ensued:

- **International Strategy Development:** We aim to create an international strategy aligned with our institutional values and including:
  - First-year international recruitment plan for September 2026
  - Streamlined staff structure with one house officer
  - Strategic marketing investment in key markets
  - Agent management review and performance-based incentives

Financial Update

K. Thomson, Chair of the Planning and Priorities Committee, presented a financial update, covering draft 2024-2025 financial results, revenues, expenditures, and cash flow (incomplete, expected by month-end), as well as changes to non-cash working capital. The information is in draft form pending the upcoming audit. A 12-minute discussion ensued:

- It was suggested that the Variance column needs to be represented differently on Expenditures, Revenues etc.
- Weekly projections show that the increase in domestic enrolment; however, they will not fully offset the decline in international. Revenue projections are on track unless issues arise with work study permits. On the cost side, expenses will exceed projections.
- Question raised about the increase in instructional costs from 2024 to 2025 despite plans to increase class sizes. C. Rodgers-Rowley explained the increase is due to full-time faculty, LTAs, and early retirements.

In pursuit of the 1.25% surplus target by FY30, K. Thomson reported that the FY27 plan now requires $6M in savings, up from $3M, as one-quarter of expected early retirements have occurred. While the FY26 budget has bent the curve, the trajectory remains unsustainable and will deplete reserves. Further efforts are needed to generate revenue and cut expenditures. Karen concluded by noting the Audited Financial Statements will be presented in September, the President's Task Force on Planning and Budget will resume work on a new budget model; and enrolment results and update revenue projections will be confirmed in September.

Wireframe Site for Financial Sustainability Framework

D. Perreault, Director of ITS, presented the wireframe for the Extranet site, showcasing potential content on: Guiding Principles, Enrollment Projections, Finance Primer, Common Financial Health Indicators, Fundraising, Institutional Priorities, Sustainability Framework, Land Use Development Plan. A 5-minute discussion ensued:

- **Advocacy Efforts**: R. Ventresca shared that advocacy is important, but given the recent throne speech on international issues, he's not optimistic and not waiting for change.
- **Tuition Assumptions**: Tuition is assumed to remain frozen. The outlook is two years realistic, three years optimistic, with adjustments to align with market relevance and new tactics.

4.2 Vice-President and Academic Dean (Interim) Information

No report.

4.3 King's University Council Students' Council Report

B. Lovie, KUCSC President, highlighted his report, which was missed in the package (see Appendix 1). He also provided an update, congratulating Aisha Chamberlain as the new Student Development Coordinator.

5.0 The Unanimous Consent Agenda

Several items were removed from the Consent Agenda (see 6.1 to 6.4).

Motion: To receive the reports submitted by the Educational Policy Committee (5.1) and the Planning and Priorities Committee (5.2), shared for information.
Moved by P. Ibbott, seconded by L. Melnyk Gribble
Vote: CARRIED

6.0 Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

6.1 Minutes of the Meeting of May 21, 2025

It was noted that the second THAT in the fourth motion under New Business (#7) be removed.

6.2 Mission Integration and Inclusion Committee

Concern was raised about pausing the Peace Camp. J. Henry clarified that Peace Camp is not a King's program but partnered with us. He noted support from Rabbi Dressler and Shahin to explore a new model (e.g., integrative learning). Joe added that a small event will be hosted at King's.

6.3 Governance and Nominations Committee

Members discussed addressing perceptions of Academic Council's response to the Faculty Assembly survey, especially with faculty not on Council. The survey results may be considered during the self-evaluation process, which is reviewed annually, with an external review every seventh year. Recommendations will be brought back to this body. The self-evaluation survey will be shared in the coming days.

6.4 Strategic Enrolment Management Committee

The discussion question about the enrolment report was address by T. Gray earlier in the meeting.

MOTION: All Items Removed from the Consent Agenda will be considered as one motion to approve the Minutes of Meeting of May 21, 2025 (as amended) and receive reports from the Mission Integration and Inclusion, Governance and Nominations, and Strategic Enrolment Management Committees.
Moved by P. Ryan, seconded by A Meek
CARRIED

7.0 New Business

Motion: That the President and VPAD reports be summarized and provided in writing to Academic Council.
Moved by A. Larkin, seconded by P. Ibbott
Vote: CARRIED

A 2-minute discussion preceded the vote, proposing that motions made on the floor might get lost. It was suggested instead to submit requests to the Governance and Nominations Committee for review.

Motion: Going forward, be it resolved that any institutional decision at King's University College that carries both financial and academic implications must be presented to and approved by the Academic Council before it can be implemented.
Moved: A. Meek, seconded by P. Ibbott
TABLED TO JULY MEETING

A 19-minute discussion preceding the decision to table;

- **Motion Appropriateness**: Members questioned the motion's alignment with the By-Law's scope on matters affecting the King's mission.
- **Chair Participation:** As per the Rules of Order, the Chair remains neutral, but the body may elect an Acting Chair if the Chair wishes to participate in the discussion and decision-making.

  MOTION: To nominate L. Melnyk Gribble as Acting Chair.
  Moved by P. Ibbott, seconded by L. Melnyk Gribble
  Vote: CARRIED
- **Administration's Concerns:** R. Ventresca noted administration had not reviewed the motion and expressed concerns about potential legal, contractual, and Board risks. He

acknowledged the motive behind the motion but highlighted governance implications.

- **Impact on Programming:** Members discussed the EDID Office closure's impact on programming, including the Peace Camp partnership. R. Ventresca cautioned that the motion could cross boundaries by involving an HR decision and violating academic governance. Rob emphasized that reduced Campus Ministry staff does not dismantle Catholic mission, but places responsibility on all to promote it.

[At both the July and September 2025 Academic Council meetings, A. Meek requested that the June minutes reflect that Councilors voiced great support for the motion.]

8.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned (moved by D. Maynard, seconded by B. Lovie) at 4:53 p.m.
CARRIED

Robert Ventresca,
Chair

Paul Wilton,
University Secretary