



ACADEMIC COUNCIL MINUTES OF MEETING September 24, 2025

The meeting was held at 2:40 p.m. in Labatt Hall, Room 103, and via Zoom.

COUNCILORS:

Aidan Bobkowicz
Graham Broad
Arashdeep Chahal
Adrienne Co-Dyre
John Dool
Russell Duvernoy*
Jordan Fairbairn
Josephine Gemson
Eunice Gorman
John Grant
Tom Gray*
Chaya Halberstam *
Erin Hannah
Joe Henry
Peter Ibbott *

Liam Kennedy
Allyson Larkin
Miriam Love
Braedan Lovie
Krista Lysack
Donna Maynard*
Alison Meek
Laura Melnyk Gribble
Brian Patton 
Marcie Penner
Jeff Preston 
Felipe Rodrigues*
Patrick Ryan
Jane Sanders

Jennifer Silcox
Derek Silva
Natalie Spruce
Karen Thomson
Renfang Tian*
Thomas Tieku
Paul Tufts *
Joseph Turnbull
Robert Ventresca
Corinne Walsh
Ruth Wilson
Paul Wilton
Mark Yenson

* Regrets
 Zoom

OBSERVERS: Karen Gingrich, Himm Lai, Cynthia Lessard, Sonya Lobsinger, Carri Rodgers-Rowley, Emma Swiatek, Erin Wilson.

MINUTE TAKER: Ann Hoffer

R. Ventresca, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:33 p.m.

1.0 Land Acknowledgment

B. Lovie offered a land acknowledgment, reflecting on Dr. Niigaan Sinclair's Veritas lecture and the importance of being "and" people coming together in community to honour King's shared values, mission, and vision.

2.0 Opening Prayer

J. Dool delivered the opening prayer, reflecting on our calling to serve students' needs beyond education and learning.

3.0 Academic Council Orientation

P. Wilton gave a brief overview of King's governance structure and member responsibilities. Based on the attendance at last year's session and self-evaluation feedback, the Governance and Nominations Committee recommended holding the orientation at the first meeting of each academic year.

Paul outlined the history of bicameral university governance, noting that a 1906 Royal Commission recommended separating responsibilities between a Board of lay directors and an Academic Senate (Senate) to balance faculty authority over teaching and research with public accountability.

Paul used a dance analogy to explain the leadership dynamic: for academic matters, Senate “leads the dance” with delegated authority from the Board (see slide 10, [Orientation slide deck on OWL](#)), while the Board typically leads with consultation from Senate (see slides 11-12). He also referenced Western’s Senate practices, including how new business is introduced and how motions work. At King’s, voting Council members vote by raising cards to ensure clarity amid observers present, and ballot vote requests should be submitted in advance. A 3-minute discussion ensued.

- In response to a question about the role of elected members, Paul clarified that while members are encouraged to engage with their constituencies, the bylaw requires them to act in the best interests of the entire College and all stakeholders, making independent decisions informed by Council discussions.

R. Ventresca acknowledged P. Wilton for recently completing his PhD at the University of Toronto specializing in university governance. A round of applause followed.

Action: Slides from this presentation will be posted to OWL for members’ access.

4.0 Committee Reports

4.1 Governance and Nominations Committee

M. Yenson, Committee Chair, noted a correction to one (of two) draft motions provided in the report.

Motion #1: To recommend an amendment to the Academic Council bylaw to the Board and Corporate Members to:

- 1) Amend the Academic Council year from September 1 - August 31 to July 1 – [June 30/August 31](#)
- 2) Grant the University Secretary authority to update titles of ex-officio roles on Academic Council and its committees as title changes occur, subject to the approval of the Corporate Members at the next Annual Members’ Meeting

Moved by: Governance and Nominations Committee

CARRIED.

Motion #2: To recommend to the Board the amendment of the following terms of reference for Academic Council’s Committees as attached:

- Mission Integration and Inclusion Committee
- Research Committee
- Research Ethics Review Committee
- Strategic Enrolment Management Committee

At the request of a member, it was requested consider each committee’s Terms of Reference separately to allow for individual discussion and approval.

Motion 2a: To recommend to the Board the amended Terms of Reference for the Mission Integration and Inclusion Committee.

Moved by: Governance and Nominations Committee

Referred back to the Governance and Nominations Committee

An 8-minute discussion ensued:

- A friendly amendment included correcting the title to Vice-President of Student Affairs
- Questioning the removal of the EDID Office (or designate) as a possible error.
- This Committee has only had two meetings and a number of further revisions are anticipated

- A member asked about the role of EDID within the structure of King's as a Catholic institution, referencing section 4.6 of the ordinances. The President (Interim) clarified that this section refers to canon law, and oversight does not fall within the Committee's responsibilities
- A member suggested the Committee consider engaging an EDI consultant in deliberations on membership

Action: The Governance and Nominations Committee to consult with the Mission Integration and Inclusion Committee and bring forward a recommendation to Council.

Motion 2b: To recommend to the Board the amended Terms of Reference for the Research Committee.

Moved by: Governance and Nominations Committee

CARRIED

Motion 2c: To recommend to the Board the amended Terms of Reference for the Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC)

Moved by: Governance and Nominations Committee

Council discussed proposed changes to the RERC Terms of Reference, specifically reassigning the Chair and Vice-Chair roles to Research Facilitators due to ongoing recruitment challenges. Members expressed concern about non-faculty holding these positions, emphasizing the need for faculty leadership. It was noted that while current Research Facilitators hold PhDs, that role does not require one but does require experience in research ethics review. E. Hannah added that the Associate Dean (Research) is separate from this Committee and the workload makes the role unsuitable for part-time faculty.

Amendment: To strike Section 4.3 of the Terms of Reference for further review by the Governance and Nominations Committee.

Moved by: M. Penner, seconded by D. Silva

CARRIED (4 abstentions)

- It was suggested the Terms of Reference be approved as amended, with the Chair role provisionally maintained and the Vice-Chair position remaining vacant, allowing the Committee to continue its work.

Amended Motion: To recommend to the Board the Terms of Reference for the Research Ethics Review Committee, as amended.

Moved by: P. Ryan, seconded by B. Lovie

CARRIED (2 abstentions)

Motion 2d: To recommend to the Board the amended Terms of Reference for the Strategic Enrolment Management Committee

Moved by: Governance and Nominations Committee

A member suggested friendly amendments to replace "Chief Operating Office" (COO) with "Chair" throughout the document. It was noted that the Chair role shifted from the VP Academic Dean (VPAD) to the COO due the VPAD's existing committee workload and noted the change has produced positive results. In response to a question, R. Ventresca clarified that the COO remains a contract position.

Amended Motion: To approve the SEM Terms of Reference referring the matter of Chair back to the Governance and Nominating Committee for discussion.

CARRIED

A member noted that the Governance and Nominations Committee currently only has two of its three faculty members and requested that the raw self-study data be shared with Academic Council. The VPAD agreed.

ACTION: M. Yenson to share the raw self-study data with faculty members on Academic Council.

5.0 Reports

5.1 President

R. Ventresca, President (Interim), reported strong enrolment at King's, with applications up 27% compared to 2.7% increase across OUAC. International enrolment remains a risk, with system-wide visa applications down 16%, though King's saw a 13% increase. While enrolment brings financial stability, it does not eliminate the deficit; moderate projections are expected to be met. Over the summer, \$5.7M was generated, notably from MEM online courses. Residence is at full capacity with broader representation across campus.

International challenges persist, including study permit delays, though advocacy is underway. Western's negotiations with *Navitas* are being monitored.

The King's Community Support Centre was commended, and Council was encouraged to visit their website.

Rob noted the sold-out Homecoming dinner and highlighted upcoming events, including the Law and Public Policy Forum and a full reading of the Calls to Action for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

A member led a round of applause to acknowledge the largest student intake in King's history.

5.2 Vice-President and Academic Dean

M. Yenson, VPAD (Interim), highlighted the welcome of four new faculty members to the King's community this fall, as noted in his report (circulated with the agenda).

Mark noted that Enrolment Services has been restructured for greater effectiveness, moving to a Registrar's Office model led by T. Gray, with recruitment now under Marketing and Communications, led by A. Casson. In response to a question about this change, he explained that separating recruitment from admissions allows recruiters to focus on outreach while admissions staff handle adjudication, addressing challenges faced under the previous join-role structure.

He reported that as of September 12, 2025, undergraduate domestic fee-paying enrolment has surpassed the optimistic target for first-year students (112.7%) and is nearing the target for upper year students (88.6%). For international fee-paying students, first-year enrolment is at 53.7% of the target, with 17 new upper-year admits. Some international students faced Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) related delays, and deferrals to January are being arranged where possible.

Questions were raised regarding the enrolment update, particularly its impact on

curriculum planning. A higher minimum enrolment threshold had been applied to required courses, reducing those with fewer than 15 students from 42 to approximately 24-25 course offerings. Chairs and Directors were thanked for their efforts in implementing these changes.

A member shared that it would be valuable to have the Enrolment Report showing specific registration numbers.

Action: Mark Yenson to share the *ex post facto* Enrolment Report with Academic Council members.

5.2.1 Christy Bressette, Vice-Provost & Associate Vice-President Indigenous Initiatives, Western University, was unable to attend due to a last-minute commitment but is expected to join in October. Her focus includes aligning affiliate policies with Office of Indigenous Initiatives, Western. Two new resources were highlighted.

Action: The resources [Braiding Truth Into Action: A Guide Towards Indigenous Allyship at Western University](#) and [Centering Indigenous Voices: A Guide Towards Allyship in Indigenous Research](#) will be shared with faculty.

5.3 King's University Council Students' Council (KUCSC) Report

B. Lovie, KUCSC President, thanked individuals across campus, including the Student Affairs and Campus Life team, for their ongoing contributions. Braedan recognized A. Bobkowicz for coordinating student appointments to various departments, adding that Aidan will follow up with more details. Braedan further thanked A. Bobkowicz and A. Chahal for their support on Council and Committees and acknowledged H. Lai, a KUCSC Council member attending as an observer.

Braedan also announced the release of *The Crown*, a student-led KUCSC publication highlighting student initiatives club creation.

KUCSC was applauded for its support of orientation activities and move-in day.

6.0 The Unanimous Consent Agenda

Both the Planning and Priorities Committee Report (6.1) and Minutes of the Meeting of July 7, 2025 (6.4) were moved to Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

6.2 Strategic Enrolment Management Committee Report

Motion: To receive the Strategic Enrolment Management Committee Report.

Moved by: B. Lovie, seconded by L. Melnyk Gribble.

CARRIED

6.3 Educational Policy Committee Report

Motion: To receive the Educational Policy Committee Report.

Moved by: B. Lovie, seconded by L. Melnyk Gribble.

CARRIED

7.0 Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

7.1 Planning and Priorities Committee (P&P) Report (was 6.1)

Discussion focused on classroom modernization and IT support. While some classrooms have upgraded technology, others still lack basic resources, such as projector cables and sufficient power outlets, which can impact learning, especially during longer classes. Reduced ITS staffing has made consistent support more difficult. The P&P Committee was asked to consider how these issues may affect student retention.

Concerns were raised about prioritizing modernization over essential IT needs. It was clarified that the classroom modernization project is funded separately through Foundation donations and KUCSC contributions, not through capital projects. R. Ventresca noted that modernization is a part of a long-term, integrated plan to engage donors and improve campus spaces. Rob emphasized the need to gather information, assess, and triage priorities given current financial constraints. M. Yenson added that if ITS is unable to resolve an issue, faculty should contact him to explore alternate classroom options with Enrolment Services.

Action: Members with concerns are invited to submit their concerns, in writing, to the Planning and Priorities Committee.

7.2 Minutes of the Meeting of July 7, 2025 (was 6.4)

A. Meek noted that the minutes from the June 18, 2025 meeting do not, in her view, accurately reflect the level of support for the motion she introduced at that meeting. Alison requested that the wording be revised to indicate that there was significant support for the motion.

Action: P. Wilton confirmed that the items will be reviewed and new language incorporated.

A correction was noted on page four to replace the initial "A." with "L." for Professor Melnyk Gribble.

Motion: To approve the minutes of July 7, 2025, as amended.

Moved by: T. Tieku, seconded by P. Ryan.

CARRIED.

8.0 New Business

No items were noted.

9.0 Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 4:11 p.m.

Moved by: B. Lovie, seconded by P. Ryan

CARRIED



Robert Ventresca,
Chair



Paul Wilton,
University Secretary