



**OCAD UNIVERSITY REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES OF SENATE  
MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2026; 3:15PM – 6:15PM  
HYBRID – ROOM 322, 230 RICHMOND STREET WEST**

**Present:** Julian Goss (Chair); Sandra Gabriele (Vice-Chair); Parantap Bhatt; Philippe Blanchard; Maggie Broda; Amanda Boulos; Ross Bullen; Sophia Chaudhary; Ian Clarke; Peter Coppin; Maya Desai; Melissa General; Nicholas Di Genova; Susan Ferguson; Deanne Fisher; Bentley Jarvis; Minjeong Ju; Tredgar Kennedy; Ian Keteku; Katherine Kiloh; Susan Kun; Fidelia Lam; Ashok Mathur; Riley Midroni; Michelle Miller; Angus Mok; Peter Morin; Amish Morrell; Suzanne Morrissette; Tannis Nielsen; Lesley-Ann Noel; Suharu Ogawa; James Olley; Maria-Belén Ordóñez; Ben Peto; Cindy Poremba; Neal Prabhu; Prakriti Pratijit; Helmut Reichenbächer; Angelika Seeschaaf-Veres; Ana Serrano; Nancy Snow; Vladimir Spicanovic; Suzanne Stein; Annie Tung; Emma Westecott; b.h. Yael

**Regrets:** Angela Bains; Sean Baker; Claire Brunet; Jim Drobnick; Simon Glass; Simone Jones; JJ Lee; Sarita Srivastava; Amy Swartz; Jaime Watt

**In Attendance:** Natalie Nanton, Senate Secretary; David Wagschal, Associate Senate Secretary; and other members of the OCAD University community.

**1. Remarks from the Chair**

The meeting was opened with a Land Acknowledgement. The Chair thanked Senators for their participation in optional individual informational meetings with the Senate Chair and Senate Secretary to discuss questions, concerns or observations about Senate. Senators were reminded that the annual Financial Basics training session will be offered on February 2, 2026.

**2. Senate Agenda for January 26, 2026**

**Motion to approve** the Senate agenda for January 26, 2026, moved by Vladimir Spicanovic, seconded by Cindy Poremba.

**Motion carried.**

**3. Senate Minutes from November 24, 2025**

**Motion to approve** the Senate minutes from November 24, 2025, moved by Nancy Snow, seconded by Vladimir Spicanovic.

**Motion carried.**

**4. Consent Agenda Information Items**

**Motion to accept** the consent agenda information items, moved by Vladimir Spicanovic, seconded by Prakriti Pratijit.

**Motion carried.**

**5. Information Update from the President and Vice Chancellor**

The President thanked all those who had participated in the recent Financial Town Halls, and reminded Senate members that video recordings of both sessions are available. It was emphasized that Senate members are welcome to contact members of the Executive Team with any further questions.

**6. Student Matters**

A student Senator raised concerns about the lack of upper-year fabrication studio offerings. It was noted that in-depth fabrication skills are essential to many disciplines, and that some students are delaying graduation to get into these courses. It was emphasized that there is student demand for these courses, as indicated by several student petitions.

Discussion

The Interim Dean, Faculty of Art, confirmed that they are responsible for the courses in question and encouraged the student Senator to meet with them to share the petitions and discuss the matter further. Another Senator also indicated that they are currently engaging with Studio Facilities to discuss student access to the fabrication studios and invited the student to contact them as well.

It was observed that, in some cases, significant required courses are being scheduled at the same time as fabrication studios, which might be creating the impression that there is reduced demand for these courses. The importance of fabrication skills for employability was also emphasized, particularly given the emergence of Generative AI. Lastly, it was observed that, even beyond the fabrication studios, at least two levels of training are essential for advancing key skills in the University's studio subjects.

It was requested that the Senate be updated on the matter at a future meeting.

**7. Indigenous OCAD**

The Chair explained that this standing item is intended to encompass both regular reporting from the Indigenous Education Council (IEC) as well as other topics related to Indigenous academic matters.

The Chair of the IEC and the Executive Director, Indigenous Engagement, screened a presentation that provided an overview of the current Indigenous leadership and structures at the University. It was explained that, building on the work of previous leadership, efforts are underway to strengthen the relationship of the IEC with the Senate as well as to enhance collaboration and communication with stakeholders across the University. It was emphasized that, moving forward, the intention is to center not only the success of Indigenous students but also the success of Indigenous faculty and staff.

The new Indigenous Student Advisory Circle was introduced to Senate members. It was explained that the Circle, formed in collaboration with the Indigenous Student Centre and

guided by Elder Liz Osawamick, seeks to provide a forum for the growing number of Indigenous students at the University to provide feedback on their experience. It was noted that early student feedback has included a request for mandatory Indigenous competency training for all faculty.

Finally, Senate members were informed that work is resuming on the activation of the Indigenous Learning Outcomes.

#### Discussion

Senate members were asked to reflect further on Senate's relationship with the IEC and to consider what is working well, and what could be strengthened. Senate members were encouraged to contact the Chair of the IEC with any ideas or questions.

### **8. 2025 Fall Term Grades**

**Motion to approve** the 2025 Fall term grades, moved by Maria-Belén Ordóñez, seconded by Katherine Kiloh.

The circulated memo was reviewed.

**Motion carried.**

### **9. Senate Executive Committee (SEC)**

**Motion to move in camera**, moved by Philippe Blanchard, seconded by Prakriti Pratijit.

**Motion carried.**

#### IN CAMERA SESSION OF SENATE:

*Commenced at 3:58 p.m.*

#### **9.1. Recommendations for Honorary Degree Recipients**

#### **9.2. Recommendation for Academic Administrative Appointment**

The Senate approved a six-month extension to the appointment of Philippe Blanchard as Interim Dean in the Faculty of Art.

#### REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING OF SENATE:

*Resumed at 4:20 p.m.*

### **10. Senate Academic Standards Committee (SASC)**

#### **10.1. 2026 Winter Graduands**

Senate members were referred to the screened memo.

**Motion to approve** the 79 Winter graduands, moved by Parantap Bhatt, seconded by Philippe Blanchard.

It was confirmed that the percentage of students receiving distinction at the University is consistent with trends at other Canadian art and design universities.

**Motion carried.**

#### **10.2. Revisions to Policy 1.6: Experiential Learning Placement Program**

**Motion to approve** the revisions to Policy 1.6: Experiential Learning Placement Program, moved by Philippe Blanchard, seconded by Maria-Belén Ordóñez.

A presentation was provided that outlined the proposed revisions, including the clarification that responsibility for risk management processes rests with the Centre for Emerging Artists and Designers, and the addition of a clause to make explicit that students are expected to maintain regular communication with their experiential learning faculty supervisors. Several other minor updates were noted.

**Motion carried.**

## **11. Senate Undergraduate Studies Committee (SUSC)**

### **11.1. Laptop Program Changes for 2026-27**

It was explained that several further revisions have been made in addition to those approved by Senate in the Fall.

**Motion to approve** the additional undergraduate laptop program changes, moved by Katherine Kiloh, seconded by Philippe Blanchard.

The proposed changes were briefly outlined.

**Motion carried.**

## **12. Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)**

### **12.1. Laptop Program Changes for 2026-27**

**Motion to approve** the graduate laptop program changes, moved by Ashok Mathur, seconded by Peter Morin.

The proposed changes were briefly outlined.

**Motion carried.**

### **12.2. New Program Proposal: PhD in Creative Practice**

**Motion to approve** the new program proposal for a PhD in Creative Practice, moved by Ashok Mathur, seconded by Peter Morin.

A presentation was provided that summarized the key elements of the proposed PhD, including core requirements, rationale, approval timelines, target audiences, planned intake, provisions for financial aid and supervision, and expected financial impact. It was emphasized that demand is now increasing for doctoral-level credentials in the art and design sector, and that the proposed degree would be the first of its kind at a dedicated Canadian art and design university. It was further explained that the degree is modeled on shorter-duration research intensive doctorates, which are found more commonly outside of North America. These models, it was further noted, are less focused on instructor-led courses, and employ a “confirmation” model instead of traditional North American comprehensive exams. It was also underlined that initial cohorts would be drawn primarily from working professionals within industry or academia who already have considerable experience in practice-based research. It was confirmed that due to the limited cohorts, and reduced focus on instructor-led courses, the financial impact of the program is expected to be negligible. It was also confirmed that the number of supervising faculty already identified in the proposal would be sufficient for the initial intakes, and is expected to gradually build capacity through mentoring and co-supervision with other faculty members. Positive funding implications were also noted, particularly the potential of leveraging the program in applications for research grants.

### Discussion

Concerns were raised that, given current financial challenges, it may be an inopportune time to bring forward an innovative new program, particularly one that will be as high profile as the University's first PhD. Specific concerns were raised around supervisory capacity, the lack of dedicated staff support, the adequacy of space and facility resources for students, and low budget allocations for supplies, marketing and student funding. It was expressed that these concerns are made especially pressing by the challenges facing the institution in ensuring adequate resources in all of these areas for the existing master's programs.

In response, it was emphasized that the supervisory load of the anticipated PhD students will be significantly different from supervision of master's students, since, in this model, incoming students will already be well advanced in their fields, and will have a clear trajectory of research established. Supervision, it was explained, is therefore expected to be less intensive than would be the case in master's degrees or traditional North American PhD programs, which take more junior students. With regard to staff support, it was explained that the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) has moved to a new model of collective support for all programs, and that careful examination had confirmed that resources exist to support the small anticipated PhD cohorts. It was further confirmed that students could be integrated into existing graduate spaces, and it was added that PhD students are not expected to require space throughout their program and that many would have alternative work spaces at home or in personal studios. It was explained that students would have access to all normal SGS travel and funding supports.

Concerns were reiterated about whether sufficient resources will be in place to support supervisory and space needs.

A concern was raised about the qualitative difference between a fine arts or design master's degree and a doctor of philosophy degree. It was suggested that if a master's degree is typically focused on a particular artifact, and a doctor of philosophy on a conceptually-specific, usually written, product that advances new knowledge, the present proposal appears to be closer to a master's degree. The concern was also raised that, within the North American context, the proposed program might not be perceived to be as valuable as more traditionally-structured PhD programs.

In response, it was emphasized that the current proposal is intended to be innovative, expanding the horizon of educational opportunities in Canada, and that demand is expected to increase for shorter duration programs. It was reiterated that the intended audience for the degree would possess extensive professional experience, distinguishing them from students who would typically enroll in other North American practice-based PhDs.

Senate members raised several other concerns, including whether suitable research lab opportunities could be found for this level of professional; the potential for students to take considerably more than three to four years to complete the program, thereby putting strain on supervisory resources; documented issues with

finding studio spaces for existing master's level students; whether Canada Research Chairs would be prepared or able to offer funding or space; concerns about the sufficiency of library resources; and concerns about the capacity of the research office to support some of the grant scenarios envisioned in the proposal. It was also suggested that editorial inconsistencies in the document be addressed before the proposal proceeds further.

It was observed that the proposal is not entirely clear as to the mode of delivery of the program or whether there is a residency requirement. In response, it was clarified that the program is designed so that mode of delivery and residency can be tailored to an individual student's needs, which will allow the program to be as inclusive and accessible as possible.

It was noted that, because this program would ultimately become a flagship program for the University, it is critical that the proposal be as strong as possible, and subject to thorough due diligence. At the same time, it was recognized that active and vigorous new program development is important for the broader health of the institution, particularly in our current fiscal circumstances, and that the University does need to demonstrate that it is meaningfully contributing to the research community and add new knowledge to its fields of specialization.

**Motion to consider** tabling the motion until such time as the University's financial situation has improved, moved by Emma Westecott, seconded by Ross Bullen.

**Motion carried.**

Discussion took place on whether it would be preferable to table the motion or move to an immediate vote. It was noted that tabling the motion would allow for further consultation and modification of the proposal to address some of the issues raised. Concerns were also reiterated about the need to ensure that the proposal is viable given broader concerns around the financial sustainability of graduate studies as a whole. It was expressed, however, that there is a need for the University to demonstrate vibrancy in developing new initiatives, and that the University should be confident in its ability to implement innovative ideas. It was also observed that the University is always engaged in the iterative improvement of all programs.

It was noted that it would be difficult or even impossible to determine "such time as the University's financial situation has improved", and that therefore this should be replaced with a condition about further consultation with Senators.

**Motion to adjourn debate** on the motion to approve the PhD in Creative Practice proposal pending further consultation with Senators, moved by Maria-Belén Ordóñez, seconded by Emma Westecott.

**Motion carried.**

### **13. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC)**

#### **13.1. Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan**

**Motion to approve** the MFA/MDes/MA Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan, moved by Suzanne Stein, seconded by Peter Morin.

A concern was expressed about the importance of ensuring that recommendations of Cyclical Program Reviews are adequately resourced.

**Motion carried.**

### **13.2. Strategic Foresight and Innovation IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan**

**Motion to approve** the MDes Strategic Foresight and Innovation IQAP Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan, moved by Peter Morin, seconded by Sandra Gabriele.

Concerns were raised about the recurring themes of under-resourcing in the Final Assessment Reports, and also about ensuring that implementation plans contain specific, measurable, time-bound actions. It was clarified that the references to "program committee" in the report will be understood to refer to all who teach and contribute in the program.

**Motion carried.**

## **14. Senate Academic Policy & Planning Committee (SAPPC)**

### **14.1. Annual Report on Research Ethics Board**

Senate members were referred to the circulated report, which was presented to Senate for information. The floor was opened to questions.

#### Discussion

It was clarified that the Research Ethics Board process applies to ethics as defined by the 2nd edition of Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), and does extend to other ethical issues, such as research involving partners engaged in national defence.

## **15. Senate Committee Information Reports**

The Chair referred members to the consolidated Senate Committee Information Report which included reports from the following committees:

- Senate Executive Committee (SEC)
- Senate Academic Policy & Planning Committee (SAPPC)
- Senate Academic Standards Committee (SASC)
- Senate Undergraduate Studies Committee (SUSC)
- Senate Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)
- Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC)
- Senate Research Committee (SRC)

The chair of the Senate Undergraduate Studies Committee (SUSC) provided further details on the committee's ongoing discussion of the double-credit pilot process, highlighting that a standardized process for supporting pilot initiatives is being developed. Senate members were informed that discussions are also taking place on ensuring oversight of changes that may not fall directly under the purview of SUSC but nevertheless have an impact on curriculum.

Discussion

It was confirmed that the standardized protocol for supporting pilots would include procedures for sharing back the results of pilot evaluations with SUSC and the broader faculty community.

**16. Enrollment Presentation**

It was agreed to defer this item due to lack of time.

**17. Other Business**

It was requested that Senate return to the question of assessing the University's progress in decolonization, as per the priorities of the Academic & Strategic Plan. It was also observed that it is important that decisions about school closures due to inclement weather be made as soon as possible, given their potential impact on early morning classes.

**18. Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourn**, moved by Emma Westecott, seconded by Parantap Bhatt.  
**Meeting adjourned at 6:20 pm.**

*[Originally signed]*

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Julian Goss, Senate Chair

*[Originally signed]*

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Natalie Nanton, Senate Secretary