

Nipissing University
Minutes of the Academic Senate Meeting
January 16, 2026
2:30 p.m.
Room F210 & Zoom Videoconference

Members Present:

K. Wamsley (Chair), C. Richardson, R. Hacquard, B. Law, N. Colborne, G. Raymer, D. Iafrate, N. Black

R. Davis, H. Earl, A. Hatef, C. Irwin, S. Kariuki, K. Lucas, P. Nosko, M. Owens, T. Smith, K. Srigley (Interim Speaker), S. Srigley, T. Stewart, L. Thielen-Wilson, H. Zhu

J. Allison, C. Anyinam, S. Cairns, C. Greco, R. Hoffman, T. Horton, D. Jarvis, A. Leblond, P. Maher, P. Millar, A. Nkurunziza, C. Ricci, A. Schinkel-Ivy, M. Sullivan, I. Tavares, J. Thornborrow, V. Williams

O. Pokorny, R. Kasperavicius

F. Couchie

R. Hehn

J. Martin, N. Botham

Absent With Regrets:

R. Gendron, G. McCann, H. Texiera, A. Adler, D. Hemsworth, A. Kociolek, O. Remillard, D. Lamirande, W. MacKenzie

The Senate Speaker offered a Traditional Territory acknowledgement.

Adoption of the Agenda of the Senate Meeting of: January 16, 2026

Motion 1: Moved by M. Owens, seconded by K. Lucas that the agenda of the Senate meeting of January 16, 2026 be adopted. Friendly amendments to the Sociology Major Modification included in the November 24, 2025 Academic Curriculum Committee Report were presented on screen and are attached in the minutes.
CARRIED

Adoption of the Minutes of the Senate Meeting of: November 21, 2025

Motion 2: Moved by S. Srigley, seconded by J. Allison that the minutes of the Senate meeting of November 21, 2025 be adopted.
CARRIED

Reports From Other Bodies

The President delivered his report, welcoming Senators to the 2026 term and acknowledging the commencement of the budget planning cycle. He advised that a balanced budget remains projected for the current fiscal year, with a positive financial outlook anticipated for 2026–2027. A recent \$3 million funding announcement was also noted; these funds have been allocated to academic space maintenance and renovations, as well as instructional technology upgrades.

The search for the next Provost is underway. The Search Committee has convened its initial meeting, and community consultation will begin shortly, including a survey to be administered by Boyden.

The President also provided an update on proposed revisions to the Professor Emeritus/Emerita policy, including the adoption of the gender-neutral title “Professor Emerit.” A revised policy will be presented to Senate for approval, and current files will be reviewed in accordance with existing guidelines.

In addition, Graduate Studies is revising its graduate supervision policies to better support students whose supervisors are retiring.

Upcoming campus events were highlighted, including Shoot for the Cure and the Military Appreciation Game in support of the Military Family Resource Centre.

The full report is appended to the minutes.

The Provost and Vice-President Academic delivered her report, welcoming Senators to the new term and noting a busy start to the semester. She advised that work is ongoing to develop the Academic Plan and Operational Plan (APOP) reporting template, with institutional progress updates scheduled to commence at the next Senate meeting. Policy revisions continue to advance through AQAPC, including updates to the Amalgamation, Consolidation, Transfer, Renaming and Closure of Academic Programs and Academic Units Policy.

The Report on the Annual Program Reviews (APRs) will be presented at an upcoming Senate meeting, together with proposed revisions to the APR process and template. She further noted that the SEM Working Group continues to meet regularly to review recruitment and retention data and to consider new retention initiatives.

Appreciation was extended to faculty members who contributed to recent self-studies.

The full report is attached to the minutes.

The Board of Governors provided a report which is appended to the minutes.

The Council of Ontario Universities Academic Colleague provided a report which is appended to the minutes.

The NUSU VP Advocacy and Awareness provided a report which is attached to the minutes.

Question Period

In response to a question regarding the status of the outdoor classroom, the President advised that construction is progressing. Some of the walls and higher trusses have now been installed, and the structure is taking shape. The project is moving along, with an anticipated opening in the spring.

Further questions were raised regarding teaching spaces. Specifically, when classrooms are redesigned or renovated, is there an opportunity for faculty to provide input?

An example was provided regarding Room A137, which was redesigned and renovated over the summer. Concerns were noted that the projection screen is positioned in the centre of the room, with the podium directly in front of it. As the screen extends almost to the floor, part of the projected image is obstructed. The Speaker indicated that she also teaches in A137 and confirmed that a request has been submitted to raise the projector.

The President advised that a Space Committee meets regularly and welcomes feedback regarding teaching spaces.

It was further noted that some Indigenous faculty members have expressed difficulties with classroom configurations that do not allow students to sit in a circle, which is important for certain teaching approaches. A question was raised as to whether faculty are aware of the Space Committee and its role. The President indicated that there would be follow-up on this matter.

Reports of Standing Committees and Faculty or University Councils

Senate Executive Committee

Motion 3: Moved by K. Wamsley, seconded by T. Smith that the Report of the Senate Executive Committee dated January 8, 2026 be received.
CARRIED

Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee (AQAPC)

Motion 4: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by M. Owens that Senate receive the Report of the Academic Quality Assurance and Planning Committee dated November 28, 2025, which includes for information:

- a) The FARs/IPs for the BA Indigenous Studies, BA Political Science, BA Liberal Arts, BA Liberal Science, and the MSc Kinesiology programs;
- b) The Two (2) Year Post-Cyclical Program Review Monitoring Reports for BA Child and Family Studies, BA & BSc Computer Science, BA Gender Equality and Social Justice, BA Religions and Cultures, BA Social Welfare and Social Development.

CARRIED

Motion 5: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by N. Colborne that Senate receive the proposal for suspension of admission to the Art History and Visual Studies stream of the BA (Fine Arts) program for consultation.
CARRIED

Motion 6: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by T. Smith that Senate approve the consolidation of Anthropology, Religions and Cultures, Gender Equality and Social Justice, and Sociology into a single Sociology program.
CARRIED

Senator Susan Srigley spoke to the major modification of the newly merged degree in Sociology, which now includes curriculum from Anthropology, Gender Equality and Social

Justice and Religions and Cultures, and requested that the following be included in the Senate minutes:

“While I am excited about the prospect of this new program, and what it will offer our students, I need to also acknowledge the dissolution of the programs in Anthropology, Gender Equality and Social Justice and Religions and Cultures. This is a personal loss for me, having been hired to develop the honours degree in religion over 20 years ago with Sal Renshaw. And I know it is a loss for my colleagues in Anthropology and GESJ. It is also a loss for our students. Rest assured, we will continue to grandparent all currently enrolled students in our programs so that they will earn their degrees, but, sadly, they will be the last.

Faced with the suspension of enrollments in Sociology, Religion, GESJ and Anthropology, this past summer, faculty from each of these programs rustled up an enormous amount of good will and worked very hard to develop a dynamic new program with curriculum divided into concentrations, creating a new interdisciplinary degree in Sociology. It was a lot of work, but we think that it will be an exciting new degree option for students at Nipissing. I'd like to thank my colleagues, Robin Gibson, Nathan Colborne and especially Jane Barker for their support throughout this process.”

Senator Colborne expressed his appreciation for the significant effort undertaken, noting that the work was carried out in a highly collegial manner and resulted in a creative and innovative program. He indicated that he looks forward to supporting and offering the new program.

The Speaker also acknowledged her colleagues for their dedication and hard work as well as the excellent programs they had developed over many years. She reflected on the sense of loss accompanying these changes, while recognizing the importance of embracing change and the potential opportunities moving forward.

Academic Curriculum Committee

Motion 7: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by R. Hoffman that the Report of the Academic Curriculum Committee dated November 24, 2025 be received.
CARRIED

Faculty of Arts & Science

English

Substantive:

Motion 8: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by N. Botham that Senate approve that ENGL 3486: Topics in Genre, ENGL 3496: Topics in Dramatic Genres, and ENGL 3497: Topics in Prose Genres be added to list of available courses in English Studies Group I: Literary Foundations as outlined in the attached proposal.
CARRIED

Fine Arts/Visual Arts

Substantive:

Motion 9: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by N. Colborne that Senate approve that the Art History requirements for the BFA Program be changed as outlined in the attached proposal.
CARRIED

Substantive:

Motion 10: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by N. Colborne that Senate approve that the Art History requirements for the BA Specialization in Fine Arts Program be changed as outlined in the attached proposal.
CARRIED

Substantive:

Motion 11: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by N. Botham that Senate approve that the Art History requirements for the BA Major in Fine Arts, Art History and Visual Studies Stream Program be changed as outlined in the attached proposal.
CARRIED

Non-Substantive:

That a restriction be added to FAVA 2507 Art Abroad as outlined in the attached proposal.

History

Substantive:

Motion 12: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by H. Earl that Senate approve the creation of HIST 1037 Introduction to U.S. History, as outlined in the attached proposal.
CARRIED

Substantive:

Motion 13: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by N. Botham that Senate approve the creation of HIST 1116 Food: A North American History as outlined in the attached proposal.
CARRIED

Substantive:

Motion 14: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by H. Earl that Senate approve the creation of HIST 2046 Slavery and the American Civil War as outlined in the attached proposal.
CARRIED

Substantive:

Motion 15: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by J. Martin that Senate approve the creation of HIST 3527 American Music as outlined in the attached proposal.
CARRIED

Non-substantive:

The deletion of HIST 1016: Introduction to Historical Studies as outlined in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

The deletion of HIST 1107: Introduction to Historical Studies as outlined in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

The deletion of HIST 2516: Intro to American History as outlined in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

The deletion of HIST 2626: Restraining the Hounds of War as outlined in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

The deletion of HIST 3116: Topics In European or World History I; HIST 3117: Topics In European or World History II; HIST 3126: Topics In European or World History III; HIST 3127: Topics In European or World History IV; and HIST 3146: Topics in Canadian History; HIST3136: Selected Topics in Women's and Gender History; and HIST 3355: Topics in the History of Women and Gender in Canada as outlined in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

The deletion of HIST 3377: American Healthcare as outlined in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

The deletion of HIST 3526: Spies: the Rise of the Secret Security State as outlined in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

The deletion of HIST 3716: Russian History to 1917 as outlined in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

The deletion of HIST 3717: Russian-Soviet History as outlined in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

The deletion of HIST 3947: Sport and Spectacle in Modern Society as outlined in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

The deletion of HIST 4325: Oral History; and HIST 4435 Sexuality and Gender in Europe, 1300-1600 as outlined in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

That HIST 2166: Survival: People and Nature in Northern North America to the Industrial Era be banked.

Non-substantive:

That HIST 2036: Trade, Commerce, and Economy in the Ancient World be banked.

Non-substantive:

That HIST 2227: The Making of Modern Europe: From Total War to Revolution 1914 - 1991 be banked.

Non-substantive:

That HIST 2336: The Vietnam War be banked.

Non-substantive:

That HIST 2406: Athletes, Gladiators, and Actors: The Body Culture of Ancient Greece and Rome be banked.

Non-substantive:

That HIST 2426: Law and Justice in the Ancient World be banked.

Non-substantive:

That HIST 2547: Famous Figures in the Ancient World be banked.

Non-substantive:

That HIST 2706: The Ancient World in Modern Popular Media be banked.

Non-substantive:

That the course title for HIST 2137 be changed from “The Global Cold War” to “Empire, Ideology, and Intervention: The Cold War in Global Perspective.”

Non-substantive:

That the course description for HIST 2137 Empire, Ideology, and Intervention: The Cold War in Global Perspective be revised.

Non-substantive:

That the course title for HIST 3147 be changed from “Topics in Canadian History” to “Advanced Topics in History.”

Non-substantive:

That the course description for HIST 3147 Advanced Topics in History be revised.

Non-substantive:

That the course title for HIST 4335 be changed from “Topics in American History” to “Seminar in American History.”

Non-substantive:

That the course title for HIST 4485 be changed from “Environmental History” to “Seminar in Environmental History.”

Non-substantive:

That the course title for HIST 4185 be changed from “Canada in the Twentieth Century” to “Seminar in Canadian History.”

Non-substantive:

That the course description for HIST 4185 Seminar in Canadian History be revised.

Non-substantive:

That the course title for HIST 4385 be changed from “Gender in Canadian History” to “Seminar in Gender History.”

Non-substantive:

That the course description for HIST 4385 Seminar in Gender History be revised.

Non-substantive:

That the course title for HIST 4615 be changed from “Special Topics” to “Seminar in European History.”

Non-substantive:

That the course description for HIST 4615 Seminar in European History be revised.

Non-substantive:

That the course title for HIST 4815 be changed from “The Third Reich” to “Seminar in International History.”

Non-substantive:

That the course description for HIST 4815 Seminar in International History be revised.

Non-substantive:

That the course description for HIST 3415 Fieldwork in Classical Archaeology be revised.

Non-substantive:

That the prerequisite for HIST 3415 Fieldwork in Classical Archaeology be revised.

Substantive:

Motion 16: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by N. Botham that Senate approve the removal of the restriction from the WAG certificate as outlined in the attached proposal.
CARRIED

Substantive:

Motion 17: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by R. Davis that Senate approve that the requirements for the WAG certificate be changed as outlined in the attached proposal.
CARRIED

Physics

Non-substantive:

That the prerequisite for PHYS-2006: General Physics III: Electromagnetism be changed as outlined in the attached proposal.

Sociology

Substantive:

Motion 18: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by N. Botham that Senate approve the creation of SOCI 3107 Rural People, Places & Problems as outlined in the attached template and in line with the major modification proposal.
CARRIED

Substantive:

Motion 19: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by J. Martin that Senate approve the creation of ~~SOCI 3106~~ SOCI 3336 Sports & Society as outlined in the attached template and in line with the major modification proposal.
CARRIED

Substantive:

Motion 20: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by J. Martin that Senate approve the creation of SOCI 4306 Sociology of Organizations as outlined in the attached template and in line with the major modification proposal.
CARRIED

Substantive:

Motion 21: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by A. Leblond that Senate approve that the courses be recoded to SOCI as outlined in the attached document and in line with the major modification proposal.
CARRIED

Non-substantive:

The deletion of the courses listed in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

That the courses be recoded to SOCI and renamed as outlined in the attached proposal.

Non-substantive:

That the course title for SOCI 2036 Gerontology: Aging and Society be changed to SOCI 2036 Aging and Society as outlined in the attached proposal.

Substantive:

Motion 22: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by T. Smith that Senate approve that the learning outcomes for Sociology be revised as outlined in the attached document and in line with the major modification proposal.
CARRIED

Non-substantive:

That the courses be identified as antirequisites as outlined in the attached proposal.

Substantive:

Motion 23: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by N. Colborne that Senate approve the Major Modification for the Sociology Program be approved as outlined in the attached proposal.
CARRIED

Faculty of Education and Professional Studies

Master of Education

Substantive:

Motion 24: Moved by C. Richardson, seconded by G. Raymer that Senate approve that successful completion of EDUC 4756 (*Curriculum Design and Inquiry*) with a final grade of 70% or higher be eligible as transfer credit toward an elective course in the MEd as outlined in the attached proposal.
CARRIED

Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

Motion 25: Moved by B. Law, seconded by M. Sullivan that the Report of the Graduate Studies Committee dated November 28, 2025 be received.
CARRIED

Honorary Degrees Committee

Motion 26: Moved by K. Wamsley, seconded by N. Botham that the Report of the Honorary Degrees Committee dated December 3, 2025 be received.
CARRIED

Elections

- Elect one (1) faculty Senator to serve as Deputy Speaker of Senate for a term effective July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2025. *As no nominations were received, the election will be included in the February 27, 2026 Senate agenda.*

New Business

Motion 27: Moved by K. Wamsley, seconded by T. Horton that Senate move in camera.
CARRIED

Motion 28: Moved by K. Wamsley, seconded by H. Earl that Senate approve the list of Honorary Degree recipients.
CARRIED

Motion 29: Moved by K. Wamsley, seconded by H. Earl that Senate move out of camera.
CARRIED

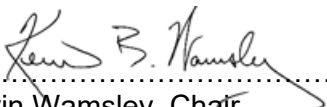
Announcements

President Wamsley reminded Senators of the upcoming Shoot for the Cure basketball game and the Military Appreciation hockey game and encouraged attendance and support for these events.

The Provost reminded Senators that nominations for the Dave Marshall Leadership Awards are being accepted until January 31. Senators were encouraged to submit nominations for deserving student leaders in recognition of their outstanding contributions to their academic program, the campus, or the broader community.

Adjournment

Senate was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.


.....
Kevin Wamsley, Chair


.....
Sandy Landriault, Secretary to the Senate

January 16, 2026 Senate Agenda Revisions

November 24, 2025 ACC Report:

Motion 19: Please change SOCI 3106 to SOCI 3336 (and change in the supporting documents)

Motion 21: That Senate approve that the courses be recoded to SOCI as outlined in the attached document and in line with the major modification proposal:

Add ANTH 2026 (Archaeology I) to be recoded as SOCI 2226 SOCI-2306

Add ANTH 2027 (Applied Archaeological Excavation) to be recoded as SOCI 2227 SOCI-2417

Add ANTH 3037 (Archaeological Cataloguing and Reporting) to be recoded as SOCI 3137

Then the non-substantive right below it, non-substantive: The deletion of the courses listed in the attached proposal.

Remove ANTH 2026 (Archaeology I) from the list.

Remove ANTH 2027 (Applied Archaeological Excavation) from the list.

Remove ANTH 3037 (Archaeological Cataloguing and Reporting) from the list.

The non-substantive below motion 22: That the courses be identified as antirequisites as outlined in the attached proposal.

Add the following to the list of antirequisites:

ANTH 2026 (Archaeology I) is an antirequisite to SOCI 2226 2306

ANTH 2027 (Applied Archaeological Excavation) is an antirequisite to SOCI 2227 2417

ANTH 3037 (Archaeological Cataloguing and Reporting) is an antirequisite to SOCI 3137

16 January 2026
President's Senate Report

Welcome back to the new term Senators, welcome to 2026. I hope that you all had a restful holiday. It is budget season for us, as all of our units are preparing for their 2026-27 budgets which will be presented over the next 8 weeks or so. Looking ahead to the coming months we are still projecting a balanced budget for this fiscal year and hoping for a positive projection for 26-27. You will see a funding announcement from our MPP's office – this is old news and funds that are already spent on academic space maintenance, renovations, and technical equipment for instruction - however, \$3m was certainly welcome.

As you know, we are in the process of conducting the search for our next Provost. The Committee had its first meeting before Christmas. I will be chairing the Committee with members including Renee Hacquard, Hilary Earl, Robin Gendron, Glenda Black, Alison Shinkel-Ivy, Sarah Canton, Dave Smits, Jaden Martin, and Jenny Macky. Boyden will be contacting you in the coming weeks with a survey to determine what you think are the most important qualities in a Provost, so please have an eye out for that and have your voice heard in the process.

As I have reported previously, we are working on some changes to our Professor Emeritus/Emerita policy. We will be moving to the gender-neutral term Professor Emerit. As we work through the details of the policy that will be brought to Senate for approval, we will be evaluating all current files within the existing guidelines of the process over the course of the next several weeks. At the same time, Graduate Studies is revising its policies on graduate supervision to ensure that students whose supervisors are retiring are well served.

A reminder that Shoot for the Cure is happening tonight at 6:00; The Military Appreciation Game in support of the Military Family Resource Centre is happening tomorrow at 4:00 pm.

Provost's Report to Senate

January 16, 2026

Welcome and General Updates

Welcome back and happy new year! As always, the beginning of a new semester is a busy time for the university community.

Ongoing and Upcoming Initiatives

Several initiatives continue to advance through the Provost's Office:

- The development of an Academic Plan and Operational Plan (APOP) reporting template. This work continued at a meeting earlier this week. We look forward to beginning regular updates on our institutional progress at the next Senate meeting.
- Policy development continues to move through AQAPC; specifically, revisions to the Amalgamation, Consolidation, Transfer, Renaming and Closure of Academic Programs and Academic Units and Policy.
- There will be a presentation of the Report on the Annual Program Reviews (APRs) at the next Senate meeting. At that time, we will also speak about how the APRs will differ moving forward and discuss anticipated changes to the template.

Quality Assurance

I have had the pleasure of reading several self-studies and I want to offer my thanks to the faculty members who participated in completing these reports.

Strategic Enrolment Management

The SEM Working Group continues to meet regularly to review recruitment and retention data and to review new retention initiatives.



Board of Governors Report to Senate – January 2026

Board of Governors Meeting December 4, 2025

The Board of Governors met on Thursday, December 4, 2025, In the President's Boardroom and via Zoom remote conferencing.

Updates on the Academic Plan/Operation Plan (APOP) initiatives were provided, including a Financial Literacy website which is currently in the draft stage. A draft template to track progress of all APOP items is also in development.

The Board of Governors is responsible for appointing Nipissing University Research Ethics Board (NUREB) members through a fair and impartial process. A resolution was passed to appoint Shiv Mohan as a community member for a three-year term.

The President outlined three strategic objectives for the 2025-26 academic year, focusing on financial sustainability, student learning opportunities, and campus inclusivity. The objectives aim to secure funding, enhance the student experience, and implement equity and governance improvements. The Board accepted the recommendation of the Executive Committee to approve the President's 2025/26 Goals and Priorities as presented.

The Board of Governors is pleased to formally announce the reappointment of Dr. Kevin Wamsley as President and Vice-Chancellor of Nipissing University for a second five-year term, beginning August 1, 2026.

The Board of Governors next meets on February 19, 2026.



Report to the Nipissing University Academic Senate Council of Ontario Universities (COU)—Academic Colleagues Meetings

Dates: December 9–10, 2025

Format: Hybrid (COU Office and Zoom)

Prepared by: Carlo Ricci

Executive Summary

The December 9–10, 2025 meetings of the COU Academic Colleagues took place in a context of unprecedented financial pressure on Ontario's universities. Tuition remains cut and frozen, operating grants are the lowest in Canada on a per-student basis, and recent federal limits on international student permits have had a significant impact. Universities received approval for approximately 68% of requested international student numbers (compared to approximately 20% for colleges), resulting in an estimated system-wide revenue loss of approximately \$300 million in the past year.

A major focus of the meetings was artificial intelligence (AI) in teaching, research, and institutional operations. Presentations and consultations emphasized that AI adoption is accelerating rapidly, bringing transformative opportunities. The discussion underscored the need for ethical, secure, and student-centred integration of AI, alongside clear institutional strategies, faculty support, and attention to equity, privacy, and academic integrity.

Context: Sector-Wide Challenges

Participants emphasized that Ontario universities are operating under extraordinary financial constraints:

- Tuition remains cut and frozen, limiting institutional revenue growth.
- Ontario's operating grants are the lowest in the country on a per-student basis.
- Federal caps on international student enrolment have reduced institutional revenues, with universities receiving approval for roughly 68% of requested international students, contributing to an estimated \$300 million system-wide shortfall.

These pressures frame all current policy discussions, including investments in technology, staffing, and student supports.

December 9, 2025—Evening Meeting

Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Research

Presenter: Professor who uses AI

He spoke about improvisation in the rapidly evolving world of AI. He emphasized that,

- The pace of AI development is such that tasks that were impossible only a month ago may now be feasible.
- Responsibility remains with the individual submitting work: regardless of whether AI tools are used, authors are accountable for what they produce.
- AI tools are already embedded in many systems students and faculty use.

The presentation highlighted the importance of shifting the conversation from prohibition toward responsible, transparent, and pedagogically sound use of AI.

COU Artificial Intelligence Task Force Consultation

Leads: A President and Vice-Chancellor and a Chief AI Officer

He, speaking as Chair of the COU AI Task Force, stressed the importance of ensuring that AI platforms used in higher education are safe, secure, ethical, and compliant with legal and privacy requirements. We discussed how consumer-grade AI tools often lack adequate intellectual property protections, raising concerns for both faculty research and student work.

A recurring theme was that failing to prepare students to work with AI is itself a risk. Graduates must be equipped to engage critically and ethically with AI tools that are already prevalent in professional environments.

Key Themes from the AI Consultation

Opportunities and Risks of AI Adoption

Participants discussed the dual nature of AI in higher education:

- **Opportunities:** enhanced research methodologies, faster data analysis, personalized learning, administrative efficiencies, and new forms of scholarly inquiry.
- **Risks:** academic integrity challenges, unethical use, environmental costs, algorithmic bias, privacy concerns, deskilling, and over-reliance on proprietary platforms.

Student-Centred AI Integration

Discussion emphasized that learners must remain at the centre of AI adoption:

- Institutions must ensure that students continue to develop critical thinking, judgment, and disciplinary understanding, rather than outsourcing cognition to AI tools.
- Faculty should be supported in using AI to enhance active learning and personalization while maintaining clear expectations around integrity and authorship.
- There was concern about who benefits from AI adoption and who may be left out, particularly students with limited access to paid or institutionally supported tools.

Institutional Readiness and Strategic Planning

Participants identified the need for:

- Targeted professional development to help faculty decide when and how to integrate AI into teaching and research.
- Clear institutional guidance on approved platforms, data security, and intellectual property.
- Equitable access to AI tools for students and faculty across disciplines, campuses, and employment categories.

Impact of AI on Higher Education

Looking ahead 2—5 years, participants anticipated that AI will:

- Transform teaching practices, assessment design, and student support services.
- Influence research practices, including data analysis, peer review, and scholarly publishing.

- Reshape faculty roles and workloads, creating a need for institutional supports to manage change, avoid burnout, and protect academic freedom.

Balancing academic freedom with privacy, data sovereignty, and ethical obligations—especially regarding faculty research and teaching materials—was identified as a governance challenge.

December 10, 2025—Morning Meeting

The morning session focused on information sharing among Academic Colleagues and updates from COU leadership. Financial pressures, government relations, and policy coordination across institutions remained prominent themes. Participants also discussed priorities for future meetings, with AI governance and funding sustainability identified as ongoing concerns.

Key Takeaways for the Academic Senate

1. Ontario universities are facing unprecedented financial strain that will shape all strategic decisions in the near term.
2. AI is already embedded in higher education systems; the question is not whether it is used, but how responsibly and equitably it is governed.
3. Student-centred, ethically grounded AI integration is essential to preserve academic integrity and educational quality.
4. Institutions require clear strategies, faculty development, and shared infrastructure to manage AI's impact on teaching, research, and workload.
5. Governance bodies, including Academic Senate, will play a critical role in balancing innovation, academic freedom, and accountability in the AI era.

Next Meetings

- COU Academic Colleagues: February 10 (6:00—8:30 pm) and February 11 (9:00 am—12:00 noon), 2026 (hybrid)

NUSU Academic Senate Report: January 2026

Welcome to the New Semester

On behalf of NUSU, we'd like to extend a warm welcome to all students, staff, and faculty as we begin the new semester. We are excited to continue providing programming, support, and opportunities that engage and connect our student community.

By-Law Updates

NUSU's updated By-Law has been officially approved. The most significant changes impact the Student Executive roles, the Executive Director position, and the Board of Directors as described below:

- Executive Director (ED): This is now a full-time, non-student staff position. The ED supervises NUSU staff, manages in-house HR, supports and guides the Student Executives. The ED is overseen by a dedicated oversight committee.
- ED Over-Sight Committee: Made up of NUSU Student Executives, Nipissing faculty, and community members. The Nipissing and community members are selected by our Board of Directors. This committee addresses staff concerns and oversees the ED's performance.
- Student Executive Roles: The President position has been removed. NUSU will now have four Student Executive positions, each with distinct responsibilities:
 1. Vice President Student Life: Focuses on creating, running, collecting feedback on student events as well as bar night themes.
 2. Vice President Campus Relations: Leads advocacy work, including committee meetings, addressing student concerns, liaising with the university, and community outreach.
 3. Vice President Communications and Awareness: Oversees social media platforms (website, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook), oversees the Reflection Gallery, and manages campaigns such as Academic Week, Wellness Week, and other awareness initiatives.
 4. Vice President Governance and Services: Maintains policies, oversees the Student Food Pantry, health plan, sponsorships, and student groups.

All Student Executives will continue to have managerial aspects in their roles. Financial responsibilities previously held by Student Executive Vice-President Finance & Administration will now be managed by a full-time Finance Associate (non-student staff).

- Board of Directors: There will now be more opportunities for students to sit on the Board as non-voting members, providing input and contributing to decision-making, ensuring that student perspectives are represented.

President Resignation

Matthew Suszter has resigned from the President role as of December 22, 2025. A by-election will not be held. The responsibilities previously held by the President will be distributed among the other Student Executives and NUSU Staff.

Health Plan Updates

The opt-out period for January start students will run from January 1 to January 19, 2026. This only applies to students starting in January.

Upcoming Elections

NUSU will be holding Executive, Director, and Senator elections this semester. This year, the Director and Senator elections will coincide with the NUSU Executive elections, following best practices compared to other student unions.

- Any current Student Executive running in the election will not be permitted to work during the campaigning and voting period.

Dates

- Nominations start: January 12, 2026
- Nomination forms are due: January 19, 2026
- Campaigning starts: January 21, 2026
- Campaigning ends: January 30, 2026

During the campaigning period, professors should anticipate students reaching out to speak in classes regarding the elections.