

## Report of the Senate Engagement Committee

### FOR INFORMATION

**Presented by:** Tamara Buckwold, Chair, Engagement Committee

**Date of Meeting:** April 25, 2026

**Subject:** **Engagement Committee – Report on Activities**

**Senate action:** For information only.

#### **Background and Summary:**

Members of the Senate Engagement Committee are Tamara Buckwold (chair), Shankar Das, Roberta Gallagher, Janice Paslawski, Jasmin Luu, and Bruce Richet, with Julian Demkiw, University Secretary and Chief Governance Officer, and Kris Brown, University Relations. Since the date of the last Senate meeting, the committee met on October 20, 2025, January 13, March 16, and April 7, 2026. The following provides an overview of the committee's work.

#### **Committee Orientation and Mandate**

At its October 20, 2025 meeting, the committee focused on establishing a shared understanding of its mandate, history, and role in supporting Senate engagement. This included a review of the committee's terms of reference, past Senate engagement initiatives, and available University Relations resources.

The committee also discussed its work plan and how engagement activities move from discussion to action, providing a foundation for subsequent work during the year.

#### **Senate Purpose and Engagement Framework**

Building on this foundation, the committee reviewed and refined the Senate purpose statement and the definition of Senate engagement previously drafted by the Senate Engagement Working Group struck in 2024. Development of a purpose statement and definition of engagement was identified as a priority in the Senate Engagement Plan prepared by the earlier Senate Engagement Advisory Group and presented to Senate in 2022. The intent of this work was to ensure that the language clearly reflects Senate's governance role, supports meaningful participation, and can be consistently applied across Senate communications and resources. Following discussion and refinement, the committee supported bringing this language forward for Senate approval.

### **Enhancing Senate Engagement and Communication**

In response to feedback from recent Senate engagement sessions, the committee focused on strengthening communication with and among Senate members and improving access to timely, well-organized information. This included reviewing centralized document management through SharePoint, discussing communication tools and practices, and identifying ways to support more effective engagement during Senate meetings. Improved clarity and communication were identified as continuing priorities. In addition, University Relations outlined the review and development of an alumni engagement strategy with further updates to be shared in the future. The committee drew attention to the potential role of Senate members in the execution of this strategy through participation in alumni engagement events and activities.

### **Senate Handbook Development**

The committee advanced work on the development of a Senate Handbook as a practical resource for Senate members. The handbook is intended to clarify governance roles, legislative authority under the University Act, and Senate processes, while supporting onboarding and ongoing effectiveness of Senate members. The handbook offers easy access to relevant university information, including institutional structure, overarching principles, priorities and strategic plans. The committee discussed content scope, consistency with university communications standards, and the importance of a regular review cycle, and supported bringing the handbook forward to Senate for information once finalized.

### **UPlan 2035**

The committee met with Dr. Nancy Turner to review and discuss the development process for the University Plan 2035. The committee highlighted the importance of including external stakeholders like Senate Members. This session will be brought to the April Senate meeting.

### **Engagement Planning**

The committee reviewed upcoming Senate agendas and the design of engagement sessions, with attention to agenda placement and structure to support meaningful discussion. The committee also considered future engagement opportunities, including enrolment planning, university priorities, and external engagement.

### **Survey Development**

The committee initiated work on the development of a survey directed to Senate members and university units. The survey is intended to elicit information that will assist in planning processes, activities and communication channels to enhance the effectiveness of Senate in the fulfilment of its purpose as bridge between the University and the broader community. This work is ongoing with a further report anticipated at the fall meeting of Senate.