

Report to Senate of the Provost & Vice-President, Academic

December 3, 2025

Dear Senators,

I am pleased to provide the report of the Provost & Vice-President, Academic to Senate. As you will note, the structure of this report and its content are focused on Brock's [academic plan](#).

As Senate is responsible for the educational policy of the University, it is critically important that we keep the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the academic plan in mind. I have framed this report accordingly around the priorities outlined in the academic plan, with an eye to the specific actions identified within each that we've committed to as an institution. I would also like to use this report as an opportunity to celebrate our progress and achievements on the plan so far.

Thank you, and I look forward to our continued discussions.

Priority 1: High-Quality and Meaningful

- At the Faculty of mathematics and Science, Professor William Marshall in the Department Mathematics & Statistics was recently awarded the [2025 Linda G. O'Bryant Noetic Sciences Research Prize](#). The team, led by Professor Marshall, will share a \$100,000 prize with two other groups—all working on conscious artificial intelligence. Out of 56 applications and 8 finalists, “Team Marshall” were selected for their contributions to “Evaluating Artificial Consciousness through Integrated Information Theory”. Over 3,000 researchers from across the world attended the online awards’ ceremony. Congratulations, William!
- At the Faculty of Humanities, Professor Michael Carter in the Department of Classics & Archaeology, recently shared his expertise in a new documentary series now streaming on National Geographic. The six-episode series, [Gladiators – Warriors of the Ancient World](#), tells the origin stories of iconic gladiators, following the ancient combatants on their life-or-death journeys to the Colosseum. Well worth a watch!
- At the Goodman School of Business, Professor Kirsten Robertson’s collaboration on the Canadian Space Agency grant was recently [featured in Brock News](#)—as a research project that explores the psychological working conditions of astronauts on mission to the International Space Station.
- From the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation (CPI), the Brock [Chancellor’s Chairs for Teaching Excellence](#) provides funding to undertake a specific, 3-year program of research and practice leading to a significant development in the [scholarship of teaching and learning](#). The programs of activity for the Chairs may be integrated within their broader research and scholarly focus. The Brock Chancellor’s Chairs for Teaching Excellence provide recipients an annual support grant of \$5,000 in each of three years. Applications must be submitted before April 1, 2026. For more information contact cpi@brocku.ca.
- Also from CPI, the [Instructor Certificate Program \(ICP\) in University Teaching and Learning](#) is designed to offer flexible and varied opportunities for instructors to engage in pedagogical

development through exploration and dialogue with colleagues from across the university in five domains: inclusive teaching, instructional design, assessment and evaluation, educational technologies, and reflective practice. CPI is also facilitating [two new communities of practice this fall](#), focused on assessment, GenAI, and inclusive pedagogies. These gatherings are designed to spark ideas and support instruction without added workload. Email cpi@brocku.ca if you are interested in attending.

- On November 19, Professional and Continuing Studies (PCS) received notice from the Ontario College of Teachers that four programs are being recommended for accreditation to the registrar, demonstrating the continuing development and commitment PCS has to offering high-quality teacher professional development through Additional Qualification and Additional Basic Qualification courses.
- Also at PCS, two custom learning sessions were recently delivered to the Niagara Parks and Bethesda in the month of November, demonstrating a commitment to supporting training and development for professionals and organizations. A testimonial from Bethesda has been added to the Brock YouTube channel, highlighting the benefits of their training series in previous years. You can view the versions [here](#) and [here](#).
- From Co-op, Career and Experiential Education (CCEE), students in Shawna Chen's ENTR 3P92 class showcased and tested their prototypes in an Entrepreneurial "Demo Day" held in the Rankin Family Pavilion Atrium on November 12. Nine student teams engaged the Brock and Niagara community with a range of entrepreneurial and marketing concepts - some developed independently and others in collaboration with the course's community partner, Riverview Cellars. The showcase supports students in refining the final stages of their projects and presentations, strengthening the real-world impact of their ideas while addressing authentic challenges and opportunities identified by Riverview Cellars.
- Also from CCEE, the HR team from Asahi KASAI was recently hosted at Brock on November 12. Their visit included a tour of our Engineering labs and a discussion about future talent needs and recruitment planning for 2026.
- At the Faculty of Social Sciences, faculty and students in the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre recently toured three Niagara Parks sites as part of ongoing class projects related to sustainability. Corey Burant, Niagara Parks Manager, Lands and Stewardship, hosted the tour, speaking on a wide range of topics related to habitat restoration, invasive species and site maintenance. [See more here](#).
- Last month, a [speaker event](#) was hosted by Brock's Forensic Psychology and Criminal Justice program that focused on gun violence in North America. The panel included faculty from various disciplines, and discussions related to gun violence, gender-based violence and Canada's criminal justice system.
- The [Social Sciences Research Colloquium](#) is scheduled for December 5 in the Cairns Atrium. The event features oral presentations by three FOSS students alongside two accomplished faculty researchers: 2024 Distinguished Researcher Julie Ham (Sociology and Criminology) and Early Career Researcher Charlis Rainekei (Psychology). This year's Colloquium has expanded to include over 20 student poster presenters. All are welcome.

- Over two days in November, the Department of Sociology and Criminology hosted a public Experiential Education showcase with students in CRIM 4P01 (Service Learning in Community Justice). The class requires a 24- to 30-hour service-learning placement on community justice or social justice issues within a community organization. Students shared presentations about their experiential education activities and appreciated the chance to talk about their placement experiences.
- Brock University has been granted membership with the Inter-American Organization for Higher Education (IOHE), following the IOHE General Assembly held on October 14 in San José, Costa Rica. IOHE connects more than 350 institutions across 28 countries to promote cooperation, innovation, and internationalization in higher education. Membership will expand opportunities for Brock's students, faculty, and researchers through enhanced collaboration across the Americas.
- [International Education Week](#), organized by a pan-institutional committee chaired by Brock International, ran from November 17 to 21 and was marked by a series of 24 events across campus. The [Human Library](#) invited participants to connect with "Human Books" and learn from their diverse cultural experiences, while the Study Abroad Fair supported students exploring international learning opportunities. Other impactful events included a Night Market, Indian and Japanese cultural showcases, and a language exchange.
- Brock representatives from Professional & Continuing Studies and Brock International participated in a recent CALDO (Canadian Latin American Dialogue & Opportunities) mission to Mexico. The mission included visits to several leading Mexican universities to promote short-term program opportunities, explore research and student mobility partnerships, and engage with government and funding agencies.

Priority 2: Accessible, Flexible, and Customizable

- The Library launched a new course readings platform this Fall. Leganto is a course reading list management system that helps instructors create and organize reading lists for their students. It integrates with Brightspace to provide easy student access to a wide range of resources, including library materials, online articles, streamed media and individual files. The tool helps instructors find, organize, and share resources, and provides tools and analytics for student engagement. With Leganto, instructors can: Build course resource lists independently or collaborate with others; Add any kind of content, including print or electronic Library resources, streaming video, websites, textbooks, journals, OER, and more; Allow students to easily access course resource lists in Brightspace; Structure lists with weekly, monthly or topic-based sections; and, Easily roll over course resource lists from term to term, adjusting as needed. For more information, see the [Leganto Guide for Instructors](#) or contact reserve@brocku.ca.
- The Executive Seminar Series launched at the Goodman School of Business on November 24, aims at providing flexible and relevant learning opportunities for professionals. The inaugural seminar, Transformative Business Models, convened C-suite executives at Microsoft Headquarters in Toronto. Professors V. Kumar, Dave Bouckenoghe, and Anteneh Ayanso presented research blended with practical application. Professor Shawna Chen

served as Master of Ceremonies and CEO Panel moderator, with Professors Teju Herath, Parunchana Pacharn, and Jennifer Li moderating the fireside chats.

- From Student Accessibility Services, in response to student feedback, weekly Study Hall will be running to provide a safe space and in-time strategies and supports for students. This Study Hall is primarily supported by student peers. The Study Tech Hub is also seeing high volumes of student use as a study space on campus.
- The Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre's initiative to train student mental health champions is well underway, with one now for each Varsity Team, and an additional four wellness navigators embedded in four academic Departments. The Wellness Ambassador training has a goal of reaching 100 student-facing staff by June 2026, and has begun its second cohort training and currently has 61 total registrants.
- The Curriculum Delivery Initiative continues, and the resource group has completed consultations with the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, The Department of Psychology, and the Adult Education program, and is now wrapping up with the Department of Kinesiology. Next up will be the Department of Economics, the Department of Communications, Pop Culture, and Film, and the Department of Linguistics. Calls are open for more programs interested in the Curriculum Delivery Initiative. Please email cpi@brocku.ca for more information.
- Brock University representatives recently visited Grand Cayman to connect with key school partners and strengthen the existing institutional partnership with the University College of the Cayman Islands (UCCI). During the partnership strengthening discussions, Brock representatives met with Acting President and Chief Executive Officer of UCCI to discuss additional program mapping opportunities from UCCI associate degree programs to Brock University bachelor's degree programs such as Computer Science and Tourism. UCCI is eager to pursue program mapping for these two programs in addition to the existing program mapping already being undertaken for Business Administration and Sport Management.

Priority 3: Supportive and Student-Centred

- At the Faculty of Humanities, the culminating project of VISA 2P97 led by Donna Szoke and supported by CEWIL funding, is a Video Art Screening/exhibition that opened on Thursday, November 27. Hosted by the Niagara Artists Centre and in partnership with leading professional Video Artists, the exhibition showcased the student-created Video Art that seeks to answer the question: "What is community?" Additional screenings will be hosted November 28 - December 13 and are free to attend during the Center's regular hours.
- At the Goodman School of Business, the [2025 Emerging Leader, Allie Hughes](#) (BA '09) returned to campus on November 28 to lead a workshop with ACE Goodman students on crafting compelling narratives for competition case solutions.
- Heading into exam seasons, the Black Student Success Centre (BSSC) will be hosting Study Nights to provide a supportive space for students to prepare for exams and complete assignments with access to resources and peer connection. Upcoming Study Nights will run from December 6 to 18, and faculty members are invited to join. The BSSC invites individuals interested in joining to email bssc@brocku.ca.

- Learning Services hosted the annual [Night Against Procrastination](#) on November 23, welcoming a record-breaking 600 students to an evening focused on getting academic work done. Participants engaged in focused study time while accessing on-demand learning support from our team. Campus partners (including The Hub, the BSSC, Hadiya²dagénhahs, Academic Advising, the Library, Brock International, FGSPA, Student Life and others) offered wellness breaks, guidance, and holistic support throughout the night.
- Learning Services also co-hosted with Sociology and Criminology a Study Hall “Pas’ta Exams!” on November 26, with the Brock Sociology & Criminology Students’ Association and the Department of Sociology. Students received academic support from TAs and Learning Services’ Peer tutors as they prepared for exams while enjoying a Pasta Dinner. Learning also organized an International Study Hall on November 24 for students to come together to receive study strategies, tutoring, and food as they take on Canadian University exams, and will be hosting a second one on December 5.
- Looking ahead, Learning Services will be supporting the FMS Study Jam on December 8, which supports students as they prepare for their first exams. This event includes exam review sessions, tutoring, study strategy workshops, and exam prep resources, with active participation from faculty members and TAs.
- As a reminder to instructors, the [course outline template](#) provides suggested language regarding policies. Of note, the [Student Absence Self-Declaration Form](#) can be used by students once per course per term. CPI has [documentation](#) to support instructors in tracking usage and is available to provide course consultations for instructors wishing to proactively design with Brock policies in mind.
- An Integrated Engineering Meet & Greet was recently hosted by FMS in collaboration with the Region of Niagara on November 18. The event provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen connections with industry partners, promote the Integrated Engineering Co-op program, and support meaningful conversations between students and employers.
- From CCEE, as part of the Co-op Professional Preparation courses (0N90 and 5N90), students recently participated in an in-person networking simulation designed to offer a supportive, low-stakes environment to build confidence and career readiness. Four tailored events were offered to ensure alignment with students’ academic disciplines over the two weeks in November. These guided conversations helped students explore industry trends, workplace expectations, and potential career pathways, strengthening their preparedness for upcoming recruitment cycles. More than 65 industry partners connected with nearly 400 students, many of whom are preparing for May 2026 co-op work terms.
- At the Faculty of Social Sciences, PhD candidate Madeline Marie Asaro (MA ’20) was recently recognized by the Council of Ontario’s Universities with a 2025 Autism Scholars Doctoral Award. Asaro's research interest was inspired by her work in Associate Professor Kimberley Zonneveld’s lab as a Master’s student. Congratulations, Madeline!

Priority 4: Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive

- At the Goodman School of Business, Shawna Chen is advancing equity and inclusion through her involvement with the 2SLGBTQIA+ Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub, funded by the Canadian Queer Chamber of Commerce. Professor Chen contributes to two key initiatives that promote visibility and opportunity for queer entrepreneurs. The first, Own It, is a short documentary series that showcases the stories and experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs. The second explores how verbal and nonverbal communication during business pitches influences investor decisions, with the goal of supporting queer founders in accessing funding and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- At the BSSC, for the third consecutive year, The Level Up: Black Secondary Student Symposium at Brock University brought together students and educators from DSBN high schools on November 20 for a day of empowerment and community building. Through workshops on cultural expression, leadership, identity, and advocacy, participants explored ways to affirm their voices and create safe spaces in schools. Hosted by Brock's Human Rights and Equity Office and the Black Student Success Centre, the event generates positive connection and interest that has shown to result in admission to Brock University.
- From CCEE, Students in Dr. Kirsten Robertson's OBHR 2P92 class are partnering with Breakwall Brewery, a family-owned craft brewery and community hub in Port Colborne, through the iHUB-funded experiential education project. Acting as consultants, student teams are developing recommendations to support Breakwall's training, onboarding, marketing, and organizational culture — each approached through an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) lens to help strengthen the brewery's capacity as an inclusive employer. Currently, students are in the final phase of the project, having completed three engagement sessions with Breakwall's leadership and staff in preparation for their end-of-term presentations.
- CPI is partnering with the Black History African Ancestry Month committee and Professor Shannon Kerwin from the Department of Sports Management to expand the successful course integration initiatives from year's past. Course integration events are designed to heighten the profile, accomplishments and contributions of Black individuals in related disciplines as distinguished guest speakers in our courses, and as part of the university's broader celebrations of throughout the month of February. If interested, please join the session on [December 9 from 10am-11am](#) to discuss how to participate.

Priority 5: Future-Oriented

- At the Faculty of Humanities, The Digital Media Mock Design Studio, supported by CEWIL funding, brings together students from various classes and disciplines across the Digital Humanities to create games and other interactive media. On November 21, student groups presented their Game Design Documents and work plans to leading industry professionals in game design, interactive media, innovation studios, and more. There were 44 reviewers in person and 13 connected online; 17 of those being alums of the program. Over 70 students were involved in the review process, including students from IASC, GAME, and MUSIC. The developers in attendance included over a dozen local studios (Adjective Noun, Phantom Compass, etc.), several Toronto Studios (Soft Rains, Game Pill, Hilltop, Torn Banner, etc.), a

Montreal studio (Kitfox Games), and some large international studios (Ubisoft, Rockstar, Epic Games, and Activision/Sledgehammer). The event culminated with Industry Night, which included the above developers, Brock representatives, undergraduate and graduate students, and local industry/internship partners, including representatives from the DSBN—which provided an opportunity for further networking for students, and to share gratitude with Brock’s industry and community partners.

- CPI is inviting Departments and faculty members to engage in conversations concerning the future of assessment at Brock University. Contact cpi@brocku.ca if your Department or program is interested in contributing to these discussions.
- The Environmental Sustainability Research Centre recently hosted a hybrid panel discussion about career paths in sustainability. The event brought together students, community members and practising professionals. [See more here.](#)
- Social Sciences Day at FOSS will be happening on December 5 and is currently at full capacity with over 400 registered students expected from local secondary schools—including two schools that are participating for the first time. Looking ahead to the new year, FOSS is also planning a recruitment event in February 2026 at the Burlington campus.

Welcome to final Senate meeting of the Fall semester—and the calendar year!

Artificial Intelligence

Continuing on the artificial intelligence generative discussion from our previous Senate meeting—which I was unfortunately not able to attend—I’ve appended to my report a document that Dean Peter Berg has drafted and generously agreed to share. The document, [Developing a Framework for the Enablement of AI Integration at Brock University](#), is intended to serve as a roadmap and jumping off point for what the pathway to AI enablement looks like at Brock. I have also created a small working group, chaired by the University Librarian Nicole Nolan—alongside Dean Berg, Anna Lathrop, Gerladine Jones, and representatives from ITS and Research—and have asked them to develop a workplan for implementing an AI strategy at Brock. The goal of this small working group is to identify concrete next steps for us as an institutional in relation to AI. I have asked them to provide this workplan early in the new year, and I look forward to sharing their recommendations widely with the community, including here at Senate when they are ready.

2026 QS World University Rankings: Sustainability

I am absolutely delighted to be able to share that we’ve made a significant leap in the 2026 QS World University for Sustainability this year—moving Brock University up approximately 400 positions to rank #606 out of 2,002 institutions globally.

This places Brock in the top 31% worldwide for sustainability performance!

This accomplishment was made possible thanks to the efforts of the Rankings Working Group, the Office the Institutional Planning, Analysis and Performance, and the Sustainability Office. Through data collection and rigorous documentation of sustainability initiatives— Brock scored across all 52 of the QS environmental, social, and governance (ESG) ranking indicators.

Key highlights include:

- Governance Excellence: Brock achieved a rank of #320 globally in good (sustainability) governance—a 700+ position improvement placing the university in the top 15% worldwide.
- Health and Well-Being: Brock ranked #346 globally (another 700+ position improvement), showcasing research impact on community health and quality of life.
- Equality Leadership: Brock improved to #294 globally in Equality (up 132 positions), reflecting strong diversity policies, gender balance, and comprehensive inclusion initiatives.

This is a wonderful achievement, especially as we know that institutional sustainability is a factor students prioritize when selecting a place to study.

I would like to thank, and congratulate, all those involved in making this possible!

Lastly, I have included my most recent report to the Board of Trustees as an appendix to this report, for Senate's reference.

Sincerely,

Arja Vainio-Mattila
Provost & Vice-President, Academic

Enclosure: [Report to Board of the Provost & Vice-President, Academic \(November 27, 2025\)](#)
[Developing a Framework for the Enablement of AI Integration at Brock University](#)