

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

February 25, 2026

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

- As part of the Faculty of Mathematics and Science's interdisciplinary FMS Colloquium Series Rise of the Machines: The Future of A.I. and Robotics, Professor Veena Dwivedi delivered a highly attended lecture titled "A cognitive neuroscientist asks: can artificial intelligence 'understand' language?" The event drew engagement from across campus and the broader community, contributing to meaningful dialogue on the intersection of neuroscience, linguistics, and artificial intelligence. The series continues on March 13 with a presentation by Yifeng Li, Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Machine Learning for Biomedical Data Science. All are welcome, and details are available on ExperienceBU.
- In the Faculty of Social Sciences, Julia Baird, of Geography and Tourism Studies and the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre co-led a public event at the First Ontario Place. The Art in Action Climate Symposium brought together scientists, Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, artists, political leaders, and community members to discuss ideas for a sustainable future. The event builds on a project led by Baird and fellow ESRC researcher Gillian Dale and supported by grad students in Baird's Water Resilience Lab.
- Also, in the Faculty of Social Sciences, PhD in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) students, and Horizon Scholarship winners, Asude Ayvaci (MA '24) and Kevin Yu (MA '24) are building on research they began in their master's degrees in the Department of Applied Disability Studies. Ayvaci continues to work with Alison Cox on training strategies to reduce the need for physical and chemical restraints for individuals who display severe challenging behaviours. Yu continues his work with Priscilla Burnham Riosa to develop strengths-based approaches for service providers and families of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- The fourth annual Humanities Graduate Student Symposium on Saturday, Feb. 7 was a huge success. The student organizers received more than 40 submissions on the theme of "What does it mean to be human" in response to their call for paper last fall and after a double-

blind peer review chose twenty to present panel talks and lightning talks. Participants included graduate students from programs at York, U of T, Laurier, and McMaster, who from all reports were impressed with the experience. More than 60 people joined the symposium throughout the day contributing to thoughtful and encouraging discussions.

The full program with abstracts and speaker bios can be found on the Faculty website:

<https://brocku.ca/humanities/research/hgss/>

- Faculty, Instructors, Teaching Assistants and community partners are invited to join the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation's [Spring Perspectives on Teaching and Learning](#) on Monday, May 4th. The [call for session proposals](#) is now open! [RSVP for Spring Perspectives on ExperienceBU](#)
- St. Catharines City Council endorsed the Code of Conduct for Human Trafficking Prevention in the Niagara Region at their council meeting on February 9, 2026. PCS has partnered with TOES Niagara to develop training and resources for those who have adopted the Code. This project was funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada.
- PCS submitted a renewal/redevelopment of the Special Education, Part 2, AQ course to the Ontario College of Teachers for approval. The OCT has renewed the accreditation of this course until 2030.
- On January 28, CCEE hosted the 5th annual Experience Expo. Nearly 90 employers participated, engaging with over 1,300 students from across the University. The event is intentionally designed as an inclusive, campus-wide recruitment opportunity where students, regardless of program or year, can connect directly with employers for co-op, summer, part-time, and new graduate roles. The event reinforces Brock's role in addressing youth employment challenges by showcasing the work-ready talent of our students and alumni. With support from MARCOMM, the employer webpage received nearly 2,000 views in January and February, reflecting strong engagement leading up to the event. The Expo also resulted in two participating employers establishing scholarships/donations to support the BSc Integrated Engineering program. We are grateful for their continued partnership and confidence in Brock student talent.
- In collaboration with the Faculty of Education, CCEE co-hosted a pilot Teachers' Recruitment Fair at the Burlington Campus on February 4. More than 25 Ontario school boards and international schools met with graduating teacher candidates. This partnership provided direct employment pathways for our students and demonstrated another great way to showcase our new Burlington campus and impact to the community.
- CCEE has successfully completed the administration of the CEWIL iHub grant for 2025/26 as well as supported the implementation of these projects. Final reports for all projects have been submitted to CEWIL Canada. Across Spring/Summer 2025 and Fall 2026, funding supported 14 courses with embedded experiential learning opportunities across the Faculties of Applied Health Sciences (FAHS), Mathematics and Science (FMS), Social Sciences (FOSS), the Goodman School of Business (GSB), and Humanities (HUMA). In total, nearly \$400,000 was invested to expand and enhance curricular experiential learning initiatives.

- From March 2-6, the Library and CPI will be hosting a number of events in celebration of **Open Education Week**, a global annual celebration of our collective achievements in Open Education (OE). The feature event this year will be an [OE Celebration](#) of Brock's most recent [OER Grant](#) recipients. Additional events will include workshops on using tools that support OE such as H5P and Pressbooks, sessions on Open Pedagogical practices like Wikipedia editing assignments and considering accessibility, and an introduction to Open Educational Resources (OER). All events are listed on [ExperienceBU](#) and will be shared globally through [OEGlobal](#) to welcome participation from educators all over the world.
- From February 2–7, 2026, Brock marked International Development Week with events showcasing the University's contributions to poverty reduction and global sustainability. Activities included [Taste the World, Test the World](#), engaging the community in global food and trivia, and a Feb. 4 panel moderated by AVP Research Deborah O'Leary, highlighting Brock researchers working in sustainability, resilient ecosystems, and poverty reduction. The week also featured *The Machine Encased in Glass: A Tour of Cairns Complex*, reinforcing Brock's commitment to meaningful international collaboration and a more inclusive, sustainable world.
- International Services & Partnerships hosted exchange partner Queen Margaret University (QMU) on January 22, 2026, for an information session with prospective exchange students and a second session promoting QMU's graduate programs in Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy, offering Brock students insights into postgraduate study pathways abroad.

Priority 2: Accessible, Flexible, and Customizable

- The Faculty of Mathematics and Science is proud of the students who have come together to form the Brock Engineering Society, a new student-led organization that expands interdisciplinary, hands-on learning opportunities across campus. At its recent launch event, the Society introduced flexible ways for students from all faculties to engage in design teams, technical workshops, and collaborative projects. Current initiatives—including a campus navigation app, a Formula SAE electric race car team, robotics and autonomous vehicle projects, and medical device development—offer customizable, practical experiences that complement academic programs and foster real world skill development.
- The Faculty of Social Sciences Graduate Liaison and the Communications Officer are offering a LinkedIn [development workshop](#) for Brock graduate students and researchers looking to build their online platform.
- CCEE and IPAP successfully partnered on an ONCAT grant focused on expanding access to co-op education for transfer students. Our proposal is one of the 27 that received ONCAT grant this year. This work supports Brock's commitment to access, mobility, and student success in experiential learning.
- The Library has improved workflows to better support faculty and student access to Library resources at our satellite campuses. In collaboration with the Marilyn I Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts (MIWSFPA) Learning Commons staff, the Library implemented a systematic request process through the Omni catalogue for both Brock-owned materials

and interlibrary loan items. This improved workflow has seen strong uptake: In 2025, 592 items were delivered to MIWSFPA for pickup. Since September, 330 items have been sent to MIWSFPA.

- Since the Burlington Campus opened, Brock Library has been able to streamline services to improve access to resources for students and faculty in Burlington. The improved workflows have improved the patron requesting user experience, aligned loan policies, and established a more efficient intercampus-transfer workflow, resulting in increased demand. Since opening, 182 items have been from the James A. Gibson collection or via interlibrary loan were delivered for pickup in Burlington.

Priority 3: Supportive and Student-Centred

- The Indigenous Plus program recently moved to Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement and is currently working with an Elder on a new Anishinaabemowin name. More to come in the spring. Preparations are also underway to recognize the 1st cohort of students to complete Year 1 of the program.
- On February 21 and 22, the Faculty of Mathematics and Science hosted the FIRST Tech Challenge Ontario Provincial Championship at Brock University, welcoming more than 1,000 attendees and 36 robotics teams from across Ontario. The event provided Grade 7–12 students with an inspiring, hands-on STEM experience that nurtured problem-solving, teamwork, and critical thinking while encouraging pathways into STEM fields. The Faculty's leadership in hosting this provincial competition reinforces Brock's commitment to supporting young learners and strengthening future academic pipelines.
- The Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre (SAS) received a MCURES Grant that will allow us to develop innovative programming and will enable us to address waitlists and wait times. Our Open-Door Single Session Counselling continues to be fully booked every day. Presently we are offering three groups (ADHD, DBT for graduate students only and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy).
- Our Mental Health Wellness and Health promotion programming has been very busy. Thrive week just concluded. Our Drag Brunch and Learn (partnership with BUSU) has started. Our Social Work and Social Service Interns have been instrumental in supporting our wellness and health promotion effort. Our Ambassador of Campus Well-being program is preparing for the graduation of its second cohort on February 27th.
- Student Accessibility Services (SAS) partnered with Admissions to include information about accessibility services at the time of offer. The intent of this initiative is to encourage early self-identification, support proactive transition planning, reduce delays in accommodation implementation, and improve incoming students' confidence and preparedness. By embedding accessibility information into the admissions process, SAS is shifting from reactive to proactive support, strengthening the student transition experience and promoting early engagement.

- SAS experienced a 19% increase (2024 vs. 2025) in the number of students writing accommodated exams during the December exam period. Despite the substantial growth, SAS successfully maintained service quality and exam integrity. This achievement reflects the team's commitment, adaptability, and strong operational management under increased demand and highlights the need for additional planning with future projections of ongoing increases.
- SAS launched a Student Advisory Panel to formalize and elevate student voice in shaping departmental priorities and informing broader university accessibility initiatives. The newly created Student Advisory Panel had its first meeting and provided structured feedback on SAS programs, processes, and communications, identifies emerging accessibility barriers and opportunities for improvement, and contributes to institutional accessibility planning through lived experience perspectives.
- Brock Sports and Recreation Brock Women's Basketball, Women's Hockey and Women's Volleyball each hosted a game day in support of the Canadian Cancer Society and breast cancer awareness. Teams invited those in attendance to contribute to the cause, either through donation, the purchase Badger-branded apparel or by participating in game-day activities.
- Paint the Meridian returned to downtown St. Catharines on January 31 as the men's and women's basketball programs took on the McMaster Marauders. Students, alumni, families and fans from across Niagara came together in a celebration of school spirit, pride and tradition.
- Women's basketball standout, Madalyn Weinert, capped her decorated university career by being named a 2024-25 U SPORTS Top 8 Academic All-Canadian. A fourth-year student in Brock's Medical Sciences program, Weinert posted a 93 per cent average while leading U SPORTS in scoring during the 2024-25 season.
- Brock women's and men's wrestling teams completed the sweep of the provincial banners for the 10th year in a row It was title No. 24 and 11th consecutive for the women's team, while the men's side captured their 10th straight and 27th overall.
- Former Brock Badgers goaltender Logan Thompson is set to represent Canada on the global stage when he hits the ice as a [member of the men's hockey team](#) at the Milano Cortina 2026 Olympic Winter Games.
- The Zone saw its busiest January since opening 5 years ago! Every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday we were open in January hit capacity at least one time on these days. New programs included partnering with General Brock, Bookstore and Dietitians.
- As we finalize the integration of Goodman's graduate recruitment efforts and continue advancing our graduate enrolment strategy, the international recruitment team has been on the road for nearly four weeks across Vancouver, China, and India as part of this coordinated outreach. During this time, they met with prospective students and parents, as well as key institutional and agent partners, to strengthen relationships and reinforce our value proposition in priority markets. We are already seeing encouraging momentum, with strong growth in February applications and an increase in accepted students. This progress

reflects the impact of sustained in-market engagement and the collective effort to position Goodman's graduate programs more strategically and competitively.

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Priority 4: Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive

- Hosted by [Hadiya'dagénhahs First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Centre](#) in collaboration with Niagara College, our community partner, REDress Day was held on Feb. 13th with 60 attendees. An important day of honouring, reflecting, and learning with community to honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people (MMIWG2S+).
- Lyn Trudeau, Assistant Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, was a featured speaker as part of this year's [REDress](#) activities to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people
- On February 19, Professor Francine McCarthy, Professor of Earth Sciences, delivered her public lecture, "A Deep Dive into Crawford Lake and the Anthropocene," at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. Her work highlights the scientific and cultural significance of Crawford Lake, including its pivotal role in understanding both long-term environmental change and human impacts on the landscape. Central to McCarthy's research is meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities connected to Crawford Lake, whose knowledge and perspectives inform and deepen the scientific understanding of the site. The event also featured multidisciplinary voices—from museum, conservation, philosophical, and artistic partners—demonstrating FMS's commitment to inclusive, community-engaged scholarship and the integration of diverse ways of knowing.
- Brock Women's Basketball, Women's Hockey and Women's Volleyball each hosted a game day in support of the Canadian Cancer Society and breast cancer awareness. Teams invited those in attendance to contribute to the cause, either through donation, the purchase Badger-branded apparel or by participating in game-day activities.
- A core priority of the Library Makerspace is supporting diverse learners and creating accessible entry points to emerging technologies and creative practice. This term, we are welcoming multiple groups of ESL students for hands-on workshops featuring 3D puzzles, introductory robotics, and guided creative design activities. These sessions are intentionally designed to reduce language barriers by emphasizing visual, tactile, and collaborative learning. By creating low-pressure, exploratory environments, we help students build confidence while developing technical and problem-solving skills.
- Through the Days of Significance series, International Services and Partnerships continued to foster an inclusive campus by recognizing key cultural and religious celebrations. In February, the University marked Lunar New Year and Ramadan, bringing students together to share traditions and deepen intercultural understanding. The series will conclude with a Holi celebration later this academic year, creating additional opportunities for intercultural learning and community building across campus.

Priority 5: Future-Oriented

- Brock Sports and Recreation has begun implementing a centralized sport management software called Univerus Sport. This platform will streamline student-athlete registration, compliance tracking, team and travel management, as well as department communication.
- To help achieve the Faculty's enrolment targets, the FOSS Communications team is working with some units to draft letters and produce videos that will effectively reach potential students.
- Librarians from Brock Library have developed a self-paced online tutorial, "[Me, Myself & A.I.](#)," to teach students the challenges and benefits of Generative AI and how to use these tools with integrity. The tutorial is open for anyone to self-enroll and may be easily added to existing Brightspace courses.

On February 10, I hosted a Spring/Summer Open Session to provide members of the Brock community with an opportunity to ask questions and share ideas about the spring/summer term. Approximately 30 participants attended and worked in small groups to discuss five guiding questions. The feedback collected during these discussions is currently being transcribed and will be included in my next report.

Lastly, as is customary early in the new calendar year, appended to this report is the updated list of programs scheduled for Cyclical Program Reviews in 2027-28. The Quality Assurance team will be reaching out to these programs to share details as the reviews begin.

Sincerely,

Arja Vainio-Mattila
Provost & Vice-President, Academic

Enclosure: [Cyclical Program Review Map for 2027-28](#)