

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

March 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

- On Mar 2nd: In partnership with Digital Humanities Hadiya'dagenhahs FNMI Centre participated in Indigenous Games Day with 40 Niagara high school students engaged in hands on learning, developing their own video games and worked in the Maker space to produce 3D printed characters for their games.
- On March 11, as part of Sustainable Development Goals Month, The Goodman School of Business presented a session with the SDG Unit of the Government of Canada, Sustainability at Brock and Brock International highlighting Brock's contributions to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The session focused on SDG Goal 12, Responsible Consumption and Production and was open to faculty, staff, students and the community.
- On February 24th, the Goodman School of Business celebrated former CFL Commissioner Randy Ambrose as the 2026 Distinguished Leader. Randy attend a senior class and gave a fire-side chat for students, staff and faculty.
- The Faculty of Education received news this week of successful applications to SSHRC's Aid to Scholarly Journals award :
 - o Michelle McGinn – *Canadian Journal of Higher Education / La Revue canadienne d'enseignement supérieur* – \$136,317 over 3 years
 - o Michael Owen – *Brock Education: A Journal of Educational Research and Practice* – \$138,000 over 3 years
 - o Leanne Taylor – *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education* – \$82,200 over 3 years
 - o Trevor Norris – *Philosophical Inquiry in Education (PIE)* – \$125,589 over 3 years

- On March 31, a presentation and community expert panel discussion will focus on the research and findings of "Children's Experiences of Homelessness in Shelter Living." Led by CHYS faculty Rebecca Raby and Christine Tardif-Williams and involving CHYS graduate students Erika Allegria and Frederick Opong, the long-term research project was conducted in collaboration with the YWCA Niagara Region. The event will look at the experiences of children who are homeless with their families. The community expert panel will discuss the findings within the context of community organizations and services.
- In the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Kinesiology, Sport Management and Recreation and Leisure Studies grouped together under "Sports Related Subjects" are ranked in the 101-150 in QS ranking. They have been in top 100 previously and are working with Institutional Technology to return to this category if not higher.
- On March 6, International Services & Partnerships and the Department of Earth Sciences, hosted Mr. Willame Medeiros Cocentino, Director of Companhia Baiana de Pesquisa Mineral (CBPM), to explore potential partnerships in the areas of Minerals/Earth Sciences, Water, Sustainability, Health and Computer Science. CBPM works closely with the Secretariat of Economic Development in Bahia, Brazil, creating opportunities for their partners, particularly related to field courses, research initiatives, and joint project development.
- International Services and Partnerships has launched predeparture training for students participating in Spring–Fall 2026 international field courses, summer programs, internships, and exchanges. More than 165 students are completing training on safe travel, including ISOS registration, health and safety preparation, and travel readiness resources, ensuring alignment with Brock's risk management expectations.
- Prof. Francine McCarthy (Earth Sciences) delivered "A Deep Dive into Crawford Lake and the Anthropocene" at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre. Designed for a general audience, the presentation earned a standing ovation and showcased the Faculty of Mathematics and Science's commitment to sharing scientific expertise to inform and inspire the wider community.
- On February 16, Prof. Gavin Hester (Physics) opened the 2026 Canadian Association of Physicists Lecture Tour at Memorial University (NL). This national stage highlights Brock's academic leadership and strengthens research connections, enriching the high-quality learning environment for our community.
- Brock Professional and Continuing Studies is launching the first cohort of their Project Management Professional (PMP) Examination Prep Micro-Credential. Brock has now been recognized as an official Project Management Institute (PMI) Authorized Training Partner (ATP), and individuals who take this exam prep will meet their educational requirement for certification as well as be more prepared for their PMP exam. You can learn more about the announcement on the Brock News here <https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2026/03/new-micro-credential-prepares-project-managers-for-certification/>
- Each year, Co-operative Education and Work-integrated Learning (CEWIL) Canada celebrates the successes and promotes awareness of co-op and work-integrated learning

programs across Canada. This year's theme is #WILbuilds as we continue to build the capacity for work-integrated learning opportunities in Canada! Throughout the month, CCEE will be announcing awards for our students, employers, and community partners. Details of our awards can be found on the CCEE webpage: Recognition of Excellence.

- The Brock University Award for Distinguished Teaching is presented annually to a faculty member who, in the opinion of his or her peers, has made an outstanding contribution to the teaching and learning environment at Brock University. Nomination packages are due at the end of May.
- The Brock Chancellor's Chairs for Teaching Excellence provide 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.
- The Archives & Special Collections has announced the acquisition of the Adams, Butler and Hill Family Fonds. These records shed light on the early Black community in the Oakville and Bronte areas from the 1840s into the twentieth century. The story about the collection appeared in the Brock News and a digital exhibit featuring parts of the archival collection is also available. The Archives will be sharing digitized records with the Sandy Spring Museum in Maryland, where the Adams family moved from.
- The Library Makerspace is proud to support initiatives such as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science Conference. We hosted 3D modelling workshops for high school students, introducing them to Blender and digital design in collaboration with Digital Humanities. This partnership not only expands access to technology and equipment but also strengthens pathways for young women to explore fields such as game design, digital media, and engineering.
- This year, Learning Services' BU101 is integrated into key first-year courses in the Faculties of Social Sciences and Goodman School of Business (MGMT 1P93, ACT 1P01), Faculty of Applied Health Sciences (HLSC 1P90 & RECL 1P90), Faculty of Social Sciences (PSYC 1F90), and Faculty of Humanities (MUSI 1P50) with it being added as an optional assignment component in the Faculty of Education (EDUC 1F95). Ongoing partnered tailoring of BU101 has been done for the Goodman School of Business and the Faculty of Math and Science. To date, in the 2025-26 academic year there have been 1900 BU101 completions.
- Working with IPAP to analyze retention data, we learned that from both the 2023 and 2024 BU 101 cohorts, roughly 91% of students who completed BU 101 returned the next academic year. Students who have completed BU 101 have an increased retention rate compared with those who do not.
- Y1-Y2 retention: 92.5% of those completing BU101 successfully transitioned from year 1 to year 2 compared with 88% of those not completing BU101

- Y1-Y3 retention: 88% of those completing BU 101 in year 1 continued studying into year 3 whereas only 78% of those not completing BU101 continued to year 3
- Given this data was analyzed following D2 grades, we expect to see further impact following D3 completion.
- This year, Faith and Life has been focused on meeting the felt needs of our student body through a threefold approach:
 1. Creation of a community of belonging
 2. Combating food insecurity
 3. Establishing supports for the spiritual and religious flourishing

This approach has been fulfilled through our Community Dinners, regularly attended by over 100 students. The creation of a frozen-food ministry that offers free, safe kitchen prepared meals to students in need without question. This has extended as of March to the MIW campus. With the reopening of the Rita Welch, we have seen four-weekly gatherings dedicated to creating space for spiritual and religious students at Brock to flourish – which include a weekly Orthodox Mass, Catholic Mass, Protestant Worship, and Friday Meditation. We have seen an average of 60 students per day access the Faith and Life Centre for studying, community building, and belonging.

One student said this week that, “If it were not for the Faith and Life Centre, I would no longer be at Brock. The FLC’s community and the support of the Chaplains have given me a space to belong and find a sense of who I am.”

Faith and Life continues to explore opportunities for diversification, growth, and establishing a flourishing community that welcomes all students, faculty, and staff at Brock to belong.

- The Office of the Registrar & Enrolment Services (ORES) is continuing to engage and collaborate with the campus community to ensure supportive and timely information is provided. Each month, the ORES welcomes department chairs, program directors, academic advisors and administrative staff, to deliver meaningful information to aid campus partners in preparing for upcoming deadlines and requirements, review key BrockDb system functions, and provide just-in-time training and information relevant to departments. The monthly information session schedule is available on the ORES SharePoint site here: [Important Dates for Faculty and Staff \(sharepoint.com\)](#). We look forward to welcoming our partners to our upcoming sessions!

Priority 2: Accessible, Flexible, and Customizable

- To celebrate Black History and African Heritage month, the Goodman School welcomed back a former Goodman graduate student Brian Mokaya to discuss the growing adoption of generative AI and we were privileged to host a conversation with Walid Al Hilaly, Sharon C., Patience Kyebitondo, and Tony Colley during our Black Entrepreneurship Panel event.

- The Department of Economics is offering required first- and second-year courses in the Spring term, enabling students to start or fast-track their undergraduate degree in Economics, or to readily switch into Economics from another program.
- In partnership with the Library, Open Education Week was celebrated across campus through a series of events and workshops and through a Brock News article.
- The OER Adoption and Adaptation Grant program continues to provide grants for instructors who wish to displace the cost of commercial textbooks with the ongoing adoption of OER for a given course. Next round of applications are due on May 31, 2026.
- Brock Professional and Continuing Studies conducted a custom professional development program for Advanced Government Staff training, in partnership with subject matter experts, FutureBridge, for the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks on February 27th. This is part of a three-part government staff training series that includes Fundamental, Advanced and Team training. The final session with these two offices will take place on March 20th.
- Pauline Dawson and Jackie Crawford of the Office of the Registrar and Enrolment Services delivered a presentation titled “From Experience to Entry: Building Inclusive Admissions through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition” at the annual Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) conference. Highlighting Brock’s commitment to accessible and inclusive pathways for applicants, the session examined policy development, pathway creation, and the implementation of competency-based assessment to support equitable admissions practices through PLAR.

Priority 3: Supportive and Student-Centred

- During February and March Goodman School of Business student clubs held 22 events to engage students in activities ranging from social gatherings like movie nights to learning opportunities with alumni panels on AI, accounting Case competitions, or skill development workshops. Each event averaged between 20 to 25 students in attendance.
- Student Health Services received an MCURES Grant that will allow us to develop innovative programming and will enable us to implement a stepped care model which will lower both waitlists and wait times.
- The third of six cohorts of the Ambassadors for Wellness will graduate on March 13, 2026.
- The new accommodation policy developed by SAS received Senate approval in February.
- For her practicum in Forensic Psychology and Criminal Justice, student Fatima Noor worked with a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping inmates fight wrongful convictions. She has received a [McCall MacBain Regional Award](#) to pursue graduate studies next year.
- On Tuesday, Feb. 3, the Department of Child and Youth Studies hosted a successful Mentorship Café focused on Community Partner Networking and professional development for students. Twenty-five students participated and took full advantage of the opportunities the event offered, connecting with community members and engaging in skill-building sessions on Professional Communication, Goal Setting, and Resume Writing. Students also had the opportunity to learn more about graduate programs in Child and Youth Studies.

- Students in the Forensic Psychology and Criminal Justice program learned about possible career path when a retired forensic detective gave a blood spatter analysis seminar showing how the size, shape and directionality of bloodstains tell a story about how a crime was committed.
- Geography student Steph Lyons, whose research focuses on environmental sustainability, received an [AI for Earth Scholarship](#) from Environment and Climate Change Canada
- The Department of Sport Management finalized a partnership with Seoul National University with many opportunities for graduate student engagement and research collaboration. Seoul National University is the top research-based institution in South Korea.
- Applications for the 2026–27 International Student Ambassador Award program are now open until April 1. The program recognizes international students who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership, and community engagement. Selected ambassadors will support Brock International in delivering initiatives that strengthen belonging among international students and promote intercultural engagement across campus.
- Brock International hosted its first UHIP Connect: UHIP Card and Coverage Pop-Up in early March. The full-day drop-in event provided international students with direct support in understanding their University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP), including coverage details, how to use their insurance card, and where to access clinics that accept UHIP. Staff were available to answer individual questions, and on-site card printing and lamination were offered.
- Throughout March, the International Student Recruitment team is collaborating with faculty leaders (Deans/Chairs/Professors/Academic Advisors) to host a series of program-focused webinars for current international applicants. These sessions connect prospective students directly with academic leaders, strengthen understanding of Brock’s academic offerings, and support conversion from offer to enrolment.
- Professor Kelly Biagi (Earth Sciences) received a Niagara Community Foundation Environmental Grant to design and monitor three rain gardens in Downtown St. Catharines. The initiative explores affordable, low maintenance stormwater solutions while offering experiential, community-based learning opportunities for FMS students and partners.
- On March 13, the Faculty of Mathematics and Science participated in the DSBN STEM Expo for the third consecutive year. Our science showcase table engaged students from more than 50 DSBN elementary schools, empowering them to explore STEM pathways through accessible, hands-on outreach.
- CEWIL Canada’s iHUB provides grant-based funding to support curricular work-integrated learning (WIL) projects that increase access, remove barriers, leverage technology, and enhance industry and community partnerships. The funding supports faculty-driven projects aimed at innovative WIL programming or reducing barriers in partnership with eligible Canadian community partners. The CCEE team along with our campus wide Experiential Education colleagues will assist any faculty interested in applying and will coordinate all applications submission. First round Applications are due by March 18th.

- February 2026 engagement at the Black Student Success Centre (BSSC) demonstrates the continued and growing need for dedicated cultural spaces that support Black student belonging and success. With 189 visits from 56 students, and 57% returning for multiple visits, the BSSC has become a consistently utilized hub where students feel safe, welcomed, and connected.
- Students overwhelmingly used the space for community connection (76% of visits) and academic grounding (46% for studying/quiet space)—a pattern that underscores how culturally affirming environments help meet both social and academic needs. The Centre also saw strong engagement from 2nd- and 3rd-year students, highlighting its role in supporting persistence and retention.

Engagement is not only strong but growing. A notable 36% of students visited 3+ times, and peak days reached up to 21 visits, showing that students are integrating the Centre into their weekly routines. This momentum extended beyond daily traffic: the Afro-Caribbean Night Black History Month event saw a 25% increase in attendance compared to last year, reflecting rising visibility, trust, and community engagement.

Together, these trends affirm that the BSSC fills a critical gap on campus by providing culturally safe, identity-affirming, community-centered space—one that students are increasingly relying on for connection, support, and academic success.

- The 13th annual Brock Student Leadership Summit was held January 23–24, 2026, bringing together staff, faculty, community partners, and approximately 70 students from across faculties and years of study to engage in leadership development through student-led TED-style talks, interactive workshops, and keynote presentations.

The Summit featured 15 student speakers and three keynote presenters, including two community leaders and Dr. Sherri Vansickle, Assistant Professor and Interim Director of the Indigenous Educational Studies Program. Sessions addressed themes of perseverance, gendered leadership, leadership theory, and cultivating meaning in everyday responsibilities.

- The winter term Success and Wellness Day Fair was held January 28th. This event saw 203 students connect with student support services across campus in Market Hall to learn about services and receive on-the-spot support.
- Spring and Summer registration opened successfully on March 3, with strong initial student engagement. Registration activity has continued to build since opening, with enrolments still climbing as students finalize their course selections for the upcoming sessions.
- Martin Szczepanowski of the Office of the Registrar and Enrolment Services has been selected to be a member of the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) advisory committee. This committee will play a key role in guiding the development and integration of tools and data initiatives that support institutions and students to make transfer pathways more effective and accessible in Ontario.

Priority 4: Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive

- The Office Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement is continuing with the development of Brock's Indigenous Strategic Plan. This month we are out in the community and have five Indigenous community consultations planned. We are hoping to visit Senate in May.
- On Feb 19th and 20th: Hadiya'dagenhahs FNMI Centre through their CEDAR programming provided an Inuit Cultural presentation to approximately 500 students within the Niagara Catholic Board. The CEDAR program is delivered year-round to K-12 students.
- International Services and Partnerships continue to strengthen international student identity and belonging through cultural and community-building programming. Recent collaborations with campus partners—including a Community Cook-Along (with Campus Collaborative for Student Food Security), residence-based cultural sharing (with Housing Services) a drumming and folklore event to celebrate Black History Month/African Heritage Month (with the Black Student Success Centre) a Pride Month movie night (in collaboration with the Wellness Hub), and an Eid giveaway (with Human Rights and Equity)—are helping connect students, promote cultural exchange, and foster a more inclusive campus community.
- This spring, Learning Services has hosted numerous international support workshops and study hall sessions as part of a broader series to help international students finish their term strong. Future events include:
 - March 16, 2026: Presenting and Facilitating in Canadian Academic (Lunch and Learn)
 - March 23, 2026: Writing your Paper as an International Student (Lunch and Learn)
 - March 30, 2026: Let's Catch up: APA for International Students (Lunch and Learn)
 - April 13, 2026: International Study Hall
 - April 20, 2026: International Study Hall
 - April 27, 2026: End-of-Term Conversation Circle for International Students

Priority 5: Future-Oriented

- During this year's spring open house, the Goodman School of Business will be hosting a Future Scholars event where all applicants who have received an offer will be invited to a special session at the start of open house to learn more about Goodman and life as a Goodman student. This annual event has proven effective in encouraging those who have received an offer to make Brock and Goodman their choice.
- Goodman Group will be presenting a program on Executive Presence, Impact and Influence on April 1 and 8. Emphasizing Communication effectiveness, body language and non-verbal behaviour, executive presence under pressure, storytelling and persuasion and influence and leadership voice. The interactive sessions are practical and designed to help executives apply what they learn immediately with real-time feedback and coaching.

- The Faculty of Applied Health Sciences' Department of Kinesiology joined the University of Jyväskylä in Finland in an initiative to create a new Erasmus Mundus Joint Master of Science in International Sports Coaching between four universities (University of Jyväskylä, University of Southern Denmark, Reykjavik University, and Brock). If successful, this multi-million-dollar program will be fully funded by ERASMUS. The proposed program in Advanced Research and Coaching Training in International Coaching (ARCTIC-COACH) is designed to bring together leadership and applied research from the Nordics in Finland, Iceland, Denmark and Canada to form a world-leading hub of excellence in sport coaching education.
- Brock University representatives (David Begg, AVP-International and Melanie Pilkington, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, Faculty of Math and Science) took part in the Asia Pacific Association of International Education conference February 24-26 to explore and promote opportunities for collaboration with potential partners and to ensure Brock's top-of-mind status among current partners, representatives from the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service, and other global stakeholders. Following the conference, they were joined by Anna Guo, Director, International Student Recruitment and Joanna Chen, Senior Relationship Manager, China to support recruitment initiatives and explore partnership opportunities in Mainland China. The visit included meetings with Trade Commissioners, university leaders, recruitment partners, and current undergraduate and graduate offer holders to strengthen institutional relationships, explore opportunities for academic collaboration and student mobility, and support Brock's international recruitment initiatives. These engagements reinforced Brock's visibility in the region and contributed to ongoing efforts to expand meaningful academic partnerships and support international student pathways to Brock.
- Prof. Mariek Schmidt (Earth Sciences) received funding for her project, "Igneous, Secondary Alteration, and Surface Contributions to Rocks at Jezero Crater to Infer its Integrated History and Past Habitability." The grant supports her work as a Co Investigator on the PIXL instrument for NASA's Mars 2020 Perseverance mission, strengthening Brock's leadership in planetary science and creating exceptional research integrated learning opportunities for students.
- CPI continues to facilitate communities of practice focusing on inclusive pedagogy, generative AI & assessment, educational technology, and dossier development.
- These CoPs provide space for instructors to come together to explore shared interests in teaching and learning. Monthly gatherings are designed to spark ideas and support instruction without added workload. Email to cpi@brocku.ca if you are interested in attending.

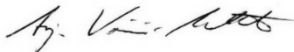
On February 10, I hosted a Spring/Summer Open Session to provide members of the Brock community with an opportunity to ask questions and share ideas about the spring/summer term. Approximately 30 participants attended and worked in small groups to discuss five guiding questions. The feedback collected during these discussions is available [here](#), and will inform the ongoing planning for a more sustainable Spring/Summer term.

In my roles as Chief Budget Officer and Chief Operating Officer, I hosted a series of budget workshops in March to provide faculty and staff with opportunities to ask questions and engage in open dialogue about the budget process. Three workshops were held in advance of the Community Information Session, which I will be hosting on April 9 from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. in the Sean O’Sullivan Theatre. I strongly encourage all faculty and staff to attend these sessions.

In mid-March, I travelled with the President and AVP International to the University of Portsmouth to advance Brock’s dual degree partnership and explore opportunities for expanded academic and institutional collaboration. The visit provided insight into Portsmouth’s academic strengths, priority faculties, and emerging joint initiatives. Discussions focused on strengthening the dual degree pathway, identifying additional areas of academic alignment, and learning from Portsmouth’s community-engaged approach. In alignment with Brock’s commitment to responsible resource use, the trip included visiting the Universities of Birmingham and Surrey with a focus on strengthening our longstanding exchange partnerships.

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: [Provost’s Report to the Board of Trustees \(Cycle 5, March 5, 2026\)](#)