

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

May 27, 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

- The Faculty of Mathematics and Science, in collaboration with partners across the University, is preparing to host the Canada Cup of Robotics – Niagara 2026 from June 13–20. This international FIRST Robotics competition will bring more than 1,500 student competitors and thousands of visitors from over 30 countries to Brock and Canada Games Park, showcasing hands-on, experiential STEM learning and global collaboration. Volunteers from across the Brock community are encouraged to support this exciting event. More than 200 roles are available in event operations, team coordination, and participant experience. No prior robotics experience is required, and training will be provided. More information and registration for volunteer opportunities is [available on Experience BU](#).
- From Student Life & Success, BU101 uptake continues to rise thanks to the wonderful partnership of faculty members teaching first-year courses. Thanks to course integration with MGMT 1P93, ACTG 1P01, PSYC 1F90, RECL 1P90, HLSC 1P90, MUSI 1P50, and COMM 1P92, BU101 engaged 2,639 unique students—an increase of 54% over last year.
- From the Faculty of Humanities, on May 8-10 the Department of Dramatic Arts welcomed 150 students, guest artists, and educators to the MIWSFPA for the second annual National STAR (School Theatrical Arts Recognition) Festival South. The packed schedule included an intensive 24-hour playwriting workshop led by Toronto-based producer, actor, screenwriter and sound designer Sean Meldrum with support from third-year Dramatic Arts (DART) student Ariel Piluso and Concurrent Education and DART student Kashvi Sharma. Thanks to our colleagues in DART, especially David Vivian, David Fancy, and Danielle Wilson.
- And on May 14-17, DART welcomed the artists and audiences of the [Niagara Children's Festival 2026](#) produced by [Carousel Players](#) of St. Catharines, one of the pre-eminent companies producing theatre for youth and young people on the national landscape.
- Save the dates! The course (re)design summer institute returns this year on August 31 – September 3. This event aims to support instructors in the development of their courses in

preparation for the fall term. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in workshops on learning outcomes and alignment, assessment and activity design, using Brightspace, and accessible pedagogy. Time will also be dedicated to working on designing or redesigning elements of your course (e.g. syllabus, Brightspace course site, assessment design). [Register for the Course \(Re\)Design Institute](#).

- As a reminder, the Brock University [Award for Distinguished Teaching](#) is presented annually to a faculty member who, in the opinion of their peers, has made an outstanding contribution to the teaching and learning environment at Brock University. Nomination packages are due at the end of May.
- From May–August 2026, the Global Scholars Program will host 22 visiting scholars, including 12 Mitacs scholars working with seven faculty members. This represents significant year-over-year growth (2025–2026), with Mitacs participation increasing by 85% and the total number of visiting scholars over the spring/summer terms rising by 77%.
- Demand and competitiveness for Global Affairs’ Emerging Leaders in the Americas Program (ELAP) and Study and Exchange Scholarships increased for the 2026/2027 cycle, with eligible applications rising 86% year-over-year (2025–2026).

### Priority 2: Accessible, Flexible, and Customizable

- If you are considering adopting or adapting an Open Educational Resource for your course – please note that grants are available that range from \$500 up to \$6000 to support the use of OER in the classroom. The next [grant submission](#) deadline: May 31, 2026.
- Four library consortia, including the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) have partnered to establish an updated [resource sharing agreement](#) that includes cross-country lending of physical materials, e-resource sharing, and in-person reciprocal borrowing at Canadian universities and colleges, without charge. Additionally, reciprocal borrowing cards are no longer required for in-person borrowing. Instead, valid institutional identification is accepted as proof of borrowing eligibility.
- This year, Scientifically Yours welcomed 75 students from 17 high schools to campus for an immersive, hands-on learning experience; participants selected from 17 projects and engaged in six activities led by faculty and staff from the Faculties of Mathematics and Science, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, and Faculty of Social Sciences, as well as the Library Makerspace. Supported by Brock graduate and undergraduate students serving as Project Leaders and Residence Guides, the program introduced participants to university life and post-secondary study while expanding access to STEM learning opportunities.

### Priority 3: Supportive and Student-Centred

- Student health trends this year highlight a significant shift in the types of concerns coming. 40% of all physician appointments at the Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre were related to mental health, a dramatic increase from the pre-pandemic baseline which was in the low to mid-20% range. This rise reflects both the growing complexity of student needs and the increasing willingness of students to seek support for mental health concerns.

- The recent MCURES grant has enabled the planned implementation of a stepped care model that spans the full continuum of student needs. Beginning with universal mental health promotion and moving up to targeted, intensive therapeutic interventions. This model allows students to access the right level of care at the right time, reducing barriers and improving service. Early indicators suggest that the stepped approach is strengthening capacity, diversifying service options, and supporting more students through a combination of workshops, brief interventions, group programming, and individualized counselling.
- Colleagues at the Marilyn I. Walker School hosted a [Green Market, May 23, 9:30 – 1:30](#), in their continued efforts to encourage sustainability and support student food security. The event featured a large garage sale in the art gallery, with household items, décor, clothing and lots of books; they also sold organic and heirloom tomatoes, vegetable plants, and edible flowers, grown in-house at MIWSFPA and offered varieties perfect for the urban garden. All proceeds from the garage and seedling sales go to a food fund, that distributes healthy snacks throughout the building for students. Also available were hand-drawn portraits by Lauren Robertson and auction items by DART faculty, Mike Griffin. To round off the day, Lindsay Taylor, Urban Forestry and Climate Action leader, walked participants through her downtown rain garden project at the Performing Arts Centre and Silver Spire Church starting at 1:00 pm. Lindsay discussed the principles of landscape hydrology and restoration, and introduce the design of her rain garden, including her selection of plants.
- From the Centre for Co-Op, Career, and Experiential Education, the Co-operative and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL) iHub has announced the approved applications for the 2026 Round 1 Call for Proposals. Of the 153 projects approved nationwide — representing more than \$13 million in funding — 12 Brock projects have been tentatively approved, representing \$631,000 in funding. As a result, Brock accounts for 8% of all funded projects and 5% of the total funding awarded across Canada. Given that approximately 250 post-secondary institutions across the country were eligible to apply, this represents a highly successful funding round for Brock. The results reflect the strength and innovation of Brock’s proposed projects, particularly in an increasingly competitive funding environment. [Applications for 2026-R2 opened on May 1st and closes May 30th.](#)
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has updated its policies related to co-op work permits for international post-secondary students. CCEE is working closely with colleagues in International Services and Partnerships to support the implementation of these changes and to assist international students participating in co-op and course-based experiential learning opportunities. Any questions may be directed to: [isa@brocku.ca](mailto:isa@brocku.ca).
- Brock recently hosted the Ontario Ecology, Ethology, and Evolution Conference (OE3C), bringing together emerging researchers to share and engage in interdisciplinary scholarship. Organized by graduate students with mentorship from Kiyoko Gotanda, the event reflects a strong culture of student leadership, mentorship, and supportive research training within the Department of Biological Sciences and Faculty of Mathematics and Science.
- Brock International delivered a three-part Spring term orientation experience for new international students, including a virtual orientation on April 15, 2026, an in-person welcome on May 3, 2026, and a Global Connections Meet & Greet on May 13, 2026.

- Eight International Student Ambassadors for 2026–27 have been selected from a highly competitive pool and have accepted their offers. Reflecting the diversity of the international student community, this cohort will provide peer leadership, enhance student engagement, and support inclusive transition and success initiatives. The selection process was conducted by a cross-campus adjudication committee.

#### Priority 4: Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive

- Student Accessibility Services has experienced substantial growth in academic accommodation needs. This year, the team administered approximately 25% more exams than last year, reflecting both increased registration and the rising complexity of academic accommodation needs for students.
- As a reminder, the 4th annual Speaking with Pride Day of Professional Development is happening on June 4, 2026. This event is hosted by Brock University Professional and Continuing Studies in partnership with Pride Niagara as part of the annual Pride Niagara Festival. For more information and to register, [please visit Experience BU here](#).

#### Priority 5: Future-Oriented

- As you may have seen, the Office of Institutional Planning & Analysis (IPAP) has formally transitioned to its new name as the Office of Institutional Planning & Data Governance—and [they have launched a new website here](#). This change in name reflects IPDG’s expanded role in supporting data governance matters Brock. IPDG will continue to support academic and administrative units with their data and survey needs, in addition to supporting a consistent and institution-wide approach data governance.
- The Open Educational Resources (OER) Working Group is pleased to announce that Brock University has 10 [UN SDG Open Pedagogy Faculty Fellows](#) participating in an international faculty fellowship that focuses on the [United Nations sustainable development goals \(SDGs\)](#). This program, which includes training and support across four mandatory meetings across this summer, leads to the collaborative design of 3 “renewable assignments,” in which students create OER that are aligned with one or more SDGs, as part of their coursework. This work is completed in cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary teams of faculty who share a common interest in specific SDGs.
  - o Melissa Blair, Public Health
  - o Olga Fellus, Education
  - o Emily Krushelnycky and Doug Karrow, Education
  - o Christiana Okyere, Child and Youth Studies
  - o Divya Matta, Chemistry
  - o Dolana Mogadime, Education
  - o Jennifer Pirosko, Education
  - o Jenn Skelding, Student Success
  - o Mariam Takkouch, Education
  - o Michelle Vine, Health Sciences
- As a reminder, the [annual Spring deletion](#) of course sites will begin in June. Notifications for impacted instructors associated with these 2021 courses will be sent out in Brightspace,

and as always if there is content that you need to save [importing it](#) into a [Project Site](#) will exclude it from the deletion process.

- Professional and Continuing Studies recently presented four sessions at the Canadian Association of University Continuing Education annual conference in Halifax. Among the sessions included a session by Marketing Manager Jonathan Belgrave on “Cutting through Complexity: Measuring What Matters in CE Marketing” and a session by Executive Director Nathan Cheney and Associate Director, Barb Mercer on “Doing more with less: providing advice for running a lean continuing education department.”
- Brock University's Burlington Campus Library (BCL) joined Brock partners in hosting the grand opening of the Bateman Community Centre. The event was an opportunity to showcase the campus, including the new library space and its collections. Erin Barton, BCL Library Coordinator, worked with a children's author (and Faculty of Education Professor), Kari-Lynn Winters, to present a Storytime for children in the community. Over 40 children and their caregivers participated in this fun and interactive event.

---

On May 19 the [2027-28 multi-year planning cycle was launched](#) for Departments/Programs. Now in its second year, this year's planning process incorporates much of the feedback we received last year. Of particular note, a multi-year dashboard is now available and accessible to all faculty and staff [via Power BI](#) to assist with planning. We will continue to refine the planning process in future years, and feedback is always welcome at [provost@brocku.ca](mailto:provost@brocku.ca).

I am very much looking forward to our discussions today on the degree architecture framework coming forward from the Undergraduate Program Committee and would like to extend a special thank you to Geraldine Jones and Larry Savage for all their work and support to date. Changes like this are at the core of Senate's mandate to guide the educational policy of the University. Opportunities to reimagine ourselves in significant and meaningful ways do not always present themselves as often as we may like, and are very exciting when they do. The conversations we have had so far have been insightful and engaging, and I would like to thank everyone who has participated, whether here at Senate or by sharing their thoughts with us directly. If there is one thing I would share ahead of our discussion today, it is to emphasize that is just the beginning—and, if approved, our work will shift to mapping each of our programs onto this new framework.

Lastly, I would like to extend my thanks to all our colleagues for your service on Senate and its various committees this year. I look forward to continuing our work when we reconvene in the Fall!

Sincerely,

Arja Vainio-Mattila  
Provost & Vice-President, Academic