

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

May 6, 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 April 7, the Department of Digital Humanities (DDH) took part in the [Level Up Showcase](#) competition in Toronto. Brock is an organizing partner of Level Up, which gives student game developers an opportunity to launch new games to the public and compete with industry expert judges. The Interactive Arts and Digital Media and GAME Programs fielded five team-built games, among more than 230 student teams present. With 1000 students, over 200 industry judges, and 3000 members of the public, Level Up has grown to be the largest gathering of game developers in the province. Stan Cho, provincial Minister of Gaming and Tourism, was on hand to welcome participants, and Olivia Chow, Mayor of Toronto, was present to award prizes sponsored by the city. DDH students won three awards in this highly competitive field! The team [Maid Mayhem](#) won 1st Place People's Choice and 2nd Place Achievement in Audio. Brock has won 1st Place in People's Choice four years in a row! We also won 3rd Place People's Choice for [DisGo](#).
- At a recent Beta Gamma Sigma (BGS) event, Goodman was presented with two awards from the organization. Goodman's nominee, Jenn Harper (Doctor of Laws 2023), Founder and CEO of Cheekbone Beauty, received the Entrepreneurial Achievement Award. This award provides international recognition to those individuals who develop, organize and enhance successful new ventures focusing on those who drive innovation, our economic engine and support for new ideas. In addition, out of 600 Beta Gamma Sigma chapters worldwide, Goodman received the Silver (second place) award for Outstanding Chapter. This award goes to chapters that demonstrate excellence in chapter performance and provides a scholarship to an outstanding student member.
- From the Faculty of Social Sciences, a recent two-day [Sociology of Criminal Justice Showcase](#) invited guests to learn about community resources created by Critical Criminology students. Topics covered included homelessness, incarceration, intimate partner violence, over-policing, substance use, and missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people (MMIWG2S+).

- Also from FOSS, the [CHYS 2F16 Poster Fair](#) recently showcased second-year students' hard work and dedication. Students shared research on caregiving, sparking meaningful conversations about risk, resilience, and clinical practice. Invited guest Cayleigh Sexton (MA '18) CHYS graduate and Executive Director of Young Caregivers' Association helped connect this work to real-world impact.
- In March, the Department of Dramatic Arts concluded its sold-out and wildly successful run of the Winter Mainstage Production, [ESCAPE TO ILKANOR: A Fantasy Play in Nine Chapters](#), written and directed by DART faculty member Mike Griffin. Congratulations to all the students, staff, and faculty involved in the production!
- At the Faculty of Mathematics & Science, the Integrated Engineering program has reached an important milestone with the completion of its second year of delivery. This marks the halfway point to graduation for the inaugural cohort. In parallel, the MEng external reviewer site visit has recently concluded, representing a key step in ongoing program development and quality assurance.
- Also from FMS, following the success of the December Winter Study Jam, which welcomed more than 100 undergraduate students from across campus and brought together Brock Learning Services, instructors, and teaching assistants, FMS again partnered with Brock Learning Services to host a Spring Study Jam. The all-day, drop-in event provided dedicated study space, academic encouragement, and course-specific support for several high-enrolment courses. More than 100 students attended, with FMS Mentors and Advisors, Learning Services, and graduate student volunteers available throughout the day and evening to provide academic support and guidance.
- As a part of the interdisciplinary FMS Colloquium Series, *Rise of the Machines: The Future of A.I. and Robotics*, Associate Professor Yifeng Li, Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Machine Learning for Biomedical Data Science, delivered a well-attended lecture on March 13, 2026, titled *Understanding the Potential of Artificial Intelligence for Life Science Research*. The presentation engaged students, faculty, and community members in discussion on the role of artificial intelligence in advancing life-science and biomedical research. The series continues on Friday, May 8, 2026, with a presentation by Professor David Hutchinson, cross-appointed in the Department of Educational Studies and the Department of Digital Humanities, titled [Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Creative Work: Game Development at an Inflection Point](#), further extending interdisciplinary dialogue and reinforcing Brock's commitment to high-quality, future-oriented academic programming.
- Professor Vasseur (Department of Biological Sciences) has been renewed as the UNESCO Chair on Community Sustainability: From Local to Global. This renewal recognizes Brock's leadership in sustainability, community engagement, and global citizenship, and reflects the University's ongoing contributions to equity-informed, locally grounded, and globally relevant scholarship. Congratulations, Professor Vasseur!
- In the Department of Biological Sciences, Professor Tattersall's recent PhD graduate, Dr. Melanie Denommé Stauder, has recently been awarded the Canadian Council of Animal Care's Emerging Leader Award for 2026. This national recognition reflects the strength of

Brock's graduate training environment and its contributions to excellence in research and mentorship. Congratulations, Melanie!

- The [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.
- Students, employers, faculty, and community partners came together at Brock University on April 16 for the annual [Co-op, Career and Experiential Education \(CCEE\) Celebration and Recognition event](#), highlighting the partnerships that underpin experiential learning. A key theme throughout the event was the critical role of collaboration in creating meaningful student experiences. The event reinforced Brock's commitment to investing in talent and strengthening the communities it serves through impactful, partnership-driven learning opportunities.
- On April 13, Brock International hosted colleagues Assistant Professor Dr. Parinya Nakpathom and Assistant Professor Dr. Krittipat Pitchayadejanant from Burapha University – institutional partners for over 25 years - on April 13, 2026. The visit focused on increasing collaboration opportunities in Geography and Tourism, the Goodman School of Business, and Brock International. Discussions also explored expanding the relationship into new strategic areas, including research-focused collaboration with the Nursing Department.
- Also from Brock International, on April 23, representatives from the Consulate General of the Republic of Bulgaria in Toronto visited Brock. The delegates included Consul General Ms. Velislava Panova, along with Prof. Ralitsa Yotova and Prof. Diana Stoyanova from the University of Library Studies and Information Technologies. The meeting identified collaboration opportunities involving the evaluation of peer-reviewed publications; the exploration of COIL initiatives; and engagement via the Global Scholars Program.
- On April 28, the international student recruitment team hosted the Study in Niagara and Brock University Fam Tour, welcoming approximately 90 global educators to campus. The event showcased key academic strengths across Business, Engineering, and Health Sciences, and highlighted experiential learning opportunities.

Priority 2: Accessible, Flexible, and Customizable

- From the Faculty of Social Sciences, Michael Selbie, co-founder of the Brock Accessibility Association, received the 2025 Brock University Accessibility and Inclusion Award. Michael, a Labour Studies, Sociology, and Criminology student, [posted a video about the value of open-ended conversations](#), how his classes have informed his advocacy, and some of the small ways that everyone can help foster a more inclusive campus. Congratulations!
- In recognition of Global Accessibility Awareness Day, the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation will be hosting a session focused on accessibility and Brightspace. Topics will include using templates to support inclusion, module design, navigation, and resource building. Join us Thursday, May 21 from 11-11:50am. [Registration is available on Experience BU.](#)
- On May 27 from 11-11:50am, the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation is hosting a session on supporting accessibility through assessment design, aimed at supporting instructors of record (faculty, sessionals) in thinking through assessment design and assessment

practices that support accessibility and student accommodations. This session will discuss topics found in the SAS Practice Standards, such as memory aids, UDL for final exams, and other assessment considerations. [Registration is available through Experience BU.](#)

- The course (re)design summer institute returns this year! 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). The event will run August 31 – September 3, 2026, and [registration is available on Experience BU.](#)
- On Monday, April 13, Brock English as a Secondary Language welcomed students from the Economics department of Hosei University in Japan for a customized Business English program. Students will complete four weeks of Business English, 12 weeks of the Intensive English Language program, and another two weeks of project-based Business English before returning to their home university; and on April 17, Professional and Continuing Studies delivered a custom training to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming.
- International Services & Partnerships supported the development of an articulation agreement between the Goodman School of Business and the Canadian University of Dubai (CUD); this formal 2+2 articulation pathway, built off a long-standing relationship cultivated through ongoing engagement and institutional visits, will see the first cohort of students eligible to transfer to Brock this Fall 2026. This pathway creates a streamlined transfer and offers eligible graduates of this pathway the opportunity to complete Brock's Master of Business Administration in one year.

Priority 3: Supportive and Student-Centred

- From Student Life & Success, Foundations in Leadership (FiL) recorded more than 1,100 total attendances across workshops and custom sessions during the 2025-26 academic year. This included 256 unique students in 31 public workshops and over 800 students reached through "Order-a-Workshop" requests. A total of 59 students completed a Foundations in Leadership certificate. The Mentor Link: Peer Mentorship program also supported 56 mentor-mentee pairs, and more than 110 referral touchpoints, connecting students to services and supports throughout the year.
- At the Faculty of Social Sciences, Professor of Child and Youth Studies Danielle Sirianni Molnar recently presented alongside CHYS PhD student, Melissa Blackburn at [the 2026 Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence \(SRA\).](#)
- Also at FOSS, Psychology graduate Dawn Kakiroko (BA '24) won Brock's Associate Vice-President, Students, [Emerging Leader Award.](#) Kakiroko currently supports Brock students as a Wellness Navigation Coordinator. Congratulations, Dawn!
- From the Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre, the final report for the McColl and McBain Foundation has recently been completed, with the fifth Ambassador of Campus Well-being cohort set to graduate in early May, leaving one more cohort in June.

- The Brock Computer Science Club recently hosted an end-of-year event celebrating student achievement and leadership while highlighting new interdisciplinary collaboration among Computer Science, Engineering, Physics, and Neuroscience. The event recognized the hard work and contributions of graduating students and club executives and marked a meaningful leadership transition as graduating co-presidents Lina Elkayed and Khush Patel passed the club on to future student leaders.
- The Faculty of Mathematics & Science recently hosted two booths at the FIRST Robotics Competition Provincial Championship at the Niagara Falls Convention Centre. There were 3,000 students in attendance from across the province in attendance, including several Brock alumni (now parents, coaches and mentors). Brock is Platinum sponsor of FIRST Robotics Canada, and a sponsor of three Niagara-based teams who competed in the competition (teams 1114 Simbotics, 2852 DM High Voltage, and 6978 QuickStrike). Team 1114 came out on top as captain of the winning alliance at the event and are headed to Houston for the World Championships!
- As I've shared previously, Brock will also be hosting the upcoming [FIRST Canada Cup of Robotics on June 13-20](#). This event will welcome 3,000 students from around the world to campus as they compete in one of two global robotics tournaments happening that week.
- The Open Educational Resource 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.
- The 2025–26 International Student Ambassador Award program has successfully concluded, marked by a highly engaged and impactful cohort of nine peer leaders who delivered a wide range of meaningful events and initiatives throughout the academic year. Their contributions have significantly enhanced the international student experience and strengthened community connections across campus. Applications for the 2026–27 cohort have now closed, and the selection process is nearing completion.

Priority 4: Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive

- The Goodman School of Business is collaborating with the Indigenous Engagement Office to present the sixth installment of the Indigenous Leader Speaker Series. Sheila Cote-Meek, Interim Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement, will sit down with Trisha Pitura, Co-founder/Head of Design of Mini Tipi manufacturers of high-quality blankets and accessories with exclusive authentic Indigenous designs. The event will take place virtually on Tuesday, June 23 from noon to 1 p.m. More information will follow.
- Sign-in data within the Black Student Success Centre (BSSC) demonstrate consistently high and sustained engagement with students across all faculties and years of study. As the Centre looks ahead to the new academic year, campus partners are invited to [collaborate](#)

[with the BSSC](#) to co-design programs, referrals, and learning environments that deepen collective impact and further advance Brock University's shared goals of equity, student well-being, and academic success.

- On April 13, Hadiya'dagenhahs organized 26 Wikwemikong First Nations students who visited campus for a tour. The group was in the area for a Robotics competition. Students expressed interest in visiting the Engineering Department where they were welcomed.
- Also from Hadiya'dagenhahs, recent partnerships have been formed with the City of Toronto and Hamilton for the delivery of cultural programming.
- Also from FOSS, Social Justice and Equity Studies student Bella Recinos Athanasas [recently spoke with local media about her graduate research and volunteer work](#) with Niagara Transgender Action Coalition where she works to amplify the community's BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of colour) and newcomer and Indigenous voices.
- Following the success of last year's teaching resource challenge, the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation will be running the National Accessibility Awareness Week (NAAW) challenge again this year. By taking part, you will receive an email daily during the week of May 25 to May 29, in which you will be given an accessibility challenge that is applicable to your scope of work and practice. Participants will then submit their completed challenge portfolio at the end of the week for a chance to win prizes. [Sign-up is available through Experience BU](#).
- Professional and Continuing Studies, along with Pride Niagara and the Human Rights and Equity Office, has opened registration for the "Speaking with Pride" event, which is held annually as part of Pride Week in Niagara. Speaking with Pride is Niagara's 2SLGBTQ+ professional development and networking event for community members and allies. [More information and registration can be found here](#). The event will take place on June 4, 2026.

Priority 5: Future-Oriented

- On April 23, the Goodman School of Business welcomed approximately 250 Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) students to campus from high schools from around the region and beyond. They participated in mock lectures and information sessions before sampling campus cuisine at the Decew residence dining hall.
- Goodman Group has closed out a very successful year. Having worked with the following partners: Niagara Regional Police Service, Niagara Parks Commission, District School Board of Niagara, CAA Niagara, City of St. Catharines, City of Welland, City of Niagara Falls, Regional Municipality of Niagara, Town of Lincoln, Martindale Place, DKI Miller, Town of Pelham, Community Living Fort Erie, Westlake Royal Building Products, City of Port Colborne, Town of Fort Erie, City of Guelph, Town of NOTL, among others.
- At the Faculty of Social Sciences, this spring saw the relaunch of the [Brock University Seed Library](#), which invites community members from Brock and Niagara to "borrow" seeds for planting in their gardens and "return" harvested seeds to share with others. The initiative, started in 2022 by two ESRC students, is a joint venture of the ESRC, Sustainability at Brock, the Brock University Library and Brock Students for Circular Economy.

- On April 2, Brock hosted the [Niagara Brain Bee competition](#), welcoming 45 high school students from across the Niagara region to our campus. The Brain Bee is an internationally recognized neuroscience competition designed to inspire secondary school students to learn about the brain and pursue careers in science. In addition to the competition itself, students participated in faculty- and student-led demonstrations, and interactive sessions with current undergraduate and graduate students, including electrophysiology, neuromuscular mechanics, and neuroanatomy. The event provided meaningful experiential learning opportunities for participants and Brock student volunteers. It contributes to strengthening community partnerships and supports recruitment by introducing prospective students to the Brock academic environment.
- Brock recently hosted the Niagara Regional Science and Engineering Fair (NRSEF) on March 28, continuing a long-standing community partnership that supports experiential, high impact learning for secondary school students across the Niagara region. The fair grew by 15 projects this year, with five advancing to the Canada Wide Science Fair. Faculty, staff, and students from FMS, FOSS, and FAHS participated as mentors and advisors, reflecting strong interdisciplinary collaboration and meaningful community engagement. Plans are underway to engage additional faculties in future years.
- A reminder from the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation, 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.
- Co-op, Career, and Experience Education recently supported a campus visit from [representatives from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia](#), who engaged with Brock to learn more about institutional approaches to experiential learning and student success. Discussions included Brock's Core Competencies framework and its alignment with global workforce priorities, including those outlined in Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

As I noted in my previous report to Senate, the small working group tasked with identifying concrete next steps for implementing an AI strategy at Brock recently completed their work. That plan was recently [released in a guest update from University Librarian Nicole Nolan](#), as a part of the Provost's memoranda. The finalized [Brock Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Workplan](#) sets out several next steps, including the creation of a Task Force and several working groups that will focus on what AI, what it means, and its impact across different areas of University. Nicole's update, and the workplan, are both well worth the read—and she would be happy to discuss if you have been engaged in AI in your respective area, have questions, comments, or thoughts generally about AI at Brock.

I am also happy to share that work on the Indigenous Strategic Plan continues to move forward. Consultations have been completed with Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and community. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement is currently working on the analysis and synthesis of these consultations and expects to present draft strategic themes on June 23, 2026, at the opening of Indigenous Peoples Awareness Week, with a launch of Brock's first Indigenous Strategic Plan on October 1, 2026!

Lastly, I want to highlight that our discussions on the new degree architecture framework are continuing—most recently at the Senate committee level. The conversations have been insightful and engaging, and I look forward to continuing them here later this year.

Thank you, and I look forward to today's discussion.

Sincerely,

Arja Vainio-Mattila
Provost & Vice-President, Academic