

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

October 22, 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

- For the 2025 academic year, a number of new initiatives are underway at the Faculty of Mathematics and Science – supported by CEWIL Canada. This includes students in Computer Science who will collaborate with a local tech company to lay the foundation for a large-scale, AI-driven smart city project aimed at reducing municipal costs and improving efficiency, while also gaining meaningful in-course experience in our new AI-centered lab spaces. As well, a redesigned 4F90 thesis will include industry partners who will collaborate with students and faculty across multiple departments to develop unique research projects of mutual interest, further enhancing the student learning experience and offering an innovative model of teaching.
- Also funded by CEWIL Canada, three project courses in Visual Arts and Digital Humanities will be running this year that increase career development and community/professional connections as they provide paid work-integrated learning opportunities for students in creative fields. These projects will be highlighted in public and network-based events in November 2025, and in 2026.
- The Faculty of Mathematics and Science also has officially launched its new student-led mentorship program, built by students, for students. The initiative pairs upper-year mentors with first-year mentees in their discipline, offering support, guidance, and community from day one. The response has been strong, with about 70 mentors volunteering to take part. Unlike tutoring, this program focuses on building relationships and belonging, while reinforcing Brock's "You Matter" philosophy.
- I am very pleased to share the news that [Dr. Barbara Seeber](#), Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, was recently awarded a [Doctorat Honoris Causa](#) (honorary doctorate) by the Université de Mons (Belgium) in recognition of her extraordinary [The Slow Professor](#) project (co-authored with Dr. Maggie Berg, Professor Emerita At Queen's). Please join me in congratulating Professor Seeber!

- Also in the Faculty of Humanities, Jeremy Leipert, a Project Coordinator in the Department of Digital Humanities, was recognized for his commitment to expanding representation and providing learning and networking opportunities for Indigenous students in computer programming and gaming. In [workshops connecting Brock and local high school students with professional video game developers](#), for example, participants learned the skills needed to create a game and to contribute to a more inclusive games industry overall.
- We recently received approval from the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security for the Master of Professional Education Program at the Faculty of Education. This is an exciting new program at Brock that will be delivered fully online, catering to those working in full-time instructional positions.
- Applications are now open for the 2025-26 round of Faculty Fellows in Accessibility. Expressions of interest are due by October 31, 2025. Details on how to apply are available on the [Centre for Pedagogical Innovation website here](#).
- Nominations are also being accepted for three [Brock-wide Teaching Awards](#). There are three categories: sessional teaching, teaching of large classes, and teaching for early career faculty. The deadline for nominations is November 7, 2025.
- Congratulations to Professor Pauli Gardner in the Department of Health Sciences as the recipient of the 2025 Distinguished Teaching Award. Professor Gardner will be providing a keynote at the annual [Tribute to Teaching](#) event on Thursday, December 4.
- The Goodman School of Business's MBA program has advanced two positions in the 2026 MBA Rankings, moving from 15th to 13th place nationally. This upward trajectory is also reflected in an improved standing in the QS Global MBA Rankings.
- As a part of the Campus-Wide Curriculum, students complete a pre-curriculum reflection that serves as a measure of intentional engagement—capturing students who are aware of their participation and reflecting on meaning and purpose in their learning journey. From May–September 2025, there was a 37% increase in students completing their pre-curriculum reflection compared to the same period in 2024.

Priority 2: Accessible, Flexible, and Customizable

- Student Wellness and Accessibility has expanded its access to health services this year, including increased availability of specialized care for conditions such as attention deficit disorder and disordered eating—ensuring students can access timely, culturally competent support tailored to their needs
- At the start of Fall term, Student Assessment Services launched a more proactive and visible presence during Orientation Week by tabling at orientation events across campus, including Weather Station field and the Thistle hallway/chalkboard. Meeting approximately 500 students between events, SAS provided proactive information about services, support with transition and registration, and appointment scheduling support. Additionally, the SAS Open House saw approximately 175 new and returning students meet to engage with services and seek community and connection.

- Last month, 20 Law Plus students participated in a hands-on learning experience at the St. Catharines Courthouse on September 26. The visit began with a guided tour of the law library and a Q&A session with the Law Librarian, followed by small-group opportunities to observe real court proceedings in action.
- Professional and Continuing Studies (PCS) has launched a new Professional Certificate in Logistics and Supply Chain Management and has been certified a Centre of Excellence in Logistics Learning by the CITT, which is Canada's Logistics Association. Successful completion of this certificate will meet the educational requirements for the Canadian Certified Logistics Professional designation. This certificate program will be delivered fully online for working professionals looking to upgrade their qualifications and skills.
- PCS welcomed 296 learners online on September 8 for their fall cohort and another 300 online learners on October 6 for their late fall cohort in areas such as Continuing Teacher Education, Human Resource Management, Business Administration and Accessibility.
- The Goodman School of Business two new international partnerships, in the form of exchange agreements. with ICADE (Comillas Pontifical University) in Madrid, Spain, and UCSC (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore) in Milan, Italy. These partnerships will provide BBA students with the opportunity for international experience during their studies.

Priority 3: Supportive and Student-Centred

- At the Faculty of Humanities, SPAN1F50, led by Erin Redmond, is conducting community-engaged experiential learning. Students are connecting with local Spanish-speaking organizations and professionals to practice their language skills, and raise awareness of this long-standing and growing community in Niagara. They are working toward a community event that will be held in 2026.
- At the Faculty of Social Sciences, Associate Professor of Child and Youth Studies Chelsea Jones, with four Social Justice and Equity Studies students and lead author Kimberlee Collins, co-wrote an article entitled "[The need for deep rest: Six stories of critical grief](#)" that was published in the *Journal of Praxis in Higher Education*.
- Student Assessment Services' case management teams service delivery model has been implemented this fall. Where previously supported by one Case Manager, students are now supported by a team of two. This model is evidence-based in the healthcare sector and increases continuity of care and same-day, in-time supports for students. It also decreases appointment cancellations related to staff illness, reducing the risk of complaints to the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.
- Thanks to a generous \$10,000 gift from Enbridge Inc., the Enbridge Career Experience Bursary is now fully funded. Two \$5,000 awards were granted to undergraduate students in the Work Experience Program (non-co-op), based on financial need and recommendations from CCEE. A follow-up story titled "[Enbridge bursary empowers students through work-integrated learning, advocacy](#)" highlights the impact of this support.

- With the support of the Registrar's Office and Student Accounts & Financial Aid, the new 2026 International Student Scholarship program has been launched, opening even more doors for talented students to join the Brock community.
- Last month, the Black Student Success Centre (BSSC) welcomed 395 visits from 126 unique students, with the majority engaging in peer connection and academic support. The most common reasons for visits were socializing, studying, and seeking wellness or staff support. Students from Psychology, Nursing, and Business programs were especially active, with second- and third-year students showing the highest levels of engagement.
- In collaboration with the Wellness Navigators (SWAC), the BSSC has collectively engaged students through a variety of wellness-focused initiatives, including Preparing for Academic Success, Community Cook-Along, Talk the Talk: Communication Workshop, and a weekly Wellness Hour. These programs have equipped students with practical skills, valuable resources, and opportunities for reflection, helping them strengthen communication and networking abilities, build meaningful social connections, and improve overall well-being.
- Overall, 64% of currently enrolled first-year students have logged into ExperienceBU this term, demonstrating high degree of engagement on campus!

Priority 4: Equitable, Diverse, Inclusive

- At the Faculty of Social Sciences, a Department of Political Science graduate Eve Nyambiya (BA '21) was selected as one of 40 recipients of the Coronation Medal by The Canadian Women's Foundation, in recognition of her work advancing gender equality and justice. [You can read more about Eve and her accomplishments here.](#)
- Student Wellness and Accessibility has enhanced its psychotherapy capacity this year by investing in additional psychotherapy resources, which have reduced wait times and broadened the scope of mental health services available to students across diverse backgrounds and lived experiences.
- Student Assessment Services, with the support of the Black Student Success Centre, has hired a student peer to be co-located between Departments to build relationship, provide education, reduce barriers and stigma, and provide culturally responsive services in access to academic accommodations.
- The Intercultural Competency training module, developed collaboratively by the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and the Co-op, Career and Experiential Education team, is nearing completion. This initiative is designed to foster cross-cultural understanding and inclusive practices among students, staff and employer and community partners. Once launched, it will enhance Brock's capacity to cultivate a welcoming campus environment and equip students with the skills needed to thrive in diverse workplaces and global contexts.
- Co-op, Career and Experiential Education has finalized training materials tailored for neurodivergent students, staff, and employers. This marks a significant step toward creating equitable career pathways and promoting inclusive workplace practices. The next phase will involve gathering feedback from stakeholders to refine the materials and ensure they are responsive to the diverse needs of our community.

- This year, Brock International is launching its Days of Significance series with celebrations of the Mid-Autumn Festival and Diwali. This initiative invites the Brock community to engage with diverse cultural traditions. Upcoming events include programming around Winter Break Holidays, Lunar New Year, Ramadan, and Holi—each fostering cross-cultural connection and belonging.

Priority 5: Future-Oriented

- At the Faculty of Humanities, a research talk was recently hosted about the Ontario e-Campus Pressbook on [Ancient Greek Dress and Adornment](#)—which was researched and published by students under the direction of Allison Glazebrook.
- Looking ahead, as at the Faculty of Humanities, the Department of Classics and Archaeology has resumed their [annual lecture series](#) in collaboration with the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) Niagara peninsula branch. The Centre for Canadian Studies is hosting a [Canada Talks series this year](#); and the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts [Walker Culture Leader Series](#) has several events upcoming, including a talk with Wally Dion tomorrow.
- Earlier this month, the [province announced a \\$5.2 million investment](#) to support 360 seats in the teacher education program over the 2025-26 and 2026-27 academic years. This announcement coincides with the opening of our Brock's new Burlington Campus. If you haven't had the chance to visit—I encourage you to make the trip! It's a wonderful new space that is designed to both train our students and engage with the community.
- International recruitment efforts continue, including a recent 10-day visit to India led by Associate Vice-President, International, David Begg, who, alongside the South Asia team, met with students, families, and partners across Delhi, Punjab, Ahmedabad, and Vadodara. The trip featured Brock Partner Connect events in Delhi and Ahmedabad, strengthening relationships and showcasing Brock's dedication to empowering Indian students through collaboration and global opportunities. Future recruitment efforts are also planned for Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America.
- Student Wellness and Accessibility has launched a wellness ambassador training module this year that provides comprehensive, evidence-informed training to equip peer leaders with the skills to recognize, respond to, and refer students in need by creating a compassionate, student-led support network.
- On September 19, the Goodman School of Business and the Goodman Alumni Network co-hosted the second annual Goodman Alumni Summit. The event welcomed 30 alumni for a full day of professional development. Sessions delved into critical contemporary topics, including artificial intelligence and the future of work, examining how organizations can adapt to rapid technological change, evolving workforce expectations, and dynamic global business environments. The summit featured presentations from faculty and alumni, alongside a keynote from Darrell Keezer, Founder of CandyBox Marketing.
- Robust consultation regarding the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy occurred throughout the summer months. Draft changes to the policy are

anticipated to be shared in October. These revisions are expected to bring the policy into compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) directives, as well as enhance the clarity of procedures, supporting consistency and transparency.

- Given the rapid shift in the capabilities of generative artificial intelligence, the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation (CPI) is inviting Departments and Faculties to engage in conversations to help inform the development of proposals concerning the future of assessment at Brock University. Please reach out to CPI at cpi@brocku.ca if you're interested in contributing to these discussions.
- This fall, CCEE is delivering a robust suite of career programming designed to prepare students for the evolving world of work. Programming will emphasize emerging career pathways, transferable skill development, and opportunities to connect with industry professionals. Through workshops, employer panels, and experiential learning engagement, students will be encouraged to think beyond immediate goals and develop strategies for long-term career success. For more information, please contact career.ed@brocku.ca.

As the Fall term is now in full swing, I wanted to take a moment to highlight two ongoing initiatives—the Curriculum Delivery Initiative (CDI) and Reimagining Brock University.

As I noted in my last Senate report, the [Curriculum Delivery Initiative](#) work is ongoing and there is now capacity with the CDI team to take on support additional interested programs. The CDI is a key part of the implementation of Brock's academic plan and the commitments we've made that relate to undergraduate programming across all five of the priority areas identified above. It is also a good opportunity to leverage the resource team for support in thinking through ideas and program changes you may have as a part of program/Departmental planning. If there is something your academic unit is interested in, please reach out to Anna Lathrop at alathrop@brocku.ca.

On the topic of change, I would like to remind Senators that the Brightspace shell for [Reimagining Brock University](#). Thank you to those of you who have responded so far with your thoughts on the two posted discussion topics of degree architecture and core & context. I expect we will be talking about both of these topics more this academic year, and I welcome thoughts and/or suggestions on these topics by email at reimagining@brocku.ca.

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 \(October 2, 2025\)](#)