

**Committee on Advising and Student Life**  
**Annual Report**  
**Academic Year 2024-25**  
**May 21, 2025**

**MEMBERS**

Chaz Aguiar (undergraduate)  
Francesca Bernardi (MA)  
Natalie Bouffard (undergraduate)  
Jim Doyle (SSPS, Chair)  
Shawn Gilles (graduate)  
Rudra Kafle (PH, Secretary)  
Melissa Kagen (IMGD)  
Brittany Frederick (ODIME, standing guest)  
Jane Li (RBE)  
Ingrid Matos-Nin (HUA)  
Evan McCracken (undergraduate)  
Erin Ottmar (SSPS)  
Emily Perlow (Dean of Students, ex-officio)  
Paul Reilly (OAA, ex-officio)  
Sarah Stanlick (DIGS, Provost's Representative)

**COMMITTEE ACTIVITY**

The committee met thirteen times during the 2024-25 academic year to address the following areas:

**1. Academic Advising.**

- a. CASL member Paul Reilly, Assistant Dean of Student Success, briefed CASL on the advising process for first-year students. The Committee discussed the possibility of mandating advising meetings for first-year students.
- b. CASL provided feedback on draft faculty and student surveys about their experiences with Academic Advising Day. These surveys will be implemented in AY2025-26.

- c. CASL, in collaboration with the Office of Academic Advising and the Morgan Teaching and Learning Center, held its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Just-in-Time Advising Training session on February 12. CASL members were supported in this work by Arne Gericke (Dean of Undergraduate Students), Jeannine Coburn (BME), Joseph Cullen (HUA), Kent Rissmiller (Associate Dean, Global School), Kaitlyn Schneider (SSPS), Ron Grimm (CBC), Dana Harmon (Director PE, Recreation, & Athletics). New topics for this year included BS/MS advising and Connecting Emotionally with Students.
- d. CASL member Ingrid Matos-Nin (HUA) and Stephen Kmiotek (CHE) were appointed to the review committee for the Board of Trustees Award for Outstanding Academic Advising.

## **2. Student Life and Wellbeing.**

- a. The Committee reviewed and provided feedback on a draft version of a “Student Experience Survey” related to Title IX, to be administered in the Spring of 2025.
- b. The Committee worked with the Director of Student Success and Support to communicate to faculty about the CARE report process.
- c. After discussion with the Associate Dean of Students, CASL expressed its support for tracking the number of academic integrity cases involving the use of AI.
- d. CASL followed up with the Bias Response Team about concerns expressed last year about anonymous reports. Anonymous reports are no longer accepted through the Bias Reporting process. CASL recommended that the Bias Response Team issue annual reports.
- e. The Committee expressed its support for the continuing efforts of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, & Multicultural Education and the students it serves.
- f. CASL members held listening sessions on April 2 for faculty to share comments and ask questions about the Student Code of Conduct. The feedback from these sessions was shared with CASL and the Dean of Students office.
- g. Melissa Kagen updated CASL on the work of the Wellness Coalition to implement the Okanagan Charter and assess the effects of social media on student mental health.
- h. The Committee provided feedback on a draft document related to civil liberties on campus.
- i. CASL collaborated with the Dean of Students Office on the annual process of reviewing and potentially updating the Student Code of Conduct, with the primary goal of clarifying language that is currently too general and open to interpretation.
- j. The Committee expressed its support for the work of the Office of International Student Life in helping international students navigate changes in the current political climate.

## **3. Committee Administration.**

- a. Melissa Kagen was appointed as CASL’s representative to the Campus Wellness Coalition.
- b. CASL agreed to invite Brittany Frederick, Director of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Multicultural Education, to join the Committee as a standing guest.
- c. CASL developed a new Faculty Handbook description of its Roles and Responsibilities, to better reflect the collaborative nature of the Committee’s work

and to acknowledge the growing importance of new areas of emphasis such as student mental health and well-being. The new description was approved by the Faculty at the April Faculty meeting.

#### **4. Invited guests**

- a. Lauren Buffone, Director of Student Success and Support, gave a presentation to the Committee on the activities of the CARE team. On CASL's recommendation a version of this report was also presented at the November Faculty meeting.
- b. Christine Sharry, Associate Dean of Students, met with CASL to discuss trends in academic integrity violations, particularly those involving the use of AI.
- c. Stanley Horton, Senior Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging and WPI's Title IX Coordinator briefed CASL on recent changes to the Bias Reporting Process.
- d. Brittany Frederick, Director of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Multicultural Education, provided the Committee an overview of recent activities of ODIME, in particular how ODIME has responded to current events.
- e. Christine Sharry, Associate Dean of Students, briefed CASL on the annual review process for the Student Code of Conduct and relayed feedback on the Code received from student groups.
- f. Colleen Callahan-Panday, Director of the International Students and Scholars Office, informed CASL about recent efforts to support international students in the current political climate.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMITTEE ACTION IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026**

- Review data resulting from the Spring 2025 Student Experience Survey to identify possible action items.
- Elect a CASL member to represent the Committee on the Campus Wellness Coalition for AY2025-26.
- Work with Paul Reilly to implement and analyze student and faculty surveys about experiences with Academic Advising Day.
- Work with the Office of Academic Advising and the Morgan Teaching and Learning Center to plan and deliver the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Just-in-Time Advising training session in February 2026.
- Explore ways to create a larger "footprint" for Academic Advising Day, providing additional opportunities for students to engage with their academic programs.
- Work with COAP and CTAF to ensure academic advising is appropriately considered in tenure and promotion deliberations.
- Continue the practice of meeting annually in April with the Associate Dean of Students to collaborate on the review and potential revision of the Student Code of Conduct.
- Form a CASL working group to collaborate with the Dean of Students office on draft language for the Student Code of Conduct related to student rights to free speech and freedom of inquiry.
- Work with the Dean of Students office to explore the development of an FAQ document to supplement the Student Code of Conduct.

**Academic Year 2025-2026 Membership transition**

Jim Doyle completed a 3-year term and Melissa Kagen completed a 1-year term as elected members of CASL. Melissa Kagen and Zoe Reidinger were elected to serve 3-year terms on CASL (2025-2028). SGA will appoint new student members.

**Academic Year 2025-2026 Officers**

Melissa Kagen was elected Chair and Rudra Kafle was elected Secretary of CASL for academic year 2025-26.