

Western Alumni

Draft Minutes of the 76th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

June 4, 2025, 7 p.m. – 7:56 p.m. ET

Virtual Meeting via Zoom Webinar

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

Matthew Helfand, President of the Alumni Association, called the Annual General Meeting to order at 7 p.m. ET. He noted that the AGM is an opportunity to formally record and celebrate the achievements of the past fiscal year, recognize the contributions of Alumni Association volunteers, and look ahead to new and exciting programming designed to strengthen connections within the Western community. He also welcomed special guest speaker Eric Morse, who would be sharing insights on innovation, leadership, and the future of entrepreneurship.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Matthew Helfand offered a Land Acknowledgement.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP INSIGHTS

Professor Eric Morse, Special Advisor to the President, Entrepreneurship, delivered a presentation on the opportunities and resources available to alumni through the Morrisette Institute for Entrepreneurship Powered by Ivey. He discussed the critical role of entrepreneurship in Canada's future and noted a post-COVID decline in startup activity nationwide. He outlined the Institute's support for entrepreneurs, from students to alumni leading high-growth ventures, and described its expanded vision to help strengthen Canada's entrepreneurship ecosystem. Following the presentation, members had the opportunity to participate in a question and answer session.

Matthew Helfand welcomed former and current directors of the Alumni Association Board including past presidents, chapter & network volunteers and Alumni Ambassadors from across Canada and around the world.

Matthew Helfand recognized representatives from Western's Alumni Affinity Partners, including TD Insurance, which offers home, auto, and small business insurance, and Manulife, which provides life, health, dental, and travel insurance, as well as a range of banking products. He expressed appreciation for their ongoing partnership and generous support of University programming.

Matthew Helfand noted that official notice of the meeting had been published 45 days in advance. He also confirmed that Donna Swanson, Alumni Engagement Coordinator in Alumni Relations, had been appointed to serve as Secretary for the meeting.

Matthew Helfand provided a brief overview of housekeeping details and outlined the process for voting on motions.

Matthew Helfand confirmed with Sarah Dawson, Associate Vice-President (Alumni Relations) and Secretary to the Alumni Association Board, that quorum had been established for the meeting.

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, held May 30, 2024, were made available to members in advance on the Association's website. As there were no amendments or changes, Matthew Helfand called for a motion to approve the minutes.

Moved: Burns Cheadle

Seconded: Anne Vair

Carried

2. APPROVAL OF THE ACTS OF THE DIRECTORS

Matthew Helfand noted that a record of motions passed by the Board of Directors since the last Annual Meeting was included with the meeting materials. He advised that formal approval of these actions is required and invited a motion to approve the 2024–2025 Acts of the Directors.

Moved: Khalid Backtash

Seconded: Laura Waller

Carried

3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Matthew Helfand reflected on his first year as President of the Alumni Association Board, highlighting his focus on empowering Board members as alumni ambassadors, supporting a balance of in-person and virtual engagement, and strengthening ties with the campus community. He noted the Board's involvement in events such as Convocation and Homecoming, and expressed appreciation for the strong partnership with Western Alumni staff.

YEAR IN REVIEW 2024–2025

Sarah Dawson presented the Year in Review for 2024–2025. She highlighted the Alumni Association's ongoing efforts to strengthen alumni engagement and advance Western's mission.

Sarah Dawson shared that the Alumni Legacy Fund supported a number of future-focused initiatives, including the new Engineering Innovation Hub, support for female varsity athletes, undergraduate research, Black student leadership, and programming such as The Summer After 1L (SA1L) initiative.

Sarah Dawson also noted signature events including the 2024 Alumni Awards, the March 2025 Alumni Summit, and increasing global participation in Western Day. She added that Western Alumni hosted events worldwide, including receptions in Calgary, Toronto, London, and the UK.

Sarah Dawson thanked the Board, volunteers, and alumni for their dedication and impact. A copy of the report was included with the meeting materials.

4. REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Matthew Helfand introduced the Slate of Directors and Appointees of The Alumni Association Board of Directors for 2025–2026:

President & President-Elect

Matthew Helfand, BA'13, MA'14, JD'18, President
Patrick Searle, BA'11, President-Elect

Returning Directors

Hsiu-Yan Chan, BSc'03, BESC'03, MBA'12
Danny Chang, BSc'20
Sarah Chapman, BSc'10
Burns Cheadle, PhD'86
Avis Favaro, BA'81, MA'82
Matthew Helfand, BA'13, MA'14, JD'18
Nathan Ho, BA'08, MBA'16
Lirim Hajrullahu, BA'13, MA'15
Melissa Kargiannakis, BHSc'12, MHIS'15
George McAuley, BSc'96, BEd'98, MEd'10
Shannon MacDonald, BA'90
Daniel Matthews, BSc'09, JD'14
Patrick Searle, BA'11
Michael Salvatori, BEd'90, MEd'94
Chantel Smith, BA'10
Victoria Volk, BMOS'14

Renewals

Hsiu-Yan Chan, BSc'03, BESC'03, MBA'12
Avis Favaro, BA'81, MA'82
Nathan Ho, BA'08, MBA'16
Michael Salvatori, BEd'90, MEd'94

New

Julie Campbell, BHSc'02, BScN'14, MN'16
Chloe McKenzie, BA'11

Representatives to Other Governance Boards and Committees:

University Board of Governors

Existing Appointments

George McAuley, BSc'96, BEd'98, MEd'10
Greg Dick, BSc'93
David Simmonds, BA'07

Extension

Sarah Shortreed, BESC'89 To June 30, 2026

University Senate

Existing Appointment

Dave Ferri, BA'76, BEd'78, MEd'86

New

Khalid Backtash, BMSc'09, BSc'17, MEng'20 To June 30, 2027

Laura Waller, BScN'08, MN'14, President's Designate To June 30, 2026

Honorary Degrees Committee

Sarah Chapman, BSc'10

Lawrence Loh, BSc'02, MD'06

Matthew Helfand called for a motion to elect the slate in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution:

MOTION: To move the acceptance of the Slate of Directors and Appointees for 2025–2026.

Moved: Melanie Peacock

Seconded: George McAuley

Carried

Matthew Helfand also recognized Robert Collins, BA'77 as our Campus Council Representative.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND RECOGNITION

Matthew Helfand acknowledged retiring members: Amy Bi and Melanie Peacock.

Matthew Helfand recognized Amy Bi for her outstanding volunteer contributions and values-driven leadership. A featured alumna in the Fall 2023 Western Alumni Magazine, Amy chaired the former Public Relations Committee, served on the Legacy Fund Committee, and was a member of the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry's 2024 Alumni of Distinction Awards Committee. On behalf of the Board and the Alumni Association, Matthew Helfand thanked Amy for her meaningful impact on Western and its alumni community.

Matthew Helfand thanked Melanie Peacock for her exceptional leadership and lasting contributions to the Alumni Association. As the first President to serve from outside Ontario, she showed that strong leadership knows no borders. During her term, she launched the Global Ambassador Virtual Summit, helped direct \$750,000 toward campus initiatives, and brought alumni together across generations and around the world. She also helped modernize our Board structure to ensure we remain future-focused and effective.

On behalf of the Board and the Alumni Association, Matthew Helfand thanked Melanie for her time, dedication and commitment to Western and the Alumni Association.

6. CLOSING REMARKS

Matthew Helfand expressed his appreciation to colleagues in University Advancement for their ongoing support and partnership in advancing the work of the Alumni Association.

Sarah Dawson provided an overview of the exciting plans and priorities for the Western Alumni community in the coming year. She highlighted the strong collaboration with Western and campus partners, and the vital role alumni, volunteers, and board members play in advancing the university's mission.

Key upcoming events include Convocation in June, welcoming over 8,800 new graduates, and Homecoming in September, featuring signature alumni celebrations and the Mustangs football game. She also highlighted ongoing alumni initiatives such as Purple Perks and regional travel events worldwide.

Sarah Dawson encouraged staying connected through newsletters and social media and stressed the focus on deepening partnerships to foster philanthropy, pride, and purpose. Sarah Dawson thanked everyone for their leadership and commitment to a vibrant, inclusive alumni community.

7. Meeting Close

Matthew Helfand thanked members for attending the AGM and presented the following:

MOTION: That the Annual General Meeting of The University of Western Ontario Alumni Association be concluded.

Moved: Danny Matthews

Seconded: Patrick Searle

Carried

The meeting closed at 7:56 p.m.