

*Spaces & Experiences*

**CHESTNUT RESIDENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC)**

January 29<sup>th</sup> | 10:00 - 11:00 AM

St. Lawrence Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Chestnut Residence

Meeting Minutes

**IN ATTENDANCE**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Steve Masse	Dean of Residence and Director of Student Life
Aisalyn Templin	Administration and Communications Assistant (Secretary)
Alicia Whitfield	Manager, Residence Admissions
Andrea Nelson	Rooms Manager
Derrick Gravener	Manager, Residence Administration (Acting)
Kevin Dancy	Director of Residence Operations
Lucy Chandler	Residence Administration and Project Coordinator
Matthew Mifsud	Facilities Coordinator
Makena Zimmerman	Residence Life Coordinator
Moises Antigua	Occupancy and Admissions Coordinator
Nina Kinoshita	Residence Council President
Theo Corts	Resident
Tulgar Ihan	Chestnut Student Lounge Manager
Yashvit Danini	Chestnut Residence Lead Don

**REGRETS**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Antoni Wachelka	Resident
Arjan Grover	Resident
Dhruva Rau	Resident
Mumtaz Ahmetoglu	Resident
Nabila Preema	Resident
Nathan Sheng	Resident
Rubaina Farin	Chestnut Residence Don



Sangeeta Jeyakumar

Manager of Finance, Administration and Operations

## AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Amendments to Terms of Reference
- 2026-27 Budget Highlights
- 2026-27 Residence Admissions Process Overview
- Food Advisory Committee Report
- Facilities Project Updates
- Residence Council Updates
- Other business

**Note:** *this meeting was chaired by Derrick Gravener, Manager, Residence Administration (Acting)*

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## WELCOME

Derrick Gravener welcomed all Committee members. A Land Acknowledgement was shared with the Committee ([see slide 2](#)). New participants introduced themselves.

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## AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Derrick Gravener presented an overview of the amendments to the Terms of Reference ([see slides 6-7](#)). Steve Masse highlighted that these changes were first proposed at the Graduate House Residence Advisory Committee meeting, and we would like to adopt them across all our residences.

Masse explained that the proposed changes were intended to strengthen engagement. Residents will be invited to register and attend upcoming meetings. We are hopeful that this will increase the number of students around the table. The number of residence staff who sit as standing members of the committee will also be reduced. The final changes relate to sharing materials in advance of meetings and promptly posting minutes.

Nina Kinoshita commented that the timing of the meetings is a limiting factor, with respect to encouraging student participation. Gravener responded that this is something the Committee is considering.



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## 2026-27 RESIDENCE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Kevin Dancy outlined that there is a year-long budget process, which entails the development of an operating plan ([see slide 9-11](#)). Dancy explained that we are anticipating what our expenses are, including staffing and maintenance costs. This includes a bigger plan to update and renovate the building. There are many projects that are going on behind the scenes, not always visible to our residents. Looking ahead to the 26-27 budget year, the largest source of revenue comes from student income, at \$18.2 million ([see slide 10](#)). The second largest piece is revenue from summer business. Dancy explained that revenues are re-invested in the building and programs to improve the experience of residents and other guests.

Dancy highlighted the anticipated expenses for the 26-27 academic year, which include both fixed and unexpected costs. Direct and capital expenses are the largest. Direct expenses represent the operating costs. Overhead expenses are indirect, or transfers, such as the payroll costs, which are charged back from the University. Staff salaries represent the biggest expense at \$8.4 million ([see slide 11](#)). The cost of utilities has gone up on the supplier side. We have invested in renovations that reduce our dependence on these utilities. When the University purchased this building in 2003, the interest charges were passed onto Chestnut residence, and we pay a mortgage every year. When resources are limited, we must reduce what we do or extend our timelines. Dancy explained that the mortgage will be paid off in three years, enabling us to address other projects more quickly. The next allocations are cleaning and occupancy/space costs.

Dancy explained that some of the projects will be visible to our residents, and others, students will enjoy but may not be directly aware of. Planned refurbishments include the replacement of vinyl in student rooms. Other projects include plumbing, pumps, and air handling units. Work is being done on the common spaces that are on the top floors (27/28). The lobby has undergone renovations to make the space brighter and more welcoming. The parking garage has undergone renovations that reduce energy, with the help of some University funding.

Dancy asked if there are areas in the building or facilities that students would like to speak about. Tulgar Ihan pointed out that the elevators are a pain-point for residents. Dancy explained that the elevators in the building are old, and ready for another refresh. We cannot take them out of service to repair them, and we don't have the money to do this. Dancy said we are focused on targeted repairs, and we are meeting monthly with the elevator repair service to discuss how issues are resolved. Some of the breakdowns are the result of equipment that needs to be modernized. Matthew Mifsud said elevators #3 and #4 have been out of service for a month, and estimates are that they will be repaired shortly, as early as this weekend. We are pushing for the repairs to be done as quickly as possible. Mifsud said that we do an audit and aim to reduce disruption as much as possible. We avoid doing repairs or service during rush times in the building. There was an update following this meeting that elevator #3 will be back in working order on February 13.

Masse asked how the team manages the length of outage for elevators. Mifsud says that they aim to have resources available, on hand, to complete repairs the same day, if possible. We do further investigations to determine what is involved and how quickly repairs can be completed. Dancy highlighted that the problem is often intermittent, or parts need to be ordered from out of province or country. This contributes to the length of time involved.

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## 2026-27 RESIDENCE ADMISSIONS PROCESS OVERVIEW

Moises Antigua reviewed the summer admissions process ([see slide 11](#)). Antigua explained that summer operations include hotel guests and student residents. All current residents will be notified when the application opens. In the summer we are open to all post-secondary students in Ontario. Students who are interested should apply early.

Antigua outlined that we send offers bi-weekly until spaces are filled. May 3 to August 23 is the timeframe for summer operations. For returners, the first round of offers goes out on March 3. We do not automatically pair roommates. We have fewer single vs. double rooms. After June 30 you will need to contact the residence life office to apply.

Ihan asked if food will be provided to summer residents. Antigua replied that the summer residence fee includes a mandatory meal plan that covers breakfast and dinner in the dining commons. Makena Zimmerman asked if residents would receive an email about the summer application. Antigua said they will be notified by email. Posters will be placed in the building as well.

For the residence application on the Portal, Dons may be exempt from certain charges, but they should still apply for residence, to guarantee housing. If you are only interested in becoming a Don, you do not have to apply through the Portal.



## **FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Lucy Chandler explained that the Committee was created in response to the digital suggestion box ([see slide 16](#)). This project was piloted at Oak House, with a lot of good feedback, including quite a bit for Food Services. As a result, we struck a Food Advisory Committee to ensure this feedback gets to the right people. The Committee meeting was held at Oak House for the Fall term and will take place at Chestnut for Winter.

At the Fall meeting, Assistant Director of Residential Dining, Onkar Tendulkar, and Executive Chef Jaco Lokker spoke about how changes happen. They provided insight into the menu creation process, and timelines for this. They spoke about cross-contamination and overall space hygiene in the dining areas. A total of 11 students attended, primarily from Oak House. The biggest piece of advice is for residents to provide feedback in the moment, to ensure that corrections can be made as quickly as possible.

Chandler encouraged residents to use the dining hall as their personal pantry. She suggests that you create what you can from the options to improve your experience. The [mobile app](#) can help you navigate dietary restrictions and nutrition planning. Feedback goes into menu development to limit waste and respond to demand. [Second Harvest](#) works with Food Services to re-purpose food waste and support local food banks.

Ihan asked what the conclusion of the meeting was. Chandler said that changes do not take place overnight. The main purpose of the meeting was data collection and information sharing. The main message was about encouraging students to share as soon as possible.

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## **FACILITIES PROJECT UPDATES**

Mifsud highlighted that there are not many projects taking place during the Winter semester. Items were identified in specific rooms, and notices will be given. Mifsud explained that we try and address minor issues, to ensure that everything is fixed, repaired, and prepped for summer business. We do not do repairs in student rooms during the exam period. Notices will come from the RLO. No shutdowns are planned.

Many summer projects will take place. Last week there was a broken water main on Elizabeth Street. They had to shut down water over two blocks in the building. Larry and Matthew returned to the building and worked overnight to ensure the safety of residents. They made sure there was no damage to the mechanical systems.

Mifsud explained that snow clearing is done by our team, there have been two snow days, which is very rare on the St. George campus. Masse noted that the intersection across from Chestnut is inaccessible due to the snowbanks and asked that the team should raise this for the City as a safety concern.



Zimmerman asked if there are any updates on the laundry room. Mifsud said that work orders are being put through to Coin-o-Matic. Mifsud checks the machines when maintenance requests are made by students. Dancy said there is an RFP out for new suppliers for services.

Gravener said we have received requests, piano tuners came in (music rooms), and at the gym, we are working with a new vendor. We are hoping for quicker responses this year. We want to ensure that the machines are functioning properly.

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## **RESIDENCE STUDENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL UPDATES**

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Kinoshita said that the council is in a situation with many unusual things happening; there are two new executives, including the VP internal. During the exam period, the council couldn't work together. Plans have fallen through for the traditional dance event that the residence council hosts every year. There will be another event, which is a soccer tournament. Space and logistics are being determined. Tulgar said the dance, including dinner, will be different than last year.

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## **NEXT MEETING**

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The Committee aims to have another meeting in January and March.