



UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' COUNCIL  
**2024-2025**  
**EXECUTIVE ROADMAP**





# LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As an organization created to empower and support our students throughout their educational experience, it is particularly important to acknowledge and recognize the power of education as a tool for healing and reconciliation. The USC always seeks to empower students on our campus to voice their perspectives on the issues that matter most to them, but we must recognize that there is still immense work to be done, at the USC and across Western's campus. We must remain active in our process of learning and unlearning to ensure that we take responsibility for educating ourselves on the history of the lands that we are situated upon and their impacts on those that lived upon them first.

With this, we wish to acknowledge that Western University and our Affiliate Colleges are located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.





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**STUDENTS**  
have the  
**POWER**  
to change the  
**WORLD**



# INTRODUCTION

Dear students,

We're proud to present the 2024-2025 USC Executive Roadmap, which outlines our priorities and goals for this academic year. The document is the culmination of numerous consultations with students, hours of deliberation and discussions, and key learnings from the organization's past challenges and successes. The Roadmap is one of the guiding documents we use to set the strategic direction for the USC to ensure we are fulfilling our mission to enhance the educational experience and quality of life for all undergrads at Western.

The Roadmap is divided into five distinct themes: Academics, Community Building, Safety & Wellness, Professional Development and Student Life. These areas of focus will inform many of our events, programming and initiatives this year. The document highlights some of what we hope to accomplish, but it is by no means a complete list of the work we plan to do this year. Woven throughout our Roadmap, and central to everything the USC does, is advocacy.

Our executive team is committed to creating an inclusive, engaging and rewarding student experience for you at Western, and this document provides you an opportunity to hold us accountable throughout the year, as well as provide feedback on how we can make the USC work for you.

As your student government, your megaphone to decision makers, your campus eatery, your guide to navigating campus life, your place to kick start a career, and your social calendar - the USC is entrenched in your experience at Western. All led by students, for students.

We're excited to get started and demonstrate students truly have the power to change the world.

Sincerely,

## **2024-2025 USC Executive Team**

Emilie Kalaydjian, USC President  
Mariana Batista, VP University Affairs  
Michelle Wodchis-Johnson, VP External Affairs  
Sarah Fullerton, VP Orientation and Programming  
Daniel Klapper, VP Student Services  
Shreya Menon, VP Student Engagement





# ACADEMICS

*Uniting the student voice to call for a better educational experience*



*Being a student unites all 36,000 of us on this campus. For at least four years, you're working hard to learn the skills and knowledge that will set you up for success after graduation. In that time, the USC is right there, making sure that you have the support you need to succeed.*

### **Increasing study spaces on campus**

Western's student population has grown year-over-year, and while the university is investing in new buildings and spaces, study spaces continue to be a pain point for students. Within the University Community Centre (UCC), we will focus on maximizing the study space available to students. Outside of the UCC, the USC will advocate to add new study spaces across campus including placing desks and chairs in underutilized spaces; adding ledges and stools along viable empty walls; and replacing missing furniture to optimize existing spaces. We will also work to assist the Faculty of Science in its current goal to introduce a space specifically for Science students.

### **Academic Policy**

Post secondary education is a big investment for students and their families, and students should have the information they need to make sound decisions about that education. When the province is asked to approve tuition increases for specific programs, students should know that that increase will mean an increase in the quality of education they receive. The USC will work with Western to undertake program quality audits to provide that assurance to students. In addition, students should know their final grades before the add/drop deadline the following term, so that they can make sure they are in the right courses to keep them on track to graduate.

### **Academic Accommodation**

Academic policies have a huge impact not only on our experience in the classroom, but on our wellbeing outside the classroom as well. Compassionate accommodation policies have changed a lot since we returned to classes in person, and this year, we want to focus on making sure that students understand the new policy and how to use it. We're all students first, but sometimes life takes a turn and we need the time and space to get life back on track.



### **Accessible Education**

For students with disabilities, navigating academic policy and accommodations can be a challenge. In order to help mitigate those challenges, we will ask Western to partner with King’s students in the Disability Studies program to run drop-in sessions to be available both on Zoom and in person to support the unique needs of every student.

### **Undergraduate Summer Research Internships (USRIs)**

Our generation is playing a significant role in addressing the climate crisis. Students can also make an impact through our educational experience by having sustainability be used as a critical lens across all research projects. As part of the USC’s commitment to climate action, we will advocate for USRIs to incorporate sustainability and address how research is either impacting, or being impacted by, climate change.





A photograph of a woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a green sweater, smiling broadly. She is surrounded by other people in a social setting, possibly a conference or networking event. In the foreground, a wooden table is visible with plates of food and glasses. The background is filled with blurred figures of people, suggesting a large gathering.

# COMMUNITY BUILDING

*Strengthening our connections on and off campus*

*Choosing Western is about more than just the campus. You're choosing to be part of a community that will impact everything about the time you spend here. At the USC, we want to make sure that you feel part of that community, and are helping us find new ways to make it better.*

### **Engagement and Transparency**

The USC is entrenched in your experience at Western - through the bagel you order at the Spoke, the club you sign up for, and the concert you attend in Mustang Lounge. We literally don't exist without you - but for too long we haven't prioritized truly listening to what you want.

That changes this year. We're investing resources to meet students where they are by incorporating more feedback initiatives and consultation opportunities through the new executive portfolio, Student Engagement. We will host roundtables with Faculty Councils, conduct more outreach initiatives with different student groups, and host more drop-in and office hours for you to directly interact with the Executive Team.

### **Local Partnerships**

When you accepted your offer to Western, you became part of the local London community. We interact everyday with the municipality - through the roads we drive, the water in our taps and the patios we enjoy in the summer. In order for the student voice to be heard and respected by our local government, we need to develop a stronger, two-way relationship. This year, the USC will work on collaborating with the City to address issues impacting students through reinstating Town & Gown; showcasing local artists through a partnership with Forest City Film Festival; and offering students a way to reflect on Truth & Reconciliation Day by hosting a Lacrosse Game with Indigenous elders and community leaders.

### **Strengthening Student Connections**

The USC represents 36,000 undergraduate students, but the needs of each student group can differ vastly. As part of our goal to increase engagement, the USC will work towards building better relationships with King's and Huron students, bringing our communications to the affiliates, and supporting Brescia students as they transition to main campus through the creation of the Brescia Legacy Club. We will collaborate with the Mustang Athletes Council on programming and initiatives to foster a stronger relationship with the athletics community; and, we will launch a 2SLGBTQ+ Mentorship Program led by PrideUSC to pair students with mentors in their community.



### **Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA)**

One effective way to influence change is to unite different groups on a common issue - that's what OUSA does. The organization represents students from Western, Brock, Laurier, Laurentian, McMaster, Ontario Tech, Queens, Trent, and Waterloo, and advocates to the Province of Ontario on issues that affect post-secondary students. Through OUSA, we'll focus on addressing food insecurity, advocating for affordable housing, responding to hate motivated attacks, keeping tuition low and holding the government accountable to making sure that your university education is the best it can be.

### **London City Transit Ongoing Feedback**

Last year, Western students tapped their London City Transit (LTC) Bus Pass over 3.5 million times. As frequent users of the City's transit system, students have unique insights on how service can be improved to meet the needs of the student body. To help enact changes and meet the needs of students the USC will create a year-long, open feedback form where students can voice concerns and suggestions that we will present to London City Council and the LTC for consideration.

### **Housing**

For some students, London is your home away from home. And settling into a new residence can come with a steep learning curve and a new set of challenges. To help students make an informed decision on where they live off campus, the USC will build upon existing initiatives, like Rate my Landlord, to provide more student reviews; advocate for rent control protection across Ontario; and create awareness of tenant rights in London.









*Student development is an important part of the USC's commitment to you. Every year, we create hundreds of jobs for students on campus. However, graduation, and what comes next, is something that looms over every student at some point. We want to set you up for success in your life after undergrad.*

### **Financial Literacy**

Students should feel confident making financial decisions, especially with the rising cost of living, but financial literacy isn't as prioritized as it needs to be. We will promote free resources through PurpleCARE's mywellness platform, and look for opportunities to offer free workshops and presentations on financial topics.

### **Networking**

For some students, earning your degree from Western is just one step to launching your career. Networking with professionals in your industry can strengthen your employability and provide valuable insights to inform your career path. To help bridge the gap, the USC will host a networking gala with professionals from a multitude of fields that students can connect with. The USC will also continue to find ways to work with the Morrissette Entrepreneurship.

### **Post-Grad Support**

In order to better support students looking to transition from undergraduate to graduate school, we'll be partnering with the Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) so that third and fourth year students can get insight and tips on the graduate school experience and the applications needed to get there. The USC will also introduce a post-grad achievement fund that will offer scholarships to cover the cost of writing certifications, applications, and entrance exams such as the MCAT, LSAT, NCLEX.





# SAFETY & WELLNESS

*Helping make campus a safe, inclusive environment*

*We can't serve our mission if we don't work to make sure that students feel welcomed, represented, and supported on this campus. Whether through the USC's own programs and services or through advocacy to Western, we're working hard to provide you with what you need, when you need it.*

### **Pedestrian Safety**

Everyone should feel safe moving through campus - day or night. The USC will work with Western and the City of London to expand Code Blue Emergency Phones to key locations across main campus and affiliates; improve lighting near campus neighborhoods; advocate for year-round maintenance of bike lanes and sidewalks; and provide safe transportation after late night events like OWeek.

### **Mental Health Support**

We know that university is a time of change for many people, and with that change can come challenges that impact anyone's mental health and well being. We want to make sure students know where to go for support. From getting set up to make appointments online at Western, to working with groups across campus in support of men's mental health initiatives through Movember, we want you to know that there are people here who are ready to help when you need it.

### **Reporting Options**

Our campus should be a place that is safe for everyone. When it's not, you should know how to get help, and what accountability looks like for people who make our campus less safe. Through provincial legislation and with Western administration, we're committed to reporting tools that recognize religious and racial discrimination, provide third party, survivor-centric options to survivors of gender based violence, and protect our athletes.

### **Menstrual Equity**

Menstrual products are a necessity. While Free the Dot has been instrumental in getting period products into bathrooms across campus, we still have a ways to go in eliminating the stigma experienced by people who menstruate. This year, we want to focus on another piece of the puzzle: education. The USC will host informational campaigns explaining menstrual equity and how it pertains to transgender and nonbinary menstrual health, and how Free the Dot functions on campus. We are looking forward to working with Western to explore ways to partner on this important work.



## Food Insecurity

Food insecurity has a significant impact on students' mental health, physical well-being, and academic performance. Last year, the USC committed to advocating for long-term strategies that address food insecurity and to explore ways students can gain access to nutritious and sustainable food options. As a first step, the USC will begin collecting anonymous usage information from Food Support Services to gain a better understanding of what students' needs and how we can improve the service. We will also explore the viability of a weekly grocery shuttle to and from campus, and a round-up initiative at the Spoke, the Wave, and the Purple Store where students can round-up their purchase with all proceeds going towards supporting the food bank.







# STUDENT LIFE

*Offering diverse programming for every type of student*

*Every year, first-year students start their time at Western with Orientation Week (OWeek). It's their introduction to their new friends, their classmates, and their campus life. While OWeek is a pretty big part of the student life equation, it's not the only thing the USC does to make sure you have an incredible student experience. From concerts to therapy dogs, to trivia nights, to speed dating, to additional dance studios, the USC is committed to hosting a variety of events and initiatives so that every student can be part of something that works for them. These are just a few of the things we have planned for you this year so stay tuned for more!*

### **Outdoor Fitness Classes**

A common complaint we heard in the 2024 USC Census was how busy Western's Recreation Centre can be throughout the school year. To help students keep active during the Spring, Summer and Fall months, the USC will host outdoor fitness classes with beginner-friendly activities like yoga, tai chi, spike ball, ladder-toss, and more.

### **Frost Week**

Let's face it, coming back to campus in January isn't very exciting. It's cold, it gets dark at 4 p.m. and you're still recovering from the holiday break. This year, the USC plans to bring some excitement to the Winter semester by bringing back Frost Week. You can expect winter-themed events and programming that will help kick-start the semester.

### **Multicultural Showcase**

There are a multitude of cultural clubs within the USC's club system, and many more throughout campus. For students looking to connect, or learn about other cultures, the USC plans to host a Multicultural Showcase event after OWeek that spotlights different cuisines, artwork and performances from around the world.



spoke  
and rim tavern

USC  
University Students' Council









# CONNECT WITH US

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