



Western

## **Internationalization at Western: A Multi-Pronged Approach**

Proposed Partnership between  
Western and Navitas (DRAFT)

May 2, 2025

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## Preamble

In support of Western University's strategic priorities, this proposal seeks to establish a partnership with Navitas to enhance the recruitment and accessibility of international students to our undergraduate and professional master's programs. This initiative is closely aligned with the goals articulated in [Towards Western at 150](#), our Global Engagement Plan, [Western in the World](#), and the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Decolonization, and Accessibility (EDIDA) Strategic Plan, [Advancing Inclusive Excellence](#).

Consistent with Western's commitment to strategic enrolment growth, global engagement, and inclusive excellence, this partnership will contribute to increasing international student enrolment, fostering a culture of belonging, and supporting academic and personal thriving for all students. In doing so, Western will maintain full academic oversight and uphold the highest standards of academic integrity, while advancing its responsibilities as a publicly funded institution dedicated to public value, equity, and educational excellence.

This proposed collaboration reflects Western's aspiration to build reciprocal, respectful global relationships that enhance both educational opportunity and societal impact, ensuring that our university community continues to reflect the diverse, interconnected world we serve.

These plans call for increasing our international enrolment, particularly at the undergraduate level, to at least 20%. As we work toward that goal, we remain mindful of the challenges we face and how we compare to our peer universities.

The past years have been challenging. A global pandemic, geopolitical instability, growing competition for globally mobile students, and caps on international study permits have constrained our international recruitment efforts. Rather than increasing our international enrolment, we have declined to 2015 levels.

Adding to these challenges, domestic tuition was rolled back 10% in 2019-20 and has been frozen since, while provincial core operating grants have remained stagnant at 2016 levels. One-time funding dispensed by the government at the end of its budget cycles, allow for neither base budget investment required for faculty and staff hires nor for long-term planning and support of the academic mission. In fact, one-time funding highlights the government's intention to support only select aspects of higher education, contributing to the increased precariousness of our sector. Rising inflation, along with increasing labour and infrastructure costs, has placed growing pressure on Western's operating budget.

Given these financial and policy constraints, we must continue to explore new approaches to enhance our existing recruitment efforts and strengthen our global presence.

Western has taken a thoughtful and careful approach to international enrolment growth. Recognizing the value of international education and our need to catch up to our peers, Western is looking at a new model.

In considering the potential partnership with Navitas described here, we have maintained that approach. This potential partnership would form part of a multi-pronged strategy to support international recruitment that would augment the ongoing efforts of Western’s recruitment team.

This proposal reflects the campus-wide consultations, constructive conversations and important feedback that has informed and will continue to inform our approach.

DRAFT

## 1. Context: Achieving our strategic commitments

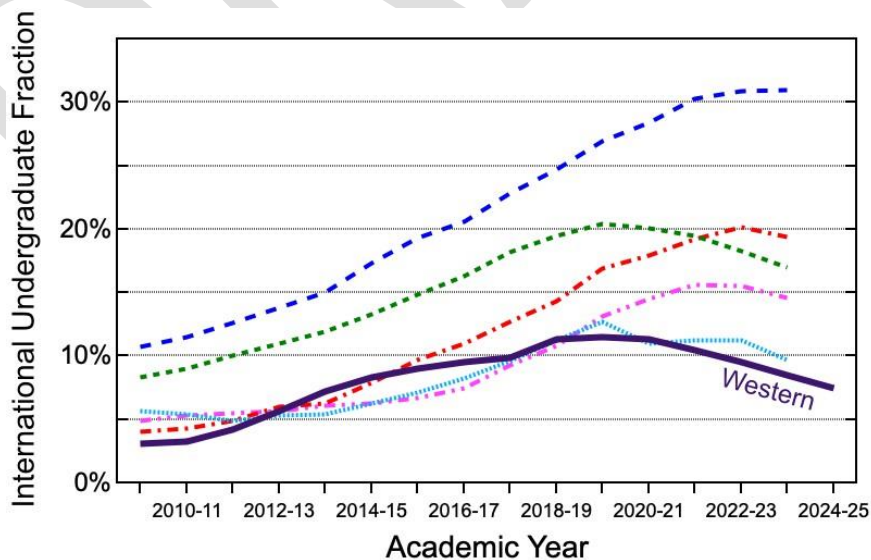
So, where do we stand today?

### a. Declining international enrolment since 2020

**The 2020 Navitas Proposal:** Recognizing the value of international education, in 2020 Western proposed a partnership with Navitas. The 2020 proposal was very different than the one proposed today. That proposal did not include the fundamental principles and risk mitigation strategies the current proposal commits to, including: Western maintaining comprehensive oversight of academic program content and student outcomes, quality assurance mechanisms, and Western recruiting and hiring instructors. In 2020, we were left with no other option but to continue increasing our in-house recruitment efforts.

**Efforts since 2020:** Since 2020, Western has made substantial investments in an in-house model for recruitment in an effort to meet its objectives. Between 2020 and 2025, we more than doubled our international recruiters from four to nine, added in-country representation, increased spending on recruitment activities by \$5.5 million, more than doubled our contracts with international private for-profit recruitment agents, and entered more partnerships with international schools and guidance counsellors.

**Results:** Now, five years later, these financial and organizational efforts have proven to be insufficient to close the gap in this new and complex environment. Western's international enrolment currently falls well below that of our peers. In fact, our international undergraduate enrolment has been shrinking (see *Figure 1*) and now sits at just 7.5%, far behind our U6 peers' average of 18.3%.



*Figure 1:* Percentage of international undergraduate students at Western relative to our U6 peers. Western's fraction is currently 7.5% and declining.

At the graduate level, we are not meeting our growth target for professional master’s programs (see [Appendix D – Professional Master's Programs](#)). As a result, we remain well below the benchmarks for international student enrollment expected of world-class, research-intensive universities.

**Reasons:** Western was late to prioritize strategic international recruitment and enrolment—an area our peers began investing in more than 15 to 20 years ago. Unlike many of our peers, we have fewer long-standing and deep partnerships with the countries from where international students originate. We also lack an international alumni base in a broad range of countries that could be actively promoting Western.

Starting in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic presented mobility challenges for students amidst ever-changing global health and safety requirements. Geopolitical conflicts and political instability have added to these challenges. As a result, our over-reliance on a single country for international recruitment carries significant risks that are affecting us today.

At the same time, universities are becoming increasingly sophisticated in their recruitment efforts, creating increased competition for globally mobile students. In Canada, government caps on international study permits have added an additional barrier.

Because of our lag in strategic international enrollment, it is harder for us to navigate Canada’s evolving and increasingly complex international education environment—one that is shaped by heightened global competition, as many reputable universities around the world actively recruit the same pool of international students.

In sum, despite our significant efforts, reaching the scale and depth of partnerships other universities began building decades ago will take us decades if we don’t make changes. We need to move more quickly and utilize a different approach to close this gap to meet our international goals. We don’t have a 15 to 20-year runway.

#### **b. Teaching, research and supports**

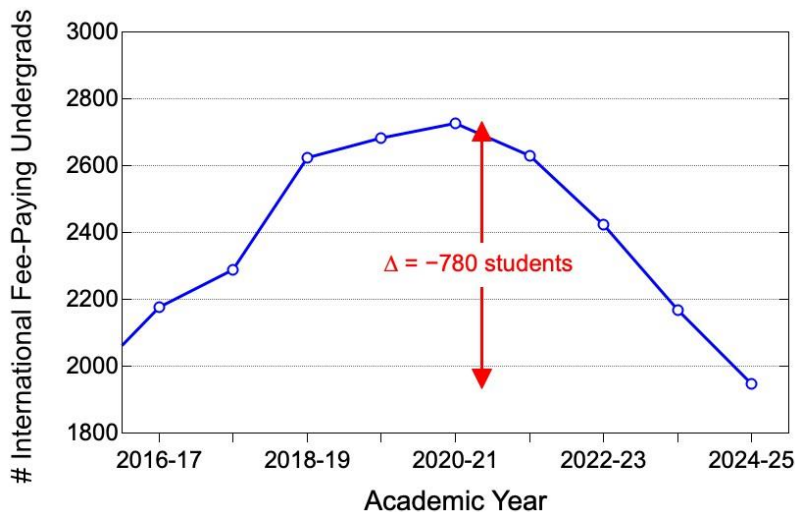
Alongside student growth, we also want and need to grow our faculty and staff to meet the demands of a world-class university. Our expenses, funded mainly by tuition and provincial grants, consist predominantly of salaries and benefits that increase over time with inflation.

To grow our faculty and staff complement over the next decade and beyond, we must maximize our ability to increase revenue. Larger institutions with expanded scope and scale can offer students more choice, build research capacity, and better weather financial uncertainty.

#### **c. Financial considerations**

Western’s operating budget has been under growing pressure, with domestic tuition frozen and provincial core operating grants remaining stagnant. Rising inflation, labour and infrastructure costs exacerbate these challenges.

The decline of about 780 international tuition-paying undergraduate students since 2020-21 (see *Figure 2*) equates to about a \$40 million drop in revenue—and without a new approach, we project the declining international enrolment (and revenue) trend to continue.



*Figure 2:* The number of undergraduate students paying international fees has decreased by nearly 800 since its peak in 2020-21, corresponding to \$40 million in lost tuition revenue.

Ontario’s universities are facing serious financial pressures due to several externally driven factors:

- Ontario universities continue to receive the lowest per-student funding in Canada.
- The provincial government froze operating grants in 2016-17, except for some modest and time-limited funding.
- Domestic tuition rates were rolled back 10% in 2019-20 and have been frozen since that time, with the exception of limited flexibility for domestic out-of-province student tuition rates and adjustments for undergraduate Computer Science and Management and Organizational Studies tuition rates.
- More recently, the federal government’s policy to limit international student study permits has impacted international student recruitment.

These external factors have considerably restricted the financial levers Ontario universities can use to increase their operating revenues. At the same time, teaching and support needs for students and the research needs of faculty and staff are increasing.

As a result, many Ontario universities are operating with deficit budgets, with some deficits surpassing \$100 million. Although the province has provided additional one-time funding allocations, and increasingly targeted funding to government priorities, Ontario universities need stable base funding to meet their current financial obligations and plan for the future.

The systemic financial challenges facing Ontario universities underscore the urgent need to identify new and reliable revenue sources that can facilitate long-term enrolment growth, enhance academic quality, and ensure institutional sustainability.

At Western, we have experienced the same pressures as all other Ontario universities. Our revenue growth is declining and is currently at a level well below inflation and our costs (see Figure 3, below).

On the expenditure side, our costs continue to increase in the range of 4 to 5 per cent per year— including compensation, information technology infrastructure, space and facilities costs, general non-salary inflation, and the pressure/need to increase service levels to our community. With these expenditure trends, we will be forced to further tighten budgets with no incremental investments.

For example, Western took on an additional 7,300 undergraduate and graduate students since 2019-20 in response to the growing demand for some of our programs. We can and want to grow in faculty, staff and students, but require stable and reliable funding to do so. Increasing our domestic enrolment has been above our “corridor” (not funded provincially) and has not resulted in any increased base-budget grant revenue from the government.

With an uncertain future, we have difficult choices to make. In the 2024-25 and 2025-26 budgets, we have not been able to add new base investments to support priority needs, and we have delayed plans to hire full-time faculty and staff. We have paused and reduced internal funding programs and initiatives, relying on units to make difficult decisions on how to balance their budgets.

### Operating Revenues: Annual % change – 2001-02 to 2025-26p

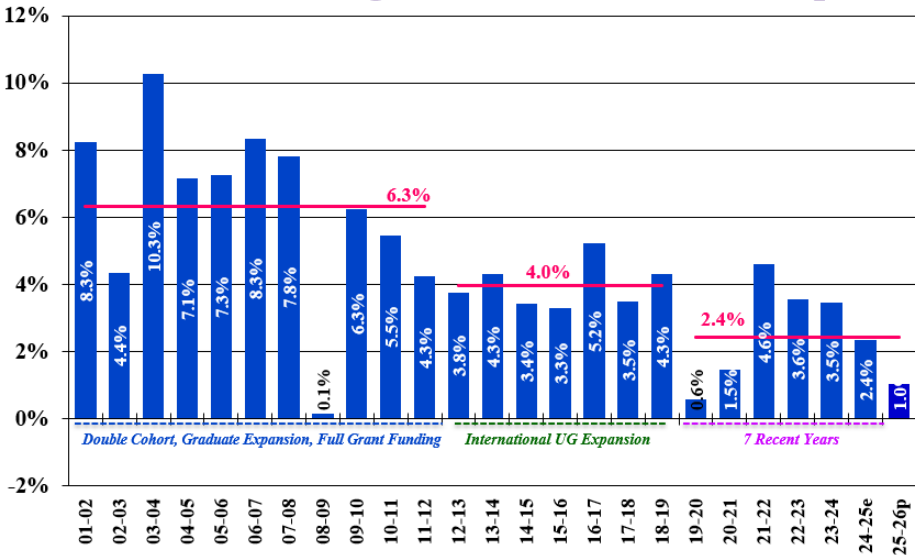


Figure 3: Annual operating revenue change in percentage, 2001-02 to 2025-26 (projected).



In summary, several of our key revenue streams face growing pressure. In this evolving policy and funding environment, it's more important than ever for Western to strengthen and to continue diversifying revenue streams to support our academic mission. One clear opportunity is to increase our lagging international enrolment through the creation of an International College in partnership with Navitas.

**d. Why create a Western International College (WIC)?**

Navitas specializes in the education and recruitment of international students. Navitas recruits more than 60,000 international students from 151 countries around the world.

Partnering with Navitas through the creation of a Western International College (WIC) would enable us to leverage Navitas' deep roots and experience working with public universities in Canada. This potential partnership would allow us to grow our international enrolment at a faster pace and identify and recruit high-quality students who would otherwise not have found their way to Western.

Navitas specializes in providing tailored and customized support through pathway programs. International students admitted through the proposed partnership with Navitas would be arriving in Canada for the first time and would require support during their first year as they adjust to academic and student life in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

Navitas partnerships across the world: Navitas works with a number of partners, both big and small, including research-intensive and comprehensive universities. Their approach in Canada is to diversify the types of institutions with whom they partner to minimize direct competition between their partner institutions.

Among our peers who partner with Navitas are the University of Melbourne (QS #13), the University of Sydney (QS #18), Lancaster University (QS #141), Curtin University (QS#174) and Deakin University (QS #197). Canadian partners include Simon Fraser University (SFU), the University of Manitoba (UM), Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU), Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) and the University of Lethbridge (ULeth). Two additional Canadian universities work with a similar recruitment and education provider.

Western is not new to working with private partners, and as we have done with all of these partnerships, we would continue to uphold our high standards. In a potential partnership with Navitas, strategic oversight of the educational experience, quality of instruction and student success would be a requirement.

Partnering with Navitas would give Western access to a highly successful international first-year education model and global recruitment expertise—enabling us to accelerate progress toward our international enrolment goals.

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<sup>1</sup> About 2% of Navitas International College students come from international high schools within Canada, often because parents and students desire the additional support.

## 2. Details of potential partnership

### a. Western International College (WIC) overview

A partnership with Navitas would result in the creation of a Western International College (WIC) offering international students a tailored and personalized pathway to their chosen degrees.

**Undergraduate Students:** For undergraduate students, WIC would offer a program equivalent to a first-year university experience that would set them up to progress into second year at Western. Undergraduate international students would spend Year 1 of their degree at WIC, taking a combination of credit and non-credit courses. Only students who meet Western-approved progression requirements would advance to Year 2 of their chosen program at Western.

**Graduate Students:** Through this proposed partnership, Western would become the first university in Canada to establish a pathway into professional master's programs. Students recruited into a professional master's program would begin with pre-master's studies at WIC, taking a combination of non-credit preparatory courses, prerequisite undergraduate courses as needed, and a small number of for-credit master's courses selected and approved by the participating departments and by the University before they progress to their chosen program (see [Appendix D – Professional Masters Programs](#)).

In short, WIC would be recruiting undergraduate and professional master's students who would not typically qualify for direct admission to Western, most often because they are missing prerequisites not available in their home country. These students are talented, ambitious, and highly motivated to succeed through this supported-entry route.

**First Intake:** We would plan for an initial intake of international to WIC in September 2026 (tentative).

**Proposed operating model:** In this proposed partnership, Western and Navitas would collaborate closely and in clearly defined ways. Navitas would be responsible for WIC's day-to-day operations and Western would have full academic oversight.

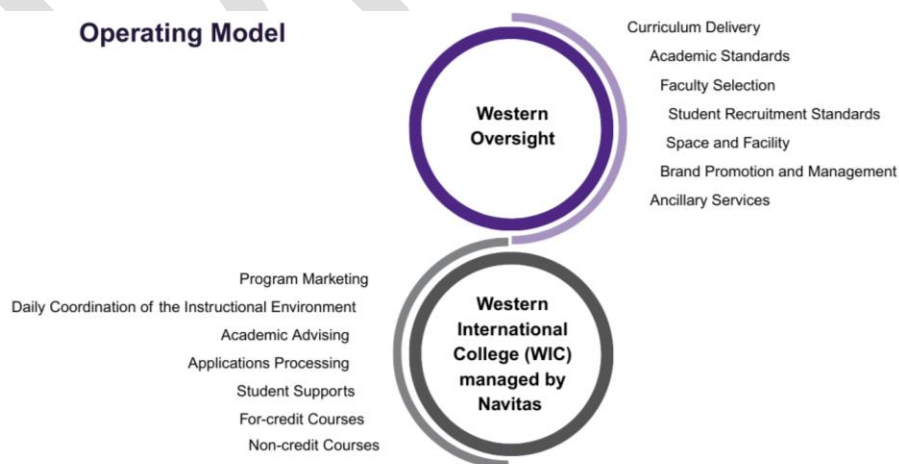


Figure 4: Western - Western International College Partnership Operating Model

#### **b. Recruitment and admissions considerations**

**An Integrated Recruitment Model:** Recruitment to the proposed WIC would take place under the Western and WIC banners in close collaboration with the Office of the Registrar. Partnering with Navitas and tapping into their vast international network would give Western access to Navitas staff around the world. This is strategic and efficient and would enable us to use our in-house recruitment team to exclusively support direct-entry recruitment. This integrated approach supports both streams: recruitment to WIC and direct entry to our degree programs.

**Undergraduate admission through WIC:** Our Senate-approved admission regulations (through the Subcommittee on Enrolment Planning and Policy, SUEPP) annually set the minimum entrance requirement for all first entry undergraduate programs at Western including those for WIC. WIC would also recruit undergraduate students who are missing one or more prerequisite courses not available in their country of origin, as well as needing to upgrade their degree studies but who otherwise meet our entry requirements. Western would offer conditional admission to these highly talented students and outline requirements for their first year at WIC in their admission offer (see section 2d, Progression to Western). This mirrors our current practice of giving conditional offers to students who require additional English language training but who otherwise meet our entry requirements.

**Direct Undergraduate Admission:** Undergraduate students who have completed all courses required for direct admission to Western and meet entry requirements outside those established for WIC would be referred to Western for direct-entry application. Direct recruitment of international students would occur alongside recruitment into WIC, supported by a suite of [scholarships for direct-entry international students](#).

Students recruited and admitted through WIC would, like direct-entry international students, be integrated into the Western community and student experience from day one. This approach, which has worked well in other Navitas partnerships, would ensure WIC students feel immediately connected to the Western community.

Students studying during their first year at WIC would pay the same tuition and ancillary fees that direct-entry international students pay at Western. This would ensure fairness and predictable tuition, enabling students to plan their educational journey.

**Professional Master's Admission through WIC:** Admission requirements for professional master's students would be determined by the Western units that offer the programs, in consultation with WIC leadership. These requirements would be consistent with Western's existing admissions standards and graduate governance processes. Prospective WIC students for professional master's programs would be required to hold at least a three-year bachelor's degree in a relevant field, along with the minimum prerequisite courses specified by each program. While at WIC, students would complete any outstanding prerequisite courses (often third and fourth-year undergraduate courses identified by the program), and take non-credit courses designed to prepare them for graduate-level study, thus meeting Western's requirement of a *four-year degree*

*or equivalent.* Depending on each student's level of preparedness, they may also be eligible to take a small set of first-year master's courses to minimize their time in-program.

**Direct Professional Master's Admission:** Students identified by Navitas who meet the requirements for direct admission to a professional master's program at Western would be referred to Western.

**Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL) Requirements:** Currently, international students require a PAL to apply for a study permit. Each province receives a PAL allocation from the federal government, and the province allocates a set of PALs to each institution authorized to educate international undergraduate and graduate students.

To date in Ontario, Navitas partner universities' PALs have been augmented to recognize their International College's planned enrolments. While International Colleges in Ontario do not directly receive PALs from the government, their university partners receive increased allocations to support the enrolment growth. Like other Ontario universities that partner with Navitas, Western would identify its projected need for PALs to the provincial government including the incremental requirements for the proposed partnership. Any potential partnership would only move forward if Western receives an increased allocation of PALs to support WIC's planned enrolment as approved by Western. In a potential partnership, Western would continue to work within the PAL system. Students would be admitted conditionally to Western, therefore requiring only one PAL as they transfer from WIC to Western.

**Admissions Summary:** This agreement would result in complete control of admission standards to Western exercised by programs, departments, and university governance.

### **c. The Student Experience**

#### **Extensive Student supports**

Western already provides excellent student support services for both domestic and international students. However, undergraduate students who complete high school here in Canada and remain here to study often require different supports than those who are new to Canada. International students often have additional, country-specific needs, from academic preparation to cultural transition and wellness supports. Most international undergraduate students admitted to Western through WIC would be new to Canada.

**Navitas excels at first-year international education:** WIC would deliver the equivalent of Western's first-year curriculum, enhanced with tailored supports to set students up for long-term academic success at Western. WIC students learn in smaller classes (maximum 35 students) and academic programming would include four-hour instruction blocks (representing one additional hour of instruction per class per week), enabling students to learn first-year subject matter alongside the necessary discipline-specific technical language. English language learning support would be exclusively contracted through the Western English Language Centre (WELC). For all international student admissions, Western has always and will continue to set the requirements for English language proficiency for individual programs and the university as a whole.

Alongside a robust academic program, WIC students would take mandatory non-academic courses and tutorials, such as interdisciplinary skills or communication skills that would prepare them to succeed inside and outside the classroom.

Additional programming would help prepare students to interact with and explore the London community and Canadian society, including skills like shopping or job seeking services, and concepts such as sexual and mental health, wellness and self-care, and using appropriate vocabulary. This would allow international students who are unfamiliar with the Canadian education system and culture to adjust smoothly.

Student success, wellness, and academic advising teams at WIC would promote an open and no-wrong-door policy to enable students to get the help they need immediately. There would be an extensive student-led and student-run leadership program as well as proactive advising sessions and extensive student follow-up to preempt academic and personal issues.

Students in the professional master's pathway program at WIC would experience a similar approach to learning (in a separate instructional stream than undergraduate students), participating in courses enriched and integrated with discipline-specific academic language and cultural elements.

Research shows that early preparation and proactive support make a big difference for international students. WIC would require students to attend an online pre-arrival course that starts six to eight weeks before they arrive in Canada. This would support academic preparation, cultural orientation, and practical logistics, so students come to Western and Canada feeling ready, not overwhelmed.

Navitas would also offer rigorous attendance monitoring, which is not only a key predictor of academic success, but also an indicator of overall well-being. WIC would track attendance and classroom participation, with staff immediately checking in when concerns arise. Every student would have 24/7 access to a dedicated WIC student advisor and support services. Where possible, WIC would use the same service providers as Western to ensure continuity of support.

In addition to WIC's highly proactive, tailored, and integrated support, students would also be eligible to access the full array of Western's student services and facilities that are funded through the payment of ancillary fees—just like Western students.

**Student Support Summary:** Navitas has developed a highly integrated and tailored approach to first-year international student education that has proven success rates (see [Section 4, Success Metrics at other Canadian international colleges](#)). The scale and design of these supports – a highly developed, tried and proven model – would take us years to develop through trial and error here at Western.

### **Western shapes an integrated student experience**

Western is known for delivering an exceptional student experience and we would ensure that signature experience is available to all our current and future students.

We would be in full control of how we integrate WIC students into the Western community. We would commit to taking the same care and attention to the teaching, learning and support of these prospective students.

Where students live, particularly during their first year, plays a key role in creating a true sense of integration and belonging. We would guarantee accommodation in an on-campus residence, just as we do for all first-year Western students. With the building of our new student residence space underway, a multi-year residency option may also be available. An integrated residence experience would support students' social and intercultural literacy.

Orientation is also critically important, and ideally WIC students would take part in Western's programming. Western, working with the University Students' Council (USC), the Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) and WIC, would determine how to integrate WIC students into activities that welcome them to campus. Departments and faculties would also have the opportunity to help shape students' academic and social belonging, engaging students early during their first year. WIC students would also have access to Western's specialized instructional space (e.g., labs, music spaces) as required.

Student leaders and groups would play a key role in shaping the international student experience. We envision WIC students to be eligible to participate in Western clubs, events, and extracurricular activities—and we would collaborate and partner with student organizations on campus to make that possible.

Navitas has seen different models of student integration across their various international colleges, and the learning from other partnerships makes sense—the more integrated we can be from the start, the better the student experience. Western would take every opportunity to integrate WIC students early and thoroughly.

#### **d. Admission to Year-Two at Western**

Students would be issued an offer of conditional admission to Western with requirements clearly specified at the time of their entry to WIC. Following our normal procedures, the progression from WIC to year two at Western would only occur if students met all specified requirements. These requirements would be solely set by Western in consultation with its departments and programs.

Students would be guaranteed admission to a Year 2 module or program upon meeting admission requirements as per the [Academic Calendar](#) for that module or program and level 2 progression requirements. Higher standards may apply to competitive, limited-entry modules/programs. Students intending to pursue limited-entry options would be counselled regarding their range of options.

#### **e. Possible location**

The location for WIC would only be confirmed at the point of a formal partnership agreement. That said, we know the general space needs of WIC would include several small classrooms, collaborative learning and collision space, common space, office space, and reasonable

proximity to student services and amenities. WIC would pay Western for the space it uses at the University as part of its royalty payment (see [Section 5, Finances](#)).

A portion of the former Brescia campus has been identified as a possible location for WIC. In addition to WIC's main site, classes and other programming would be offered in various locations on Western's campus to foster further early integration and familiarity.

### 3. Academic and Administrative Roles

#### a. WIC-appointed staff roles

WIC would operate with a staffing complement of four full-time professional staff roles employed by Navitas whose accountabilities are summarized below:

**College Executive Director:** Works in collaboration with Western's Senior Academic Lead and Western senior leadership to develop and execute strategic and operational plans that support Western's goals and the needs of international students at WIC.

**Academic Program Liaison:** Works in collaboration with the College Executive Director, program, department and faculty academic leaders and instructors on course development, delivery and evaluation. Supports adherence to Western's academic and other regulatory standards in the methods used and prepares international students for academic success and progression.

**Student Experience Manager:** Works in consultation with the College Executive Director and professional staff at Western to provide services and supports that enable students to thrive throughout their time at WIC and in their transition to Western, leveraging best practices and innovative approaches. Focus areas include orientation, community building, integration, wellness, leadership, career readiness and more—all intended to increase student engagement, confidence, retention and belonging.

**Academic Success Advisor:** Works in consultation with the College Executive Director, the Academic Program Liaison, the Senior Academic Lead (see below), and professional staff at Western to provide high-quality academic advice for students virtually and in-person to help students achieve their academic goals. Individual and group support includes course selection and continued academic development, as well as referrals to other resources as appropriate.

These non-academic roles would work with and through WIC and Western academic leaders as well as with Western's professional staff to ensure a smooth transition and student success.

#### b. Western-appointed academic roles

Unlike the 2020 proposal, Western would have full oversight of academic staff appointments, and therefore the academic work conducted at WIC, thus ensuring academic quality control and standards. The following roles would be Western employees.

**Senior Academic Lead:** Leads the work of academic quality oversight to ensure that courses at WIC are taught at the Western standard and that learning outcomes are equivalent to corresponding course sections taught at Western and its Affiliates. This academic leadership role

would report to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and would work closely with the College Executive Director. The role would be funded through royalty payments from WIC for a three-year term, continuing.

**Instructors:** High-quality instruction is the product of high-quality instructors. Under the proposed partnership, instructors teaching for-credit courses at WIC would be appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Appointments Article of the Collective Agreement (CA) between Western and the University of Western Ontario Faculty Association (UWOFA). Hiring recommendations to teach at WIC are anticipated to follow the normal path of appointment committees as closely as possible and be subject to necessary modifications as agreed with UWOFA. In addition to newly recruited faculty members, current Western faculty (both part-time and full-time) may hold Limited Duties Appointments under the CA to teach courses at WIC. Details of this arrangement need to be negotiated and confirmed between the University and UWOFA, and ideally formalized as a Letter of Understanding (LOU) that would form part of the UWOFA CA. Academic departments would be compensated for the additional work of their appointment committees through funds flowing to the departments (see [Section 5. Finances](#)).

**Course Coordinators:** For each Western department with a course offered at WIC, a Course Coordinator (CC) in the Western department would be appointed to ensure academic quality is maintained. The CC would work collaboratively with Instructors teaching at WIC to approve the course outlines and all major assessments while respecting their academic autonomy. The CC would review representative samples of graded major assessments and approve final grades and grade distributions. The relationship between the College Executive Director, the Senior Academic Lead, the CC and the WIC Instructors would need to be highly collaborative. The funds flowing to the Western departments would provide compensation for this additional work.

**Lab support:** In cases where students need lab courses, WIC would contract those services directly from departments at Western. Staffing of labs would be the department's responsibility, through practices consistent with our existing employment contracts or policies. Given that class sizes at WIC would be small, we would not anticipate that additional classroom teaching support would be part of the staffing model.

**Compensation for additional work:** Western employees who are asked to take on additional accountabilities in direct support of WIC and its operations on an ongoing basis would be recognized in ways to be decided by the faculty, department and Human Resources, including but not limited to course releases and additional compensation. Details would be negotiated with any applicable employee groups. These expenses would be covered by royalties paid to Western by Navitas (see section 5, Finances).

**Summary:** Western appointment committees would recommend instructors to teach in WIC. Notably the 2020 proposal assumed the outsourcing of academic work. By maintaining full academic oversight and overseeing academic hiring in the current proposal, Western mitigates risk and ensures the quality of instruction at WIC.



### c. Ensuring quality and oversight

Western would be in full control of academic quality and standards. In the envisioned partnership between Western and Navitas, academic quality would be upheld through multiple layers of oversight—ensuring that all teaching, learning, and progression standards align with Western’s requirements and Senate-approved frameworks.

**Curriculum oversight:** WIC would offer existing Senate-approved first-year courses, with a selection based on program priorities and student demand. All course outlines and syllabi would require approval through established Western academic channels, and course content and assessments would be regularly monitored to ensure alignment with program objectives. The Senior Academic Lead would sample student work as part of standard quality assurance processes and review and approve final grades for WIC courses upon recommendation by the CCs and course Instructors.

**Instructional oversight:** Instructional oversight would also be tightly integrated with Western’s existing academic structures. Instructors teaching at WIC would likely be recommended through departmental appointment committees (subject to discussion with UWOFA). CCs from Western would oversee the academic quality of instruction, while the Senior Academic Lead would be responsible for monitoring student performance, reviewing instructional delivery and liaising regularly with the WIC Executive Director and staff.

Together, these mechanisms would ensure that students at WIC receive a high-quality educational experience fully aligned with Western’s standards and expectations from day one.

**Summary:** In the proposed partnership, Western would retain oversight of admission and progression standards, academic work, instructors, curriculum and quality. This oversight goes far beyond the standards that typically govern the articulation agreements between universities and colleges. Three different joint committees described below would ensure both oversight and early troubleshooting should issues arise.

### d. Committees

**Academic Advisory Committee (AAC):** Members from both Western and Navitas would meet following each academic term to review course results as reported by the CCs, monitor student success, ensure the quality of academic programming, and provide operational guidance.

**Student Success Committee (SSC):** Members from both Western and Navitas would meet two or three times a year to monitor the success of student supports, both at WIC and during students’ transition to second-year programming at Western.

**Joint Strategic Oversight Committee (JSOC):** Members of senior leadership from both Western and Navitas would be responsible for strategic management of the partnership and accountable for its success. This body would meet three times per year to review reports from the AAC, monitor the performance of the partnership and set recruitment goals. The JSOC would report to Western’s Senate on a yearly basis.

More details on these committees are included in [Appendix A](#).

**e. Length of partnership, progress reporting and check-ins**

The proposed initial term of the partnership is 10 years. It would take time for WIC to set up, recruit the first cohort and increase student numbers to Western-approved levels over time. Because we measure graduation rates at the 6-year mark, a 10-year partnership would provide reliable outcomes data.

The AAC would meet after each academic term to review the academic outcomes of WIC courses and assess other relevant information provided by the CCs embedded in Western departments and report to the JSOC. Western would carry out in-depth reviews – similar to the cyclical program reviews conducted for all academic programs – at both the midpoint and end of the contract. A decision to renew the partnership would depend on demonstrated success and performance outcomes (also see [3c, Ensuring Quality and Oversight](#)).

**4. Success metrics at other Canadian international colleges**

Navitas currently operates five international colleges in Canada (see [1d. Why create a Western International College?](#)). One of these (ULeth) has recently launched and has not yet delivered students to its host institution. The international colleges at WLU and TMU are also relatively new and do not yet have long-term data on graduation rates.

However, two long-established colleges – the Fraser International College (FIC) at SFU and the International College of Manitoba (ICM) at UM – serve as strong proof of concept. Since 2006 and 2008 respectively, these colleges have recruited thousands of international students and supported their success.

**Student Diversity by Country and Discipline:** Between the 2021-22 and 2023-24 academic years, FIC brought nearly 2,900 students to Canada from a range of countries, with the single largest group (35%) from China. During the same period, ICM recruited 3,300 students, with less emphasis on China and focusing more on students from other regions in the world. These colleges, along with the TMU International College (TMUIC), are recruiting a more diverse international student body than Western currently does through its direct recruitment efforts (see Table 1 below). Breaking it down further, data from UM Senate reports show that Navitas has been able to achieve significant recruitment from regions in which Western has had little success such as Sub-Saharan Africa.

	FIC	ICM	TMUIC	Western University (direct entry)
<b>Greater China</b>	35	5	22	60
<b>Asia (excluding China)</b>	32	55	46	17
<b>Africa &amp; Middle East</b>	12	30	14	14
<b>Americas</b>	16	7	12	6
<b>Other</b>	5	3	6	3

Table 1: Fraction of recruitment (percentage) from major recruiting regions for the FIC, ICM, and TMUIC relative to Western (2021-22 through 2023-24)

**International College programming:** While at the international college, students take 5.0 first-year university credits toward a degree program at the partner university. A wide range of courses is typically available: FIC currently advertises approximately 90 unique half-courses, while a full review of the ICM program prepared for the UM Senate in April 2017 indicates approximately 40 unique half-courses in the Winter 2016 term alone, many of which were offered in multiple sections. This breadth of course availability facilitates entry to a wide range of faculties (see Table 2 below).

The time spent by students in the international college varies depending on students' high-school preparation. According to Navitas Canada, the average completion time is less than 15 months, which is consistent with the figure of 14 months provided in the 2017 UM Senate report. It is important to note, however, that both FIC and ICM offer an eight-month pre-university foundation program requiring only grade 11 education for entry—something we are not considering—and recruit students from a lower admissions band than would be approved at Western.

Completion rates of the international college first-year program are healthy: Navitas reports an 83.8% completion rate for Canada overall, which is consistent with data from the UM Senate report. This success compares well with published overall retention rates of first-year students at SFU and UM (85.7% and 79.7%, respectively, averaged over the entering classes from 2020 through 2022).

The vast majority of students (over 92% at FIC and ICM) who successfully complete the Navitas program progress to year 2 at the partner university in a subsequent term. High retention is not surprising, given that students have taken the precise courses needed for entry to a program at the host institution, with no need apply for transfer credit, but does suggest that students are satisfied with their experience.

This satisfaction is reflected in the results of an ICM student satisfaction survey conducted in 2016 (at the 10-year mark of the partnership):

	Very Poor	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
<b>Overall Quality of Program</b>	2	6	29	50	17
<b>Overall Quality of Teachers</b>	1	2	31	63	45
<b>Overall Quality of Support Services</b>	2	7	34	49	17
<b>Overall Quality of Customer Services</b>	2	6	31	63	23
<b>Overall Quality of Facilities and Resources at ICM</b>	1	3	29	63	25
<b>Overall Rating of ICM as a Provider of Learning Opportunities</b>	3	6	39	67	33
<b>Overall, the College has an excellent learning Environment</b>	5	9	47	68	35

Table 2: Student satisfaction at the International College of Manitoba.

**Transfer to the partner university:** Data from SFU Senate reports show that students from FIC are distributed across all faculties except Education, and make up slightly more than half of all new international students at SFU (see Figure 5). Direct-entry students accounted for 26% of new international students in 2024-25, with the remainder arriving as transfer students. The proportion varies by faculty, with Health Sciences being prioritized over recent years and Science only recently becoming a priority for the FIC. Internal SFU data show a similar distribution of degrees earned by former FIC students, though some shift from Arts and Social Science to Business after initial entry to SFU is evident (just as it is at Western).

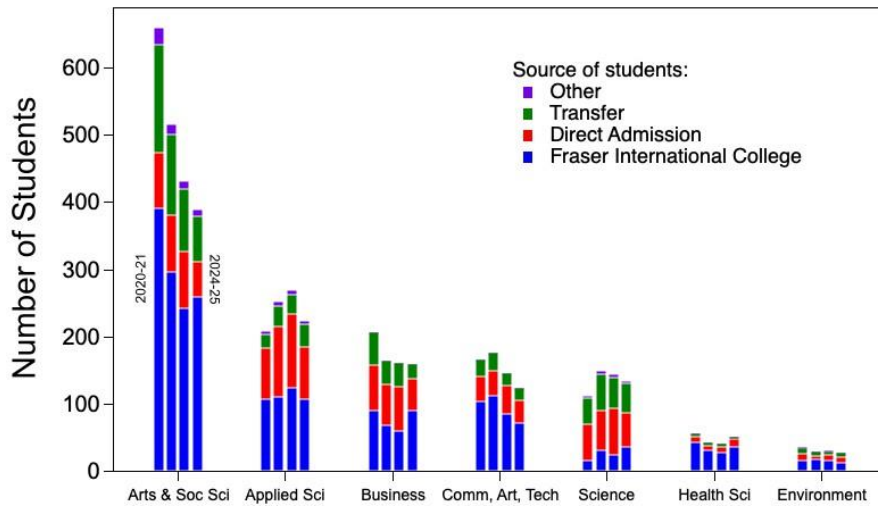


Figure 5: Distribution of new international students across faculties at Simon Fraser University (2020-21 through 2024-25).

Students progressing from the ICM to the University of Manitoba show a similar diversity of programs, with approximately half of graduates ultimately earning their degree from the Faculty of Arts, one quarter from Asper School of Business and the remainder distributed across programs (see Table 3).

UM Faculty	Total degrees	(%)
<b>Agricultural &amp; Food Science</b>	21	4.2
<b>Arts</b>	245	48.5
<b>Business</b>	117	23.2
<b>Engineering</b>	44	8.7
<b>Environment, Earth, &amp; Resources</b>	8	1.6
<b>Science</b>	54	10.7
<b>Other</b>	16	3.2

Table 3: Total degrees granted by UM to former IC students through 2016.

**Performance at the partner university:** An important metric is the performance of international college students after they enroll in the partner university. In general, such data is more difficult to obtain from public reports since former international college students are simply included in aggregate results.

Retention of former FIC students moving from year 2 to year 3 at SFU has averaged well over 90%. ICM students have experienced similar success at UM. Over the five-year period preceding the 2017 Senate report, retention of former ICM students to a subsequent year was strong, averaging 92%, matching the success of the direct-entry cohorts.

Graduation results shared by SFU and UM Senate reports show similar performance between former international college students and direct-entry international students. For instance, the graduation rate of former FIC students is within a percentage point of the graduation rate of direct-entry students at SFU who successfully progress to year 2.

Bottom line: Performance and graduation rates of students coming through FIC and ICM are comparable to or better than direct-entry international students.

## 5. Finances

The proposed WIC partnership with Navitas would include several elements.

### a. Tuition Fees at WIC

Students enrolled at WIC would pay the same tuition fees as international students enrolled at Western. Tuition revenues would be collected by WIC and the College would be responsible for all its costs. Western would not bear any costs for WIC operations; quite the opposite, Western will receive royalties, including space rental fees.

### b. Royalty sharing

Royalties are a proportion of tuition revenue that Navitas would collect from students at WIC and pay to Western, noting that these royalties would more than exceed any direct and indirect costs incurred by Western as part of the academic oversight activities at WIC. Our intention is to negotiate a royalty amount with Navitas that meets our needs.

The vast majority of the royalties received would flow directly to departments and programs, as well as support units that participate in oversight activities.

Students in Year 1 at WIC would pay the same ancillary fees paid by Western students. The portion of these fees associated with the USC and SOGS would flow directly to those organizations. Ancillary fees associated with our student support units would be directed in the same way.

### c. International tuition revenue sharing (Years 2 to 4)

Students who successfully complete Year 1 at WIC and meet Western's established progression requirements would transfer to Year 2 at Western and join their direct-entry classmates. These

students would pay the same tuition rates as other international students at Western, with the rates approved by Western's Board of Governors in effect at the time of their enrolment. The same conceptual model would apply to graduate students.

Incremental tuition revenue generated through this pathway would be distributed through Western's enrolment-related revenue-sharing system, as it exists at that time. At present, 50% of the incremental revenues flow to the faculties – with 30% based on program enrolments and 20% based on teaching responsibilities. While revenue-sharing models may evolve in future, this approach ensures that faculties are resourced in alignment with enrolment and teaching demands.

While the revenue-sharing system consists of the automatic flow of funds to faculty budgets, the remaining 50% will allow us to fund the Academic Priorities Fund (APF) and to provide resources to our support units. As noted earlier, due to the current constrained revenue situation, we have not been able to invest base resources in 2024-25 and 2025-26. Without incremental revenues, we will be forced to continue the “no base investment” scenarios and cuts to achieve a balanced budget.

#### **d. Additional financial considerations**

Navitas would assume all operational costs for WIC, including staff, instructor, infrastructure and student support costs.

As a point of comparison, Western's spending on recruitment activities, including private, for-profit agents and marketing, amounted to over \$3 million for the Fall 2024 intake. Building on these investments will be important to continue growing our direct recruitment as part of a multi-pronged approach to international education. The incremental funds outlined in section 5 will make these investments in our direct recruitment enterprise possible.

Over the past three years, we have added more than \$6 million for scholarships for international students. With new revenues, we would have the opportunity to further invest in scholarships and bursaries for international students in addition to the expansive suite of supports already in place for domestic students.

#### **e. Financial outlook**

As noted in the introduction to this document, our operating budget is shrinking while our expenses continue to rise. Relying on measures like cuts, pauses, and delays to balance the budget is not a sustainable solution—no university can cut its way to financial health. And yet, our campus community has already begun to feel the pressures of these reductions. They come at a cost, limiting our ability to invest in our research mission, attract top talent, support graduate students, advance teaching and learning, and engage meaningfully with our community.

To secure Western's future, we must identify new, sustainable and diversified revenue streams that enable us to invest in our faculty, staff, and students—the next generation of leaders who will

shape society—and honour our commitments to our communities. The proposed partnership positions us to expand our impact locally and globally.

The enrolment and revenue projections in Appendices B and C present conservative yet strategic scenarios for WIC, aligned with Western’s goals and projected enrolment. Appendix E outlines the costs and risks associated with different international education options.

Consider the opportunities an influx of funding could create. How far could \$8 million take us? What could we accomplish with \$120 million? The potential for transformation is significant.

## Conclusion

Great universities are global universities. As Western approaches its 150th anniversary, we honour our past achievements while looking ahead to an even greater future—one defined by impact. The next 150 years will be measured by our ability to transform lives, advance discovery, and contribute to our community, country and the world.

In an era of division, inequality, and global challenges, our strength lies in our connectedness. By expanding our international reach, we amplify our knowledge, innovations, and creativity to address the pressing issues of our time, both at home and abroad.

Educating Canadian and international students together builds a global alumni network that will shape the future. Our graduates—leaders, scientists, entrepreneurs and artists—will carry Western’s influence across the world, becoming lifelong ambassadors, collaborators and supporters.

Our students’ investment in a Western University education, fuels our ability to reinvest in what makes us exceptional: transformative learning, world-class research, and outstanding faculty and staff.

This partnership is a key step in our broader strategy to deepen global engagement while strengthening Western’s foundation for the future.

Collaboration is in our DNA. Western is a university of passionate, resourceful people who, despite diverse perspectives, embrace new ideas and approaches and share a commitment to seeing our institution thrive. Together, and with new partners, we will harness our potential to create a greater impact on our community and the world.

## Appendix A: Committees

### 1. Joint Strategic Oversight Committee (JSOC)

#### Proposed Membership:

- Co-Chair: Provost and Vice-President, Academic (or designate)
- Co-Chair: WIC Academic College Director
- Three (3) members nominated by the University
- Three (3) members nominated by the College

#### Purpose

The JSOC would provide oversight of the overall strategy and performance of the proposed partnership and provide a forum to review and resolve any high-level concerns. The JSOC would consist of senior members from both WIC and the University in order to ensure alignment of interests, goals and objectives and eliminate conflicts and/or barriers to success.

The JSOC would:

- Review the overall performance of the partnership annually (for the previous 12-month period) and identify any challenges affecting the partnership, including:
  - Achieving agreed upon goals and objectives
  - Determining and implementing solutions
  - Developing solutions to identified issues
  - Regularly reviewing enrollment at the College and providing broad direction on enrollment targets
- Communicate the key outcomes and decisions of the JSOC to the members of the University and the College and ensure issues are resolved expeditiously;
- Resolve any areas of conflict between the University and the College;
- Implement effective risk management to minimize or eliminate risks, threats and potential barriers to the success of the partnership;
- Review the internationalization global engagement goals of the University and look for opportunities for increased alignment; and
- Share global international education data.

#### Meetings

The JSOC would meet three times per year.

### 2. Academic Advisory Committee (AAC)

#### Proposed Membership

- Chair: Provost and Vice-President, Academic (or designate)
- Three (3) members nominated by the University
- Three (3) members nominated by the College



## **Purpose**

The AAC would be an advisory committee to both the University and the College to ensure that the academic quality of the WIC programs meets the highest standards.

The AAC would also decide:

- On the reports to the university and the College, which would include provision for regular consultation with students;
- Student academic appeal cases that are not resolved at initial stages of appeal. In seeking resolution, the AAC would be guided by the University's policies and regulations.
- The AAC would be responsible for tracking and reporting on the following:
  - The academic performance of students who progress from the College to the University;
  - The number of students who progress, and the majors/programs they undertake;
  - The quality assurance processes and academic performance of students at the College;
  - The course mapping within the pathway programs;
  - An analysis of any increase to Faculty workloads resulting from academic oversight of the courses offered through the College;
  - Any concerns that the College instructors have regarding working conditions;
  - The College would provide information to the University regarding academic issues including academic accommodation, and academic integrity.

## **Meetings**

The AAC would meet at minimum at the conclusion of each term and at additional times as necessary.

### **3. Student Success Committee (SSC)**

#### **Proposed Membership**

- Co-Chair: Vice-Provost, Students (or designate)
- Co-Chair: WIC Director
- Three (3) members nominated by the University
- Three (3) members nominated by the College

#### **Purpose**

The SSC would be responsible for implementing strategy and tactics for recruitment, support the transition of students into the WIC programs and progression into university programs. The committee would foster and strengthen the collaboration between the University and the College to realize its goals for enrollment, supports, and progression.

The SSC would:

- Review the effectiveness of student support and services provided;

- Ensure that the preparations for student intakes are carefully planned and operationalized;
- Monitor admissions, focusing on the enrollment targets agreed upon by the JSOC;
- Review the competitive positioning of the programs in relation to other education options for international students;
- Review the effectiveness and efficiency of the admissions processes, and the coordination and collaboration between the College and the University; and
- Review services offered by the University and recommend changes required to support continuity of care once students progress into the second year.

### **Meetings**

The SSC would meet two or three times in each 12-month period.

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## Appendix B: Undergraduate enrolments with and without an international college

Western's undergraduate enrolment has grown substantially over the past few years. Since 2018-19, full-time undergraduate enrolment has increased by over 5,600 students. However, in the same period, the number of international fee-paying undergraduate students has declined by 780. In 2024-25, our undergraduate international enrolment was 7.5% of our total undergraduate enrolment, well below the 20% target outlined in our Strategic Plan and well below what our U6 peers have achieved.

Lines 1 to 4 in the table below simulate projected growth in undergraduate enrolment over the next eight years—assuming Western does not establish WIC. Line 3 reflects projected growth in undergraduate international enrolment, based on the assumption of a more favorable external environment and additional institutional investment. Under this scenario, international undergraduate enrolment would increase by approximately 450 students, reaching 9.1% of total undergraduate enrolment by 2032–33.

Lines 6 to 12 simulate projected additional international students through an international college model. The simulation is conservative and based on growth numbers in other International Colleges. The incremental number of students coming to Western (Years 2 to 4 of study) exceeds 1,400 in 2032-33. In total, our international enrolment would exceed 4,000 (line 12) and the percentage of international students would surpass 13% (line 13).

**Table: Simulation of enrolment outcomes of an International College partnership:**

		2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34
<b>Full-Time Undergraduate Enrolment at Western</b>											
<i>Projection without establishment of an international college</i>											
1	Domestic UG (all years of study)	27,394	27,165	27,149	26,700	26,564	26,604	26,604	26,604	26,604	26,604
2	International UG (all years of study)	2,212	1,974	1,902	1,947	2,129	2,280	2,516	2,608	2,659	2,700
3	Total UG enrolment	29,606	29,139	29,051	28,647	28,693	28,884	29,120	29,212	29,263	29,304
4	<b>Proportion of international students</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>9.2%</b>
<b>Possible Western International College (WIC) Partnership</b>											
<i>Projection with establishment of an international college</i>											
6	Incremental Year 1 International students at WIC			80	125	250	500	750	1,000	1,250	1,250
7	Progressing from WIC to Year 2 at Western				68	106	213	425	638	850	1,063
8	Progressing to Year 3 at Western					61	95	192	383	574	765
9	Progressing to Year 4 at Western						55	86	173	345	517
10	Total incremental international enrolment				68	167	363	703	1,194	1,769	2,345
11	Total international enrolment at Western				2,015	2,296	2,643	3,219	3,802	4,428	5,045
12	<b>Proportion of international students</b>				7.0%	8.0%	9.0%	10.8%	12.5%	14.3%	15.9%

## Appendix C: Incremental revenues resulting from the International College model

The table below simulates the incremental revenue Western could receive through incremental enrolment resulting from the transfer of students from the Western International College (WIC) (see line 1). These revenues are projected to grow steadily over time, reaching \$73.5 million by 2032–33. Without WIC, this revenue would not be available. Should enrolment at WIC exceed the projections, Western’s revenue would increase even further.

**Table 1: Simulation of potential revenues deriving from WIC (Undergraduate)**

Academic Year		2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34
<b>1</b>	Incremental international undergraduate enrolment from WIC	68	167	363	703	1,194	1,769	2,345
<b>2</b>	Average international undergraduate tuition rate (based on 2024-25 rates)	52,000	52,000	52,000	52,000	52,000	52,000	52,000
<b>3</b>	<b>Total projected incremental tuition revenue</b>	<b>3,536,000</b>	<b>8,684,000</b>	<b>18,876,000</b>	<b>36,556,000</b>	<b>62,088,000</b>	<b>91,988,000</b>	<b>121,940,000</b>

The potential revenue deriving from a professional master’s pathway from WIC will depend on the specific programs involved. As an illustration, Tables 2 and 3 present the additional revenue that might result from incremental students to two programs that have expressed initial interest in creating a pathway: Engineering (M.Eng.) and Health Sciences (C.S.D./O.T./P.T.). Lines 1–3 in the tables represent the current international enrolment in those programs and the resulting tuition. In both cases, a modest increase in the initial class is modelled on line 4, with 10 additional international students assumed in each successive year, resulting in the incremental tuition revenue shown on line 5. Additional programs would be free to explore pathways where capacity exists.

**Table 2: Simulation of potential revenues deriving from a professional master’s pathway in Engineering**

Academic Year		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
1	Current Plan for Full-Time International Enrolment	318	292	280	295	300	300	300
2	Tuition Rate (increases by 2%/y after 2025-26)			\$45,779	\$46,695	\$47,629	\$48,582	\$49,554
3	<b>Tuition Revenue</b>			<b>\$12,818,120</b>	<b>\$13,775,025</b>	<b>\$14,288,700</b>	<b>\$14,574,600</b>	<b>\$14,866,200</b>
4	Simulation of Additional Enrolment through WIC				25	35	45	55
5	<b>Additional Tuition revenue</b>				<b>\$1,167,375</b>	<b>\$1,667,015</b>	<b>\$2,186,190</b>	<b>\$2,725,470</b>

**Table 3: Simulation of potential revenues deriving from a professional master’s pathway in Health Sciences**

Academic Year		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
1	Current Plan for Full-Time International Enrolment	19	26	38	46	46	46	46
2	Tuition Rate (increases by 2%/y after 2025-26)			\$40,075	\$40,877	\$41,695	\$42,529	\$43,380
3	<b>Tuition Revenue</b>			<b>\$1,522,850</b>	<b>\$1,880,342</b>	<b>\$1,917,970</b>	<b>\$1,956,334</b>	<b>\$1,995,480</b>
4	Simulation of Additional Enrolment through WIC				10	20	30	40
5	<b>Additional Tuition revenue</b>				<b>\$408,770</b>	<b>\$833,900</b>	<b>\$1,275,870</b>	<b>\$1,735,200</b>

## Appendix D: Professional Master's Programs

### Background:

Professional master's programs are graduate degrees designed to provide specialized knowledge and skills for a specific profession or career path. Unlike research-based master's programs, which provide experience and training in research and scholarship, professional master's programs are specifically designed for re-skilling and upskilling with a greater focus on practical skills and knowledge relevant to the profession. They are designed to prepare students for specific career paths and to enhance their job prospects. Professional master's programs often include experiential learning opportunities such as practicums, internships, or projects. There is a demand for such credentials in a wide range of fields including education, engineering, healthcare, information and media, business and finance, and analytics.

### Professional Master's Programs at Western

There are 29 professional master's programs at Western offered through eight Faculties. Currently, about 30% of students in these programs are international. Recruitment into graduate programs lies primarily with graduate programs/Faculties. Except for a couple of faculties, the resources for active recruitment are very limited or not present. As a result, the accept-retention rate of international students (i.e., the fraction of applicants who accept the admission offer and ultimately enroll in the program) is low (3-year average accept-retention rate of international students at Western for professional master's programs is under 40%). Expanding professional master's enrolment is a priority for our faculties, but their efforts are restricted by the availability of resources. Furthermore, over 80% of international students in these professional master's programs are from three countries only; therefore, an ever-changing geopolitical environment makes growth of professional master's programs highly uncertain if we do not diversify recruitment. Currently, we do not have the capacity or resources to expand our recruitment efforts.

### Pathways to professional master's programs through WIC

Graduate admission decisions are made by each graduate program. Each program sets specific admission requirements including the entrance academic average (70% average is set as a baseline requirement by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). As per the Senate policy on graduate admissions, admission to a master's degree program at Western requires a four-year degree. However, the policy has a provision to allow programs to consider equivalent qualifications as deemed appropriate per the standards of the discipline or profession.

WIC would offer a pathway to professional master's programs at Western for prospective students through a pre-master's preparatory program. Depending on their academic standing and background, students would complete one or more of the following options at WIC:

- Students with a 3-year bachelor's degree: Globally, many countries offer 3-year bachelor's degree programs. These students, while academically strong, are not eligible to apply for

direct entry to our professional master's program. The proposed partnership would allow these students to complete additional academic work at WIC to meet eligibility for their intended professional master's program. Each participating Western graduate program would determine the specific additional academic requirements that these students must complete at WIC prior to entry.

- Students who hold a 4-year bachelor's degree but lack specific prerequisites for a professional master's program would complete the requirements at WIC. Each participating Western graduate program would determine the specific prerequisite courses that these students must complete at WIC prior to starting their professional master's programs.
- Non-credit pre-master's preparatory program to prepare international students for academic success in their master's program: These non-credit courses would be developed in collaboration with participating Western graduate programs.
- Selected for-credit master's courses that these students can complete prior to starting their master's program: This option is primarily designed to allow students to take 1–2 courses that may help them to succeed in their master's program (e.g., professional development courses). Participating Western graduate programs would determine any such courses and approve them.

Students coming to Western through a pre-master's pathway will receive a conditional admission offer from the corresponding graduate program to apply for the study permit and will be admitted to Western's professional program when they meet the admission condition.

Students who meet the requirements for direct admission to a professional master's program at Western would be referred to Western for direct entry to the professional master's program.

### **Participation in the WIC Pathway Program**

The decision to participate in the WIC professional master's pathway program lies with individual graduate programs/faculties. Each professional master's program at Western is unique in terms of program design and admission requirements. Therefore, for professional master's programs willing to participate, specific pathway design(s) would be developed jointly by the graduate program and Navitas for pathway options (described above) that align with each program's requirements. These pathway designs would be formalized through program modification for each participating program. As per Western's quality assurance process, any major modification to a graduate program would require the approval of Senate.

### **Navitas Experience with Recruitment for Professional Master's Programs**

While the proposed partnership to establish a pathway into professional master's programs is the first one in Canada, Navitas has extensive experience in establishing and operating master's level pathways through Navitas colleges in partnership with universities in several other countries, including Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, New Zealand, United Arab Emirates and the United States.



### **Case Studies**

To provide further clarity, case studies on the WIC pathway to professional master's programs Faculties of Health Sciences and Engineering will be included in the next draft of the proposal (currently in progress).

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## Appendix E: Risk Assessment of International Education Models

The following analysis summarizes key risks and considerations associated with three international education models: Partnership model to set up **Western International College (WIC) in partnership with Navitas**, an **In-House First Year Model** and international recruitment through **Direct Entry**. A detailed comparison of financial, governance, recruitment, student experience, academic and reputational risks is provided below.

### Summary of risk assessments:

- 1. Financial:** Partnership models increase revenue certainty (amount and timing) and manage downside financial risk for Western. The Partnership model accrues revenue to Western quickly, without upfront costs. In contrast, the In-House option and Direct Entry students place the financial risk solely on Western, with no downside protection to manage financial uncertainty. Modeling the financial success of the In-House and Direct Entry options is challenging due to their reliance on a developed recruiting network.
- 2. Governance:** Oversight structures in any option would provide necessary reporting of performance through Western's governance system, with minimal differences in governance risk between options.
- 3. Recruitment and Admissions Process:** Partnering with Navitas could significantly benefit Western's international recruitment but also result in reduced control over the recruitment process without proper oversight. Current state and In-House options do not provide a viable option to meet international targets.
- 4. Student Experience:** Development of programs to support first-year international students is similar under both options with delivery provided by partner for some services. Oversight committees would be established to minimize residual risk and ensure consistent experience under the options considered.
- 5. Academic Experience:** Western would retain control over the development and delivery of academic programming under any of the options considered. Under the Partnership model, joint committees would provide additional oversight over academic standards.
- 6. Reputational Impact:** The Partnership model option could potentially impact the reputation of the university due to its association with a private enterprise. However, the experiences of other universities partnering with Navitas does not demonstrate a clear reputational impact (positive or negative). Additionally, continued poor performance with Direct Entry recruitment (including the In-House option), could lead to a negative international perception, further hindering recruitment efforts.

## Risk comparison across recruitment options

### 1. Residual

The following table highlights areas where the residual risks are similar across all options, as well as areas where risks differ based on the recruitment model.

<b>Comparison of Risk by Option</b>		
<b>Similar level of Residual Risk for All Options</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance Structure</li> <li>• Governance Oversight</li> <li>• Admissions Processing</li> <li>• Recruitment Process Oversight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Experience - 1<sup>st</sup> year Experience</li> <li>• Student Experience - Access to Resources</li> <li>• Student Experience - Residence Experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Experience - Delivery of Academic Programing</li> <li>• Academic Experience - Academic Standards</li> <li>• Academic Experience - Curriculum Offering</li> </ul>
<b>Lower Risks with Partnership - WIC</b>	<b>Lower Risks with In-House First Year</b>	<b>Lower Risks with Direct Entry</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment Network</li> <li>• Financial Risks – Revenues amount/timing</li> <li>• Financial Risks – Downside risk managed, no additional expense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No reputational impacts from Partnering with a Private Enterprise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students Admissions Standards</li> </ul>
<b>Higher Risks with Partnership - WIC</b>	<b>Higher Risks with In-House First Year</b>	<b>Higher Risks with Direct Entry</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputational Impacts from Partnering with a Private Enterprise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment Network</li> <li>• Financial Risks – Revenues amount/timing</li> <li>• Financial Risks – Expense amounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment Network</li> <li>• Financial Risks – Revenues amount/timing</li> <li>• Financial Risks – Expense amounts</li> </ul>

Recruitment is the key differential risk that has multiple downstream impacts to financial and operational outcomes; the Partnership model manages recruitment risk most effectively, and limits downside financial outcomes to Western.

## 2. Financial risk

The table below outlines key financial risks and considerations across the three recruitment models— Partnership model, In-House First Year and Direct-Entry model.

<b>Financial</b>			
<b>Risk/Issue</b>	<b>Western International College (WIC)</b>	<b>In-House First Year</b>	<b>Current State – Direct Entry</b>
Amount of revenues	Lower uncertainty	Higher uncertainty	Higher uncertainty
Timing of revenues	Lower uncertainty	Higher uncertainty	Higher uncertainty
Operating expenses	Similar	Similar	No Change
Recruitment expenses	No additional cost	Higher uncertainty	Higher uncertainty
Underperformance Financial Risk	Partner	Western	Western
Overperformance Financial Reward	Shared	Western	Western
Partner risk	Single	Diversified	Diversified

### Key Considerations:

A key financial risk is the success of the recruitment network. The operational costs of the college are similar for both Partnership and In-House options. However, under the WIC option, the financial risk for operations and the recruitment network, is transferred to the partner. This model minimizes Western’s exposure to financial risks. The WIC option leverages established and diverse partner networks, providing more stable and faster revenue streams for Western.

There is substantial financial uncertainty related to the In-House and current state options, which require upfront expense to build out the recruitment network. This increases revenue risk in terms of amount and timing. Unpredictable recruitment numbers lead to uncertain revenues, increasing the risk of unsustainable deficits that Western must fund. Delays in achieving sustainable recruitment numbers, risk losing valuable time needed to develop alternative revenue streams to support faculty operating budgets.

While underperformance jeopardizes Western's long-term financial health in all scenarios, only the In-House and current state options require Western to fund deficits through allocations from the existing operating budget. In the Partnership model, the partner funds any deficits, reducing Western's financial burden. If efforts overperform, Western benefits in all scenarios. The University takes all the risks and rewards with the In-House and current state options, but the financial risk is highest for Western, and these options have the most uncertainty. Under the WIC option, Western manages downside risk while sharing in the financial rewards; the timing of revenues has less uncertainty and is most probable to start in year 1.

Diversifying partner risk under the In-House and Direct Entry options add value since the failure of a partner limits the downside financial risk to Western. Under the WIC scenario, the partner must be financially strong, able to meet the college's financial obligations, and demonstrate long-term financial commitment to Western. Diversification under In-House and current state options reduces reliance on any one partner but increases international tax compliance risk and monitoring requirements in multiple foreign jurisdictions, both of which increase financial risk directly to Western. Under the WIC model, these risks and expenses are managed by the partner.

### 3. Governance

The following table summarizes governance structures and oversight mechanisms for each option.

Governance			
	Western International College (WIC)	In-House First Year	Current State – Direct Entry
Structure	Partnership between Western and Navitas. Final structure of WIC needs to be determined and outlined in a final agreement. Reputation impacts would need to be considered for any partnerships with a private enterprise.	Leverage Western's existing governance structures and build on existing oversight mechanisms, such as those used in preliminary year.	No Change
Oversight	Western would be directly responsible for delivering Curriculum, Academic Standards, Faculty Selection, Student Recruitment Standards, Space, Brand Promotion and Ancillary Services. Western would have oversight of remaining functions managed by Navitas through various committees. A joint Strategic Oversight Committee to review and monitor performance and set goals, will report annually.	Responsibility for all activities remain with Western. Organizational structures (including reporting) will need to build on existing oversight mechanisms to ensure proper oversight of this option.	No Change

**Key Considerations:** While the oversight of WIC is similar to existing partnerships, it is unique in terms of delivering an academic experience in partnership with a private entity. Joint committees are proposed under WIC to ensure information for decision making purposes is delivered to Western. The adequacy of the governance structure should be assessed to ensure it provides oversight and accountability acceptable to Western.

#### 4. Recruitment and Admissions Process

This section compares how each option would manage international student recruitment and admissions.

Recruitment and Admissions Process			
	Western International College (WIC)	In-House First Year	Current State – Direct Entry
Recruitment Network	Leverages the experience of an experienced partner with established recruiting expertise across regions and student cohorts. This significantly reduces recruitment risk for Western by transferring it to a third party.	Expanding our recruitment network for pre-admissible students is necessary, requiring additional time and new expertise, in addition to understanding regional dynamics and evolving student preferences for every country. Building this network increases recruitment risk as it delays the time to bring students to Western.	Expanding our recruitment network is necessary and would require, understanding regional dynamics and evolving student preferences for every country. Building this network increases recruitment risk as it delays the time to bring students to Western.
Identified Prospects Pool of Candidates	Accesses student prospects previously unavailable to Western. Can also supplement Direct Entry international enrollment. This provides the largest pool of candidates available to Western, among the alternatives considered.	Until effective recruitment efforts are undertaken, this option could potentially draw resources from the current recruitment processes, requiring additional support.	Resource intensive method to identify potential candidates.

**Key Considerations:** The WIC option and potentially the In-House first-year option provide enrollment for Western students at a lower level (80-85%) compared to domestic students. Issues related to equity and fairness may need to be considered (especially for domestic students).

Additionally, the practices used by third parties to attract and recruit students would not be under Western’s direct control. Processes to ensure recruitment practises acceptable to Western would need to be implemented to provide assurance.

**5. Student Experience**

The following section examines how each option would support the first-year experience for international students.

<b>Student Experience</b>			
	<b>Western International College (WIC)</b>	<b>In-House First Year</b>	<b>Current State – Direct Entry</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> year orientation/integration	Developed by Western and monitored by Student Success Committee	Determined by Western	Determined by Western
Residence Experience	Determined by Western	Determined by Western	Determined by Western
Access to Sports and Intramurals	Western Experience	Western Experience	Western Experience
Mental Health Resources	Western Experience	Western Experience	Western Experience
Clubs/Social Access	Western Experience	Western Experience	Western Experience

**Key Considerations:** The goal of each alternative is to provide a consistent Western experience for international students. In the case of WIC, most services will be provided though Western, and some portions of that experience will be managed by Navitas (but developed by Western), with oversight from Western. Support Services for students would be funded by ancillary fees, the same under any of the models. Processes will need to be developed to manage risks, and oversight will be key to success. Other operational risks around safety/security also should be considered under any option.



## 6. Academic Experience

This section reviews how each option would maintain the quality and delivery of academic programs.

<b>Academic Experience</b>			
	<b>Western International College (WIC)</b>	<b>In-House First Year</b>	<b>Current State – Direct Entry</b>
Delivery of Academic Programing	Delivered by Western Faculty	Delivered by Western Faculty	Delivered by Western Faculty
Academic Standards	Determined by Western. Academic Advisory Committee to provide oversight.	Determined by Western	Determined by Western
Curriculum Offering	Oversight and final approval from Western to meet current Standards.	Would need to be newly developed, financed and piloted to meet needs of this group.	Existing Western Process

**Key Considerations:** Western would retain control over the development and delivery of Academic programming. Navitas would be responsible for providing the infrastructure for teaching. Partnering with a private enterprise could have reputational impacts. Academic Experience would be similar under the options considered.

## 7. Reputational Impact

**Appendix E, Table 7:** This section explores the potential reputational impact of each model.

<b>Reputational Impact</b>		
<b>Western International College (WIC)</b>	<b>In-House First Year</b>	<b>Current State – Direct Entry</b>
<p>Partnering with a private enterprise has been raised as a potential risk to Western’s reputation. However, the performance in international rankings of other institutions partnering with Navitas has not demonstrated a clear impact (positive or negative); trends since 2012 in QS rankings across six Universities have been mixed. University rankings are influenced by a multitude of factors, including academic reputation, academic output as measured by Scopus, employment outcomes, sustainability, and international collaborations. A change in rank cannot be solely attributed to the Navitas partnership but it can provide an indicator of an institution’s reputation over time.</p> <p>The universities ranked in the top 200 have all improved their QS rank since 2012 while the lower ranked schools have mixed results. The University of Sydney has been engaged with private partners for delivery of education for the past two decades (Navitas since 2023). Lancaster University, Curtin University, and Deakin University have also partnered with Navitas since at least 2012 (Deakin University since 2015). These universities have either improved or maintained their QS rankings during that time. Simon Fraser University and the University of Manitoba have experienced mixed ranking performance over time with their own experiences with Navitas. SFU has maintained a top 400 ranking, while UM has seen a decline in their rank.</p>	<p>Recruitment challenges for this option have been detailed above as being a higher risk.</p> <p>Underperformance of recruitment efforts could negatively impact Western’s reputation. This would add further challenges to future recruitment efforts.</p>	<p>Under the current state, continued underperformance of direct recruitment efforts could negatively impact Western’s reputation. This would add further challenges to future recruitment efforts.</p>