



Why Still #NOtoNavitasUWO?

Members of the campus community continue to press for details and analysis of an envisioned partnership with Navitas. This is a large decision being made in complicated times. It is critical that we make determinations which are smart, innovative and based on shared key principles.

Some elements of the proposal have improved since 2020. However, many fundamental elements remain concerning.

1. **Privatization** - Navitas is a for-profit organization owned by the private equity hedge fund BGH Capital. Any partnership to establish a Navitas international college (NIC) allows the privatization of public education where student fees and tuition are siphoned away from the public system to corporate shareholders.
2. **Precarious, Two-tier Employment** - Under the proposed plan, faculty teaching in the international college would be UWOFA members under the current terms. This is an improvement from the 2020 proposal of non-union labour. However, NIC instructors would still be hired in teaching-only contract positions, have limited job security, no access to the extended health plan, tenuous access to the pension plan, and no workload allocation for Research or Service.
3. **Workload** - There are significant workload issues which are not being discussed. For example:
 - a. That Western will have academic oversight for course programming is certainly better than outsourcing our degree credit courses to Navitas; however, the creation and staffing of these courses will involve considerable work for appointments committees, curriculum committees, undergraduate and graduate chairs, faculty EPCs, Chairs and Directors, over a short period of time.
 - b. Many Units are already understaffed. High turnover and short contracts in part-time positions will create significant additional workload. The use of teaching-only positions does nothing to ease Service burdens within Units, nor does it contribute to student supervision demands nor building Research capacity.
4. **Revenue Sharing** - We have received no information about how the revenues flowing from such a partnership would be allocated across the university. Our current budget model makes it difficult for revenues to flow back to Units and we have reason to be skeptical that the extra work put in by Units will be recovered or compensated.
5. **Inequity in the Student Experience** - We are told that the NIC would offer students small classes, more instruction time (i.e., 4 hour classes), English-language supports and 'wrap-around services' such as field trips, orientations to living in London, bespoke counselling and 24/7 help lines. This creates inequity in the student experience for direct entry international students who have none of these extras. We are told that NIC students can be housed across campus residences and that some courses may be held on the main campus, yet they remain segregated in their first-year courses and would enter second-year programs without broad peer connections.



6. **Circumvention of Collective Bargaining** - The proposed plan would require significant revisions to our Collective Agreement to avoid non-compliance. It envisions changed structures (introducing e.g., a new academic unit, new Dean) and changed processes (e.g., at Wilfrid Laurier Navitas has a role in the hiring process and there is a separate compensation scheme). Many other critical elements could also be implicated (e.g., Standing Appointment rights, required contact hours, earned hours/course). Negotiating these changes would require an extensive process that is best carried out in collective bargaining. Though our contract expires in summer 2026, the senior administration is trying to force the issue now rather than bringing these changes to the bargaining table.

7. **Unreasonable Timeline** - This idea was raised at the Senate on February 14, 2025 and the Senate will be asked to vote on June 6, 2025. That gives Senators **less than four months** to make a decision whether to enter into a minimum 10-year deal which will significantly change the landscape of this university. Appropriate data gathering, information sharing, and consultation is impossible at this pace. Compare this to the oversight process for minor academic changes through committees from the Unit level to Faculty EPCs to the Senate.

8. **Orchestrated Process** - In the face of pressure to engage in a proper process, the administration proposed an ad hoc Senate committee to consider Navitas. However, the process remains deeply flawed and is not how good decisions are made:
 - a. The Senate was provided with committee terms of reference and composition with only one week of notice before it was required to vote.
 - b. This committee bypasses three other Senate sub-committees which would typically have independent oversight on elements of the plan. This greatly reduces the number of people reviewing this proposal.
 - c. A motion from the floor was required to broaden the remit of the committee to include reviewing alternatives. Without this, Navitas was the default solution to our international student recruitment needs.
 - d. The nomination period for the committee was only 1.5 working days.
 - e. The committee is composed of Senators rather than any experts in international education or commercial partnerships.
 - f. The committee is tasked with meeting every week throughout the busy month of April and producing a report by May.

We can do better. Continue to ask critical questions about Navitas and challenge the assumptions behind its potential approval. While financial benefits or the avoidance of cuts may make the proposal seem attractive, we must look beyond short-term gains and critically assess the long-term impact on our academic mission. Will this decision set us on a sustainable path and uphold the values we expect in shaping the future of our institution? These are not abstract concerns, they define the strength of our academic community. Take action! Engage in meaningful discussions at your Faculty Councils, push for transparency, share your concerns.