

Advancing Canada's Ambitions

Ottawa, October 27-28, 2026

Concrétiser les ambitions du Canada

Ottawa, les 27 et 28 octobre 2026

Tuesday, October 27, 2026

All times in this program are in Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) | Plenary sessions available via zoom

7:30-8:30 a.m. Ontario 3 rd floor, Westin	NETWORKING BREAKFAST	
8:45-9:15 a.m. Governor General 2 4 th floor, Westin	LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND WELCOME REMARKS	Land acknowledgement by Grandmother Louella Tobias Welcome remarks by Gabriel Miller, President and CEO, Universities Canada
9:15-10:15 a.m. Governor General 2 4 th floor, Westin	STATE OF THE NATION: CANADA 18 MONTHS INTO THE CARNEY GOVERNMENT	What is shaping Canada's political moment – and what should university leaders see coming? An expert panel will examine the forces testing the government's agenda and the economic and geopolitical pressures that could change its course, and what this may mean for leadership across Canada. Moderator: Vassy Kapelos, Chief Political Correspondent, CTV News Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joël-Denis Bellavance, Chef du bureau d'Ottawa, La Presse• Fred DeLorey, Partner, NorthStar Public Affairs• Meredith Lilly, Professor & Simon Reisman Chair in International Economic Policy Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University
10:15-10:30 a.m.	BREAK	
10:30-11:30 a.m. Governor General 2 4 th floor, Westin	CANADA-EU ALLIANCE FOR THE FUTURE: UNIVERSITIES AS STRATEGIC PARTNERS	As the proposed Canada-EU Alliance for the Future takes shape, how can universities help strengthen economic security and resilience? Ahead of the Canada-EU Summit in Montreal, a conversation with John Hannaford will invite presidents to explore how research, innovation, talent and trusted partnerships can make universities a strategic pillar of a deeper relationship. Moderator: Daniel Jutras, Recteur, Université de Montréal Speaker: The Honourable John Hannaford, Personal Representative of the Prime Minister to the EU



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11:30-1:15 p.m.

Ontario

3rd floor, Westin

NETWORKING LUNCH

1:15-2 p.m.

Governor General 2

4th floor, Westin

**WHAT CANADIANS EXPECT
FROM UNIVERSITIES NOW**

David Coletto will unpack new public opinion research on how Canadians view universities and what they expect from them today. He will explore how Canadians perceive universities' contributions to economic opportunity, innovation, workforce development and community prosperity, where confidence is strong and where gaps remain. The session will consider what these findings mean for university leadership, member communications, public engagement and the sector's role in addressing Canada's major challenges.

Speaker:

David Coletto, CEO, Abacus Data

2-2:30 p.m.

Governor General 2

4th floor, Westin

**MAKING THE CASE:
FROM EVIDENCE TO LEADERSHIP
ACTION**

Crestview will share findings from the national public communications pilot campaign, highlighting the messages, stories and evidence that resonate with different audiences. Presidents will explore how these insights can inform their engagement with governments, boards, students, employers and communities, and help make universities' contributions more concrete, relevant and visible.

Speaker:

Erin Bonokoski, Partner, Crestview

2:30-2:45 p.m.

BREAK

2:45-3:45 p.m.

**PRESIDENTS' EXCHANGE:
FROM INSIGHT TO INSTITUTIONAL ACTION**

Concurrent sessions - available in person only

Governor General 2

4th floor, Westin

**ADVANCING CANADA'S
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
AMBITIONS**

A discussion among presidents on the next phase of Canada's research, talent and innovation agenda. The exchange will explore how university research can have greater impact, the institutional choices and partnerships needed to advance that contribution and where shared priorities create opportunities for collaboration.

Moderator: Lisa Philipps, Interim President, York University

Ontario

3rd floor, Westin

**LEADING AS A REGIONAL
ANCHOR: MANDATE,
PARTNERSHIP AND
SUSTAINABILITY**

Regional universities are vital to their communities' economic, social and cultural life. Presidents will explore how to balance community expectations with institutional mandate and financial sustainability, build



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		<p>reciprocal municipal and community partnerships and strengthen recognition of universities' contributions to regional development.</p> <p>Moderator: Jason Dewling, President, Capilano University</p>
<p>Saskatchewan 3rd floor, Westin</p>	<p>FRANCOPHONE PRIORITIES: SHARED INTERESTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION</p>	<p>What priorities could Francophone and bilingual universities advance together? Presidents will explore research and knowledge creation in French, attracting and retaining talent and ensuring federal policies reflect their institutions' circumstances, with a focus on shared interests and opportunities for collaboration and advocacy.</p> <p>Moderator: Stéphane Pallage, Recteur, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)</p>
<p>3:45-4:00 p.m.</p>	<p>BREAK</p>	
<p>4:00-4:45 p.m. Governor General 2 4th floor, Westin</p>	<p>CANADA'S AI AMBITIONS: A CONVERSATION WITH MINISTER EVAN SOLOMON</p>	<p>How can Canada turn its AI strengths into lasting economic and public benefits? A fireside conversation with Minister Evan Solomon will explore federal priorities for talent, research and responsible adoption, the importance of Canadian capacity and sovereignty, and how universities can help translate ambition into results.</p> <p>Moderator: Maud Cohen, Directrice Générale, Polytechnique Montréal</p> <p>Speaker: The Honourable Evan Solomon, Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation</p>
<p>4:45-5 p.m. Governor General 2 4th floor, Westin</p>	<p>WRAP-UP</p>	
<p>6-8:30 p.m.</p>	<p>EVENING RECEPTION METROPOLITAIN BRASSERIE 700 Sussex Dr.</p>	<p>An evening of conversation with parliamentarians and diplomats on the issues shaping Canada's future, hosted by AAU, APSN, COU, PACIU, RUCBC and UC.</p>

Wednesday, October 28, 2026

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7:30-8:30 a.m. Ontario 3 rd floor, Westin	NETWORKING BREAKFAST	
8:30-9:30 a.m. Governor General 2 4 th floor, Westin	UNIVERSITIES CANADA BUSINESS MEETING	Members are invited to join the business meeting of Universities Canada for discussion and vote on matters to advance the business of the organization. Updates on key policy files and other membership matters will also be provided.
9:30-10:15 a.m. Governor General 2 4 th floor, Westin	ADDRESSING ANTISEMITISM: UNIVERSITY ACTION AND FEDERAL PRIORITIES	<p>A conversation with Minister Marc Miller addressing antisemitism on campuses and the opportunities for universities and government to work together. The discussion will explore how university efforts and federal priorities can reinforce one another, what progress will require and how government can support institutions in addressing antisemitism.</p> <p>Moderator: Joy Johnson, President, Simon Fraser University</p> <p>Speaker: The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture</p>
10:15-10:30 a.m.	BREAK	
10:30-11:45 a.m. Governor General 2 4 th floor, Westin	DEFENCE AND SOVEREIGN CAPABILITY	<p>Canada's defence readiness depends on talent, expertise and innovation. A conversation with the Chief of the Defence Staff will explore priority needs, followed by discussion among presidents on how universities can contribute, the barriers they face and opportunities for collaboration to strengthen Canada's sovereignty.</p> <p>Moderator: Kim Brooks, President, Dalhousie University</p> <p>Speaker: General M.A.J. Carignan, Chief of the Defence Staff</p>
11:45-1 p.m. Ontario 3 rd floor, Westin	NETWORKING LUNCH	
1-2 p.m. Governor General 2 4 th floor, Westin	CLOSING KEYNOTE	<p>At a moment of profound change, what will it take for Canada to translate its ambitions into lasting prosperity, greater independence and renewed national confidence? Andrew Coyne shares reflections on the Canada we are becoming and the Canada we aspire to be.</p> <p>Speaker: Andrew Coyne, Leading Political Analyst & Politics</p>



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-2:15 p.m.
Governor General 2
4th floor, Westin

**ADJOURNMENT AND
NEXT STEPS**

Closing remarks by Gabriel Miller, President and
CEO, Universities Canada