

Board of Governors Meeting

Thursday, February 8, 2024 – Minutes

The Board of Governors of Acadia University acknowledges that we are located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.

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A meeting of the Board of Governors was held on Thursday, February 8, 2024, at 8:15 a.m. by virtual means using Microsoft Teams.

Governors present: Henry Demone (Chair), Bert Frizzell (First Vice-Chair), Dr. Jeff Hennessy (President and Vice-Chancellor), Bethany Moffatt, Christine Luckasavitch, Dr. Anna Robbins, Charles Coll, Dr. Andrew Davis, Robert Ffrench, Rev. Dan Green, Mark Adam, Dr. Jeff Banks, Shanna Lespere, Melinda Daye, Nancy McCain, Tracey McGillivray, Allan MacDonald, Pam Mood, Stuart MacLean, Martin Suter, Rev. Judith Tod, Lana Wood, Matthew Rios, Christine Pound, Karen Hutt (Second Vice-Chair), and Sundeep Oad.

Management present: Erin Beaudin, Kate Ashley, Scott Duguay, Mary MacVicar, Nancy Handrigan, and Jo-Anne Peckham (University Secretary).

Regrets: Bruce Galloway (Chancellor), Dr. Candy O'Connor, Clive Anderson, Stan Thomas, Shelley Fleckenstein, Sadie McAlear, Cora Tolliver, and Susan MacDougall.

1. Call to Order

H. Demone, Board Chair, called the meeting to order, welcomed meeting participants and provided a territorial acknowledgment.

- The Board Chair welcomed Dr. Jeff Banks and Mark Adam as recently elected faculty members to the Board of Governors.
- Rev. Anna Robbins opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

IT WAS MOVED by M. Suter / C. Coll

THAT the Meeting Agenda be approved as distributed.

CARRIED.

3. Approval of Consent Agenda

IT WAS MOVED by M. Suter / L. Wood

THAT the Consent Agenda be approved as distributed.

CARRIED.

4. Business arising from Minutes

i. Compensation Review

More time will be needed to evaluate how comprehensive the report is. A few of the recommendations have been actioned however there is still work to be done. There will be a test working group established before moving forward with pieces for implementation, and there may be specific pieces that need to be handled externally. This is being treated as a priority.

ii. Whistleblower Policy

This is still in development, and close to being brought to FARC. It will then come back to a future Board meeting.

iii. Strategic Enrolment Metrics and Milestones

There has been quite a bit of progress made on producing better data on campus. The validity of the recruitment aspect is being tested, and an update will be provided at a future Board meeting.

iv. Enterprise Risk Management Report

There is a good draft report to start, and an update will be presented at a future Board meeting. The end goal is to identify gaps, keeping a list of things to be done on an ongoing basis.

5. President's Report (Closed Session)

The Chair called for a motion to move the meeting into Closed Session.

IT WAS MOVED by C. Coll / S. Lespere

THAT the meeting move to Closed Session. (08:30 a.m.)

CARRIED.

The Chair called for a motion to return the meeting to Open Session.

IT WAS MOVED by C. Coll / M. Suter

THAT the meeting return to Open Session. (09:04 a.m.)

CARRIED.

6. Financial Update

M. MacVicar's report was posted on Teams before the meeting and circulated as part of the meeting documentation by email.

The Financial reports were presented and an update was provided by M. MacVicar.

Reports: YTD Financial Update Q3 2023-2024; and 2023-2024 Deferred Maintenance and Capital Budget Q3 Update

- With the completion of the third quarter of the fiscal year, the year-to-date financial results continue to be aligned to budget with some timing variances. Revenue is slightly above budget with a YTD variance of \$0.7m or 1.0% with positive variances in interest revenue and operations.
- International enrolment is up, sitting at 514 students registered on a full-time basis. Domestic enrolment continues to be at a decreased level, which is being reflected in residence occupancy. The loss of Nova Scotia enrolment is offset by the gain in international. Full-time enrolment currently sits at just over 3,400.
- Interest revenue continues to exceed what was built in as part of the conservative estimate, and the conservative investment strategy is paying off.
- Events Acadia, most significantly hit throughout the pandemic, should see growth going forward.
- With the change of the tuition model, the enrolment change is being tracked by credit hour. Financial Services is working through and validating a collection of data from the last couple of years.
- YTD Acadia is up about \$2.3m on the bottom line projected based on residence and tuition fees that were received in January.
- Forecast is to come in on budget. Revenue is down, however interest revenue is up. With operations revenue, there is a decline where residence occupancy is reflected. Spending is down about \$600,000.
- Endowed assets are sitting at just under \$122m. The Jarislowsky investment (separate) is just under \$4.3m.

A discussion took place.

The financial statements have gone through FARC, and there will be work done towards drilling down into the tuition numbers and understanding any impact from that.

Acadia is waiting to hear from the government regarding pre-funding the operating grant, as has been done in the past. Justification from the university have been provided to the government for this.

Enabling Motion re 2024-2025

IT WAS MOVED by T. McGillivray / A. Davis

THAT the Board of Governors authorize the interim budget arrangements for the period of April 1, 2024, through April 30, 2024, to enable the Board to review and approve the 2024-2025 Budget at the April Board Meeting (or until such time as the

7. Provost, VP Academic Update

The Provost and Vice-President Academic Report was posted to Teams before the meeting and circulated by email as part of the meeting documentation.

Dr. K. Ashley provided an overview of the report.

- The university will be required to provide a strategic alignment proposal this summer which covers five performance measurement outcomes common across the universities. There will be some management needed in terms of addressing provincial needs, and none of this will stop Acadia from continuing to offer the liberal education that underpins its institutional values.
- The university could use Board help in terms of identifying work placements for co-op students, and the report provides a breakdown of the programs that are areas of focus for employer development.
- Acadia is working on two MPHEC initiatives. One relates to the development of an online learning framework, and the other one is in advance of the quality assurance assessment taking place in 2025.
- Acadia is involved in a partnership with the Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute to host an innovative Africentric B.Ed cohort of 25 students. The announcement will go out February 15th.

A discussion took place.

The question was asked, with respect to the performance indicators that the government has given, if there is a concern that government policy would cause us to adjust programs to meet their requirements. Management stated that governments are principally interested in healthcare-related and education programs. Other labour market needs were discussed and the fact that the performance indicators are currently framed very broadly. The university has the foundation for responding to these performance measurements outcomes and will find out whether it gets to define them or whether the province will send out a template.

The university's response to the strategic alignment proposals is tied to the 2% operating grant increase, and the university being able to show that we're moving in these areas will determine whether or not we receive the additional funding. To fill health-related seats, the university will need to define what those are, and show that it is filling 97 percent of those.

8. VP Student Experience Update

The VP Student Experience Report was posted to Teams before the meeting and circulated by email as part of the meeting documentation.

S. Duguay provided an overview of the report.

- Trend wise, whether we look at applications or the conversion to admitted and paid, the university is running at about 10 percent up from last year, domestically. Offers for scholarships have increased over this time last year, and residence applications are up.
- With respect to international students, a weekly meeting with the province is being held, and it's basically a wait and see situation right now. Acadia is now guaranteeing rooms in residence for international students if they need them. The university is working towards making sure the international students have what they need when the government starts processing international applications again. The details about attestation letters still need to be worked out.

A discussion took place.

Programming to attract student body diversification was discussed, and some suggestions will be forwarded to management.

9. Finance, Administration, and CFO Report

The VP Finance, Administration & CFO Report was posted to Teams before the meeting and circulated by email as part of the meeting documentation.

E. Beaudin provided an overview of the report.

- Enterprise Risk Management is top priority as a management reporting tool that would develop an action plan for each risk area and is being set up in draft form for discussion purposes. This will come back to a future Board meeting.
- Time is being spent on the employee engagement and morale action plans.
- There was an Alternative Revenue Committee a couple of years ago, and the university is looking into structuring a committee going forward. An inventory is currently being done.
- A housing needs assessment was done by Wolfville and there could be opportunities to revisit discussions of a partnership approach between the university and the town if the town is successful in receiving funding from the federal Housing Accelerator Fund.
- A plan is being worked through to be compliant with the USport's AFA Gender Equity Policy, and the university needs to be well on its way to this for the fall.

A discussion took place.

Compliance to the USport's AFA Gender Equity Policy was discussed and the importance of increasing one without decreasing the other, rather than cutting from one to give to the other. Management stated they are starting from this point. The possibility of outside support

was suggested.

10. VP Advancement Report

The VP Advancement Report was posted to Teams before the meeting and circulated by email as part of the meeting documentation.

N. Handrigan provided an overview of the report.

- Several alumni events have taken place that President Hennessy has attended.
- A \$1m gift announcement took place at the end of the year.
- There was recently an opportunity on campus to recognize a major donor to athletics.
- The Student Centre Campaign Committee is full steam ahead with meetings with individuals and proposals to foundations and corporations to complete the fundraising. New gifts are confirmed. This campaign is now closer to reaching the halfway mark.
- Continuing to keep the events plan robust and varied.
- Partnership with the Alumni Association is strong.
- Attention was brought to the Terms of Reference document in the Consent Agenda.

11. Board Education Session

- A Day in the Life of an Academic was presented by Lauren Finniss, Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning Excellence, and Rachel Brickner, Head, Department of Politics. The presentation was developed by the Faculty Support Committee of Senate in conjunction with the Academic Resources Committee of the Board of Governors, chaired by Melinda Daye.
- Key topics of the presentation included:
 - Academic Life: What does a “Lecturer” do?
 - A breakdown of each category: Teaching, Research, and Service
 - Faculty Member Base Commitment Breakdown

A discussion took place.

There was discussion about the importance of understanding the impact of one-on-one interaction with students.

The question was asked about setting priorities, and how this is done when being pulled in so many directions. The answer given was being in class with students is the top priority, and from there, it depends on deadlines.

Appreciation was expressed by Board members for the presentation.

12. Senate Update – T. McGillivray

- A few meetings have taken place now with an improved tone and process, including the Consent Agenda.
- An open session took place about Generative AI with informative and positive discussion.

- Work on updated calendars has taken place.
- Discussions around items such as institutional neutrality, micro-credentials and dual-crediting have taken place.

13. Update from the Presidents

Acadia Divinity College (ADC) – A. Robbins

Anna Robbins provided an update.

- There are good numbers this year and there are approximately 211 students, with the vast majority being graduate students.
- International numbers are up, and it's changing the face of the College.
- Approximately half of the students are online and a fully-integrated classroom is being utilized.
- ADC is becoming known as a school that is positioned as a leading seminary in innovation and strategic planning.
- Significant progress has been made with the strategic vision and a lot of opportunity has been opened up.
- A reminder that ADC relies on the leadership team at Acadia to represent their interests with the government. ADC is eager to contribute to the agenda of the university to fulfill the government performance indicators.
- Reputational risk is currently under control with respect to the lawsuit.
- A. Robbins is in her fifth year of a six-year contract, with an offer of a second contract in view.

A discussion took place.

The question was asked with ADC's high percentage of international students, if the recent policy announcements from the federal government with respect to international tuition affects ADC. It was answered that this is being looked at, and that ADC will not want to set themselves apart from Acadia on that front.

Acadia Students' Union (ASU) – S. McAlear

- No new updates.

Acadia Alumni Association (AAA) – M. Rios

Matt Rios provided an update.

- AAA is in a period of transition. M. Rios is attending his second last Board meeting as the President of the Association and will continue for one more year as past President.

Christine Luckasavitch will step into the role of President in May.

- Part of the succession planning is identification of new members for the AAA Board of Directors, as well as looking at terms of the 12 appointees to the Board of Governors.
- Budget has been approved for the upcoming year. A \$1m contribution is being made to the Student Centre. There is a lot of excitement and discussion about programming to be supported in ways to attract students.

14. Updates from Board Committees

- *Academic Resources Committee Update* – M. Daye
 - There is a meeting being planned for within the next couple of weeks.
- *Advancement Committee Update* – N. Handrigan (in absence of T. McGillivray)

MOTION TO APPROVE THE UPDATED POLICIES

IT WAS MOVED by M. Rios / B. Frizzell

THAT the Board of Governors approve the three updated Policies put forth by the Advancement Committee: Gifts-in-Kind Acceptance; Fundraising; and Gift Acceptance.

CARRIED.

- *EDI Committee Update* – S. Lespere (in absence of C. Anderson)
 - A number of recommendations were made to administration, shared with President Hennessy, who will be attending the committee meetings.
 - The committee is looking at the initiatives from a broader community perspective to help shape and influence what is being achieved from an EDI perspective as a goal.
 - Constant awareness and implementation of best practices are key focuses, stressing that education is key.
 - Ensuring that there's a safe space for students and that they can safely report issues without reprisal is a top priority.
 - Board of Directors were urged to attend events for African History Month.

A discussion took place.

There will be a recommendation coming forward to the Board regarding the building with former President Cutten's name attached.

- *Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee (FARC) Update* – S. Lespere (in absence of B. Moffatt)
 - Navigating through issues from a numerical perspective, and the Board will be apprised as more information is received.
- *Governance Committee Update* – C. Pound
 - A focus has been on ensuring the Board education sessions continue as the one that

took place today.

- The committee is looking more comprehensively on the topic of Board feedback, an important area of governance.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE UPDATED 2023-2024 NOMINATING REPORT

An amendment to be made was with respect to S. Duguay's title. It should read Vice-President, Student Experience.

IT WAS MOVED by C. Pound / M. Suter

THAT the Board of Governors approve the 2023-2024 Nominating Report as amended.

CARRIED.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE UPDATED GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

In the absence of a Human Resources Committee, certain functions and responsibilities fell to the Governance Committee. As there is now a Human Resources Committee, the language has been removed, updating the Terms of Reference.

IT WAS MOVED by C. Pound / T. McGillivray

THAT the Board of Governors approve the updated Governance Committee Terms of Reference.

CARRIED.

- *Human Resources Committee Update* – H. Demone
 - A meeting will take place later this month to discuss the salary re-opener clause.
- *Investment Committee Update* – C. Coll (in absence of S. MacLean)
 - A recent meeting took place, and C. Coll referred to M. MacVicar for any updates.
 - M. MacVicar reported that the payout percentage was agreed to for year end.
- *Student Life Committee Update* – S. McAlear and R. Ffrench
 - No update.
- *Enrolment Marketing Committee Update* – C. Coll
 - The Committee plans to meet more frequently to be well-informed leading up to the June meeting.
 - The Committee Chair expressed appreciation for S. Duguay and the team for the work being done.
- *Town and Gown Committee Update* – E. Beaudin
 - Some shared goals have been agreed on for 2024/2025, including around events, housing, recreational opportunities which will include looking at the regional

recreation complex that's underway.

- Community harmony continues to be a topic, and food security has been added which will be led primarily by the ASU.
- Discussion about bringing back the host family program took place.
- The Wolfville Children's Centre is planning an expansion, and will be doing a needs assessment on childcare, and it was agreed to add this initiative.

15. Other Business

- Chancellor Search
 - The current term ends in May following convocation.
 - There is a policy to follow and a search committee is in place, with a goal to have a new Chancellor in place by June.

A discussion took place.

The question was asked about the goal of June. H. Demone stated it is not a broad search like the presidential search, and there is no recruiter involved, so it is much more focused. The current Chancellor will be conferring degrees in May.

A discussion took place about the qualifications being sought for the Chancellor position and the necessity to have a diverse short-list. Nominations were encouraged to be submitted.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE UPDATED THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS TRAVEL EXPENSES POLICY (POLICY E.020 REMINBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES)

The Board Chair provided the history of the old policy from 2007, indicating that the new policy no longer includes an obligation to donate reimbursements back to the university.

IT WAS MOVED by M. Suter / M. Daye

THAT the Board of Governors approve the updated the Board of Governors Travel Expenses Policy (Policy E.020 Reimbursement of Travel Expenses).

CARRIED.

C. Pound expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to work with the Board of Governors as an Order-in-Council appointee, as this is her final meeting. Susan MacDougall will also be leaving the Board in her capacity as an Order-in-Council appointee to the Board.

There was no further business for the Open Session.

The Chair called for a motion to move to Closed Session.

IT WAS MOVED by S. Lespere / C. Coll

THAT the meeting move to Closed Session. (11:50 a.m.)

CARRIED.

The Board Chair reported on the following Motion that was approved during Closed Session:

The Chair called for a motion to have the Staffing Report approved.

IT WAS MOVED THAT the Staffing Report be approved.

CARRIED.

7. Adjournment

IT WAS MOVED THAT the meeting be adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Henry Demone, Chair

Jo-Anne Peckham, Recording Secretary