



Meeting of the Board of Governors

April 24, 2026 – 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.

A meeting of the Board of Governors was held on Friday, April 24, 2026, at 9 a.m., in the Acadia Room, K.C. Irving Environmental Science Centre, and by virtual means using Microsoft Teams.

Governors present: Henry Demone (Chair), Bert Frizzell (First Vice-Chair), Dr. Jeff Hennessy (President and Vice-Chancellor), Allan MacDonald, Andrew Davis, Dr. Anna Robbins, Bethany Moffatt, Candy O'Connor, Christine Luckasavitch, Rev. Dr. Dan Green, Ed Barrett, Gale Colpitts, Dr. Jeff Banks, Rev. Judith R. Tod, Karen Hutt, Mark Adam, Martin Suter, Nancy McCain, Nastasya Kennedy, Paul Black, Robert McGregor, Ross Langley, Shanna Lespere, Shelley Fleckenstein, Stan Thomas, Tim Formuziewich, Tracey McGillivray, Tove Biskop, Yas Jawad,

Management present: Ashlee Cunsolo, Erin Beaudin, Nancy Handrigan, Scott Duguay, Natalie Weekes (Admin Support), and Sonya Pineo (University Secretary).

Regrets: Cathy Simpson, Clive Anderson, Charles Coll, Cora Tolliver, and Melinda Daye

1. Call to Order

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

Rev. Judith Tod opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

IT WAS MOVED by M. Suter / D. Green

THAT the Meeting Agenda be approved as amended.

CARRIED.

3. Approval of Consent Agenda

IT WAS MOVED by T. Biskop / S. Fleckenstein

THAT the Consent Agenda be approved as distributed.

CARRIED.

4. President's Report (Closed Session)

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

IT WAS MOVED by Y. Jawad / D. Green

THAT the meeting move into Closed Session

CARRIED.

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

IT WAS MOVED by S. Fleckenstein / Y. Jawad

THAT the meeting return to Open Session

CARRIED.

5. Provost, VP Academic Report

The Provost & VP Academic Report was circulated as part of the Board Report before today's meeting and posted to Teams.

A. Cunsolo provided an update:

- Congratulations were extended to Lerato Chondoma and a group of Acadia staff and students for their participation in the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, which led to an invitation to Geneva as part of the official Canadian delegation, highlighting the global impact of their work.
- This experience has led to significant opportunities for the students who participated, including job interviews and graduate school pathways, and has elevated Acadia's international profile.
- The upcoming May 30, Schedule H deadline, will require submission of detailed program costing and extensive narrative reports for all programs.
- The internal deadlines are set for mid-May to allow time for consolidation, alignment of data, and integration of costing and narrative components.
- The work is highly intensive, with significant contributions from Academic Units, Deans, and the Provost's team, supported by a strong and collaborative data team.
- It is anticipated that government feedback will follow the May submission, ahead of the next major deadline of August 30, which will require a strategic institutional plan informed by the analysis.
- The final Schedule H submission is due October 15, and it is expected to directly inform future Bilateral Agreements and funding models.

- The transition of the Nursing program from Cape Breton University is continuing, with faculty expected to transfer by July 1 and additional staff by mid-August.
- The Nursing program continues to receive strong feedback from students and healthcare partners, with graduates performing well and the program increasingly recognized as a leading option in the province.
- Full implementation of the new Nursing curriculum is expected by 2027.

A question was raised about the possibility of expanding Nursing enrollment given strong demand.

Enrollment for the Nursing program is provincially capped, though there may be future opportunities to increase it with government support. However, Nursing is a high-cost, accredited program, and any expansion would require additional funding, faculty, and space.

6. VP Finance, Administration & CFO Report

The VP Finance, Administration & CFO Report was circulated as part of the Board Report before today's meeting and posted to Teams.

E. Beaudin provided an update:

- The Town of Wolfville has approved continued annual contributions, including funding for athletics, daycare, bursaries, and a new Homecoming initiative aimed at reducing pressure on street gatherings.
- The Town will also be paving up to Perkins Way on University Avenue, undertaking road improvements, and adding a crossing guard near the athletics complex, with further review of potential lighting and intersection improvements in the future.
- Jennifer Veinot has been confirmed as Executive Director of Human Resources, with recognition of her leadership during a very challenging period.
- Budget presentations have been completed, with plans to continue refining communications and expand student engagement, including future sessions during orientation.
- The Dayforce system has been successfully implemented, with positive feedback on usability and accuracy, and an initial audit is underway.
- Additional systems are being implemented, including InfoSilem Campus to improve scheduling and Simplicity Advocate to enhance incident and case management.
- Year-end financial processes are underway, with timelines back on track and audited statements expected to be presented in June.
- Work to formalize the Enterprise Risk Management framework is progressing, led by Ashley Doyle, building on the 2022-23 Grant Thornton report, with further updates to come to FARC and the Board.

- A proposed 20-year lease agreement for space in the DeWolf building has been negotiated with Annapolis Fine Cheese. Negotiations were supported by McKay Real Estate.
- FARC reviewed and supported the proposed lease and Board approval is requested to proceed.

A question was raised about whether the proposed Annapolis Fine Cheese lease was for relocation or production.

This will be an additional site, with the existing Dartmouth facility remaining in operation.

A question was raised about whether a 20-year lease term is standard.

This lease is longer than typical but was agreed to in order to provide the tenant with sufficient stability and make the arrangement viable.

A question was raised about potential penalties if the lease is broken.

The lease terms are still being finalized, but will include provisions for penalties in the event of early termination.

The Chair called for a motion.

IT WAS MOVED by M. Suter / S. Fleckenstein

THAT the Board of Governors approve the lease terms as presented. If approved, a formal lease agreement will be drafted and vetted by legal.

CARRIED.

7. VP Student Experience Report

The VP Student Experience Report was circulated as part of the Board Report before today's meeting and posted to Teams.

S. Duguay provided an update:

- Applications continue to trend above previous years.
- Admitted and confirmed student numbers have now slightly exceeded last year's levels, marking a positive shift after earlier declines.
- Gains in admitted and confirmed students were attributed to strong collaboration between enrolment staff, and faculty.
- Enrolment figures remain volatile at this stage in the cycle and will continue to fluctuate until registration and the start of the academic year.
- Overall, current trends show improvement compared to the previous year, though

continued monitoring is required.

- Progress continues on the development of the One-Stop Shop model, with key staffing and structural elements advancing and initial operations expected to begin shortly, followed by a full launch in September.

A question was raised about whether the capped Nursing program artificially inflates application numbers, given the high number of applications received.

Application levels have been consistently high over multiple years, and with the Nursing program now established, comparisons are considered consistent.

A question was raised about whether unsuccessful Nursing applicants could be redirected into other programs.

All applicants are asked to indicate alternate choices and are contacted about other options; however, many Nursing applicants are focused on that pathway and often pursue opportunities elsewhere.

A suggestion was made to expand recruitment marketing beyond athletics by highlighting student commitments in other disciplines, such as Music.

Initiatives like this are beginning in some units, with plans to promote incoming students through social media.

8. *VP External Relations Report*

The VP External Relations Report was circulated as part of the Board Report before today's meeting and posted to Teams.

N. Handrigan provided an update:

- N. Handrigan provided a presentation outlining long-term philanthropy trends, with an overview of giving over approximately 20 years, noting variability year to year but overall sustained donor support.
- It was reported that while the number of donors has declined over time, this reflects broader sector and demographic trends.
- Alumni giving was noted as an area of concern, with a relatively small proportion of Alumni contributing annually, consistent with national patterns but identified as an opportunity for growth.
- Estate gifts were identified as a significant and variable source of revenue, with contributions fluctuating annually but representing an important component of long-term fundraising.
- Donations are most frequently directed toward scholarships and financial aid, with periodic increases in infrastructure-related giving tied to specific campaigns.

- The presentation also highlighted growth in the University's endowment over time, driven by both investment returns and donor contributions, with investment performance representing a significant portion of overall growth.
- It was noted that endowment gifts are typically donor-directed and often tied to legacy giving, rather than active fundraising priorities.
- The importance of continued engagement strategies to strengthen Alumni participation and overall philanthropic support was noted.

A question was raised about how donor engagement is maintained year over year.

Annual renewal appeals, regular personal outreach, and follow-up after completed pledges are key approaches.

A question was raised about whether donors seek guidance on where contributions are most needed.

While some donors ask for direction, most arrive with specific intentions, often focused on scholarships or areas of personal interest, though unrestricted gifts are particularly valued.

A question was raised about whether Alumni are targeted for giving at certain milestones, such as a specific number of years after graduation.

There is currently no structured timing for this type of outreach, though more personalized and segmented engagement strategies are being explored. Maintaining ongoing Alumni engagement is key, as sustained connection increases the likelihood of future giving.

A comment was made reflecting on the decline in donor numbers alongside increasing total donations, suggesting this may relate to broader economic trends and growing financial pressures on younger graduates.

Named Funds and Spaces

The Named Funds and Spaces document was circulated to Governors and posted to Teams prior to today's meeting.

IT WAS MOVED by T. McGillivray / T. Biskop

THAT the Named Funds and Spaces document be approved as distributed.

CARRIED.

9. Governance Committee

Student Life Committee Terms of Reference

R. Langley reported that R. McGregor and T. Biskop, the Co-Chairs of the Student Life Committee, worked extensively to reactivate and develop the Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference underwent multiple rounds of review between the Student Life

Committee and the Governance Committee before being approved by both the Governance Committee and the Executive Committee.

IT WAS MOVED by R. Langley / R. McGregor

THAT the Student Life Committee Terms of Reference be approved as distributed.

CARRIED.

Nominating Report

R. Langley reviewed the Nominating Report, noting that most committee memberships remained unchanged, though the now-active Student Life Committee is expected to expand its membership.

Updates were identified for the ASU student representative positions and the representation on the ADC Board, including the addition of a Board nominee during the transition period.

It was agreed that the amendments would be incorporated into the Nominating Report.

IT WAS MOVED by R. Langley / R. McGregor

THAT the Student Life Committee Terms of Reference be approved as amended.

CARRIED.

10. Senate Update

T. McGillivray provided an update:

- The most recent Senate meeting included a substantial agenda focused on academic programs, policy work, and restructuring discussions.
- Senate reviewed a number of program updates, including forward-looking curriculum changes and revisions from the Divinity College, as well as updates from academic units across the university.
- Particular recognition was given to the Faculty of Professional Studies and the Business Program for significant curriculum cleanup and modernization work, including the removal of outdated courses that had not been offered for many years.
- Senate also reviewed extensive work related to Admissions and Academic Standing Policies, aimed at improving consistency, alignment, and clarity throughout the Academic Calendar.
- There was significant discussion related to the restructuring during the meeting.

A comment was made that the proposed restructuring has generated significant concern within both the University community and the student body.

A comment was made from a student perspective noting that the initial restructuring proposal created concern among students, particularly around the use of the term “colleges.” However, the revised proposal has been received more positively due to its interdisciplinary focus. The consultation sessions have helped students feel more engaged in the process.

A comment was made connecting the discussion on interdisciplinary and environmental learning to Mi'kmaq approaches to education, emphasizing the importance of land-based learning and the understanding that environmental connection is integrated into all aspects of life and daily living.

11. Update from the Presidents

Acadia Divinity College (ADC) –A. Robbins

A. Robbins provided an update:

- Divinity College is projecting a year-end surplus, supported in part by strong enrolment growth and ongoing donor generosity.
- Enrolment increased significantly this year, driven in part by strong interest in the new MA Specialization in Counselling, which has become oversubscribed and is currently capped due to capacity limits.
- The Divinity College continues to advance its “Faith Shaping Future” strategic vision, with a focus on formation, spirituality, relational learning, and exploring what it means to be human in an increasingly technology-driven world, including helping students develop meaningful connections with one another and the broader community.
- Faculty are actively exploring the use of AI and digital technologies in teaching and learning, including research into AI-assisted learning, digital competencies, and AI-resistant assessment methods.
- Educational outreach initiatives are expanding into communities beyond campus, including taking the Simpson Lectures on the road to locations such as Halifax, Moncton, and Charlottetown.
- Divinity College will commit a portion of its annual budget toward Indigenous education and initiatives connected to land recognition, including support for Indigenous students and partnerships with local communities.
- Plans are moving forward for the development of an outdoor classroom and gathering space at the Divinity College, designed to support learning, connection, and Indigenous recognition through features reflecting Turtle Island teachings.
- A renewed partnership is being developed with Canadian Baptist Ministries to provide cross-cultural experiences for students.
- New consulting and innovation initiatives are being explored, including strategic and curricular consulting work with theological institutions in the United States as part of a broader initiative under the ABC Consult umbrella.

- Curriculum innovation continues through new specializations, including Future Church and Indigenous Studies, as well as exploration of combined pathways pairing theological education with practical vocational training through community college partnerships.
- Appreciation was expressed for the ongoing collaboration and support provided by University administration, along with optimism about Acadia's future strengths as a smaller, community-focused institution.

Acadia Students' Union (ASU) – Y. Jawad

Y. Jawad provided an update:

- Canada Student Grants will remain at elevated levels for the 2026-2027 academic year, avoiding previously anticipated reductions which will positively impact post-secondary students across the country.
- International students will no longer be required to obtain separate co-op work permits, reducing barriers to experiential learning opportunities.
- Federal funding for French-language research grants was protected for an additional three years following advocacy efforts.
- Provincially, the ASU continued its work through Students Nova Scotia, including mobilization efforts in response to proposed reductions in post-secondary funding.
- The ASU hosted the Students Nova Scotia Transitions Conference in Wolfville, bringing together student leaders from institutions across the province.
- On campus, the ASU revived its Awards Night for the first time since the pandemic, recognizing student leadership and outstanding faculty contributions while fostering stronger campus connections.
- It was reported that the ASU Food Cupboard secured government funding through the Feeding Communities Fund to continue supporting students experiencing food insecurity.
- The ASU supported the organization of a Student Budget Town Hall, providing opportunities for students to engage directly with University leadership and discuss institutional finances.
- The ASU was named Association of the Year by the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations.
- Zahide Cam and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee received recognition for Committee leadership and work in EDI.
- The ASU team is currently focused on transitioning the incoming student leaders and supporting continuity of ongoing initiatives and advocacy work.

A comment was made commending the ASU team for their active presence, leadership, and strong student advocacy throughout the year.

Acadia Alumni Association (AAA) – C. Luckasavitch

C. Luckasavitch provided an update:

- Congratulations were extended to the ASU Executive team, particularly Y. Jawad, for their leadership and advocacy work throughout the year.
- Governors were reminded of the Alumni Awards Gala taking place that evening, celebrating the Acadia community and Alumni achievements.
- The Alumni Association is currently focused on year-end governance and nominating work, including appointments to both the Alumni Board and the Board of Governors.
- At the upcoming virtual AGM on May 6, C. Luckasavitch will transition to the Past President role, P. Black will become President, and a new Vice President will be appointed.
- Members of the university community were encouraged to attend the AGM, which is an important point in the annual cycle of Alumni Association governance.
- The next Alumni Board meeting and retreat will take place May 23–24 and will focus on onboarding new Board members and establishing annual priorities and work plans.
- The Alumni Association continues to prioritize student support, campus engagement, equity and diversity initiatives, and alignment with broader university priorities.
- Appreciation was expressed for the continued partnership between the Alumni Association and the university community.

12. Other Business

N. Handrigan announced that T. Biskop will be joining the External Relations office for five months to assist during a maternity leave replacement. Enthusiasm was expressed for the appointment, noting the value of her experience, energy, and student perspective in supporting alumni and donor relations work.

The Chair called for a motion to move to Closed Session

IT WAS MOVED by M. Adam / N. Kennedy

THAT the meeting move into Closed Session.

CARRIED.

Management left the meeting, and the Board continued in Closed Session.

13. Adjournment

The meeting continued in Closed Session until it was adjourned.

Henry Demone, Chair

Sonya Pineo, Recording Secretary