



# Meeting of the Board of Governors

## February 12, 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 Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 9:00 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), Allan MacDonald, Andrew Davis, Bethany Moffatt, Cameron MacKeen, Candy O'Connor, Cathy Simpson, Charles Coll, Christine Luckasavitch, Dr. Anna Robbins, Dr. Jeff Banks, Ed Barrett, Gale Colpitts, Karen Hutt, Mark Adam, Martin Suter, Nancy McCain, Nastasya Kennedy, Paul Black, Rev. Dr. Dan Green, Rev. Judith R. Tod, Robert McGregor, Ross Langley, Shanna Lespere, Stan Thomas, Tim Formuziewich, and Tracey McGillivray

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

Regrets: Clive Anderson, Cora Tolliver, Melinda Daye, Tove Biskop, Yas Jawad, and Shelley Fleckenstein

### **1. Call to Order**

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

Rev. Dr. Dan Green opened the meeting with a prayer.

### **2. Approval of Meeting Agenda**

The Chair noted an amendment to the agenda. The FARC report was not included in the Consent Agenda package and would be provided verbally by B. Moffatt following the President's Report.

**IT WAS MOVED** by E. Barrett / T. McGillivray

**THAT the Meeting Agenda be approved as amended.**

**CARRIED.**

**3. Approval of Consent Agenda**

**IT WAS MOVED** by E. Barrett / P. Black

**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 C. Coll / E. Barrett

**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 M. Suter / S. Lespere

**THAT the meeting return to Open Session**

**CARRIED.**

**5. Finance, Audit & Risk Committee Report**

B. Moffatt provided a report:

- FARC is meeting regularly, including a meeting yesterday, with plans to meet again in March.
- A significant amount of budget-related work is underway.
- Considerable Budget work still remains, while efforts are progressing steadily.
- E. Beaudin will present the Q2 report. The Q3 report was not yet ready.
- The Committee is highly engaged and is working closely with SLT.
- There is a challenging road ahead, but confidence was expressed in the team and pride in the work completed so far.
- The enabling motion will allow Acadia to operate without an approved Budget for approximately one month.

A conversation took place.

A concern was raised about the impact of the Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program (VRIP) on faculty capacity and whether departed positions would be backfilled amid the hiring freeze.

Although there will be no new tenure-track hiring, units have been engaged in an ongoing process to request replacements through PCA (Per Course Appointments) and CLT (Contract

Limited Term) positions. A nearly final list of approved positions is expected to be shared with Heads and Directors soon. Units significantly affected by retirements have been receiving targeted, one-on-one support.

## **6. Update on Schedule H**

A. Cunsolo provided an update on Schedule H.

- There has been significant recent movement on Schedule H from Government since the last Board meeting.
- The government has issued a new 150-page academic program review guide with new components and deadlines.
- The process is organized into five work streams, with initial program categorization submitted on January 30 and current work focused on costing and narrative reporting.
- Since December, the government has introduced 9 new templates requiring analysis of enrolment trends, labour market alignment, and program quality.
- Programs are being categorized into modernization, revitalization, rationalization, or no change, and institutions may also propose new strategic programs.
- A detailed program costing methodology is required at the course, section, and student level, and this work must be completed before narrative reports.
- Acadia has seventy-three distinct programs that will require substantial narrative analysis explaining program direction and rationale.
- A major submission deadline is May 30, followed by strategic submissions in August and a final comprehensive report due October 15, 2026, with a February 15 deadline for potential ministerial follow-up.
- These requirements are in addition to regular bilateral reporting and represent a significant institutional workload.
- The recently provided roadmap has improved clarity on expectations and timelines.

Deep appreciation was expressed for Dr. Cunsolo's enthusiasm and steady leadership through the process.

A question was raised about whether, beyond course-by-course costing, there will be an institution-wide review to ensure Acadia maintains coherent and attractive programs, rather than focusing only on whether individual courses make money.

A later phase of the process focuses exactly on this, using the detailed data to present an overall institutional strategy. The government expects universities to identify priorities, recognize that some programs will be loss leaders, and demonstrate how their overall mix of offerings remains strategic, sustainable, and aligned with their institutional identity.

A question was raised about whether using actual salaries in program costing, rather than averages, could skew results based on faculty demographics, such as units with many senior professors nearing retirement.

While actual salaries must be used, institutions can flag and explain these situations in the narrative sections, including expected retirements and demographic shifts. Although the province declined to switch to average salaries, there is room to provide context, and the seven-year trend analysis also helps show how costs and staffing profiles change over time.

A question was raised about whether this review and costing exercise applies to the Divinity College.

It was confirmed that it does, and that its unique relationship and programming are being considered carefully in how they are costed and described.

Concerns were raised about protecting Acadia's Liberal Arts identity, even when some programs may not fit neatly onto labour market categories.

The university is actively advocating for the value of Liberal Arts, highlighting leadership, adaptability, and broad career pathways.

A comment was made suggesting that, in an AI-driven world, skills developed through the humanities, such as ethics, empathy, critical thinking, and reasoning, may become even more valuable, and that this could inform the university's future positioning.

It was noted that these discussions are actively underway, including how AI intersects with programs

## **7. *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.

## **8. *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:

- Three teams (both basketball teams and the hockey team) have qualified for playoffs and are performing well in the standings, with several exciting games ahead.
- The Dayforce system was successfully implemented, including the transition to bi-weekly payroll for faculty; this was a significant effort for HR but is expected to improve payroll accuracy and create efficiencies.
- The project team is now moving on to implement InfoSilem Campus to improve scheduling capabilities, with implementation targeted for summer.
- Progress has been made on data dashboards, including employee dashboards in Dayforce and new dashboards for enrolment, retention, and tuition revenue; further dashboard development is planned.
- With the departure of Nick Sharpe, Events has moved under Athletics with Brian Finniss

and Kim Wallace, early efficiencies have been noted and a business case for future direction in development.

- The progressive design-build for the Nursing building has been awarded, with an opening targeted for late 2027 or spring 2028.
- Student Union Building demolition is progressing, with phase one well underway and phase two scheduled to begin in April.
- The budget process began earlier this year with improved data and processes, resulting in a more developed draft budget for FARC's review.
- An Enabling Motion could allow operations into April if needed, though there remains a goal of achieving budget approval in March.
- The Q2 report has been shared, Q3 is in progress, and efforts to manage costs and improve financial performance are continuing.

### **9. 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:

- A new Director of Enrolment Services, Nicole Druken, has been hired and is working out extremely well.
- Recruiters are back out on the road across the country.
- Experience Acadia Day has been expanded to a two-day, more experiential format, including participation from Grade 11 students.
- The March 1 scholarship deadline is approaching, after which efforts will focus on converting applicants, supported by a newly developed admissions package.
- Faculty collaboration continues on new opportunities, including plans to market a Master's in Computer Science internationally.
- International recruitment is showing positive movement, supported by in-market recruiters in Africa and Asia, though evolving federal regulations are creating further uncertainty and affecting student confirmation timelines.
- Work is underway to launch the One-Stop Shop in the BAC by the end of term.
- The Enrolment Team expressed strong enthusiasm about academic program renewal efforts, noting that reinvigorated programming will support recruitment and market positioning.

A question was raised about whether the university tracks the percentage of out-of-province students who are varsity athletes, and whether athletics is a significant driver of out-of-province enrollment.

This specific data is not currently available, but discussions are underway to collaborate more

closely with Athletics to better understand recruitment patterns, such as whether certain regions disproportionately send student-athletes, and to adjust recruitment strategies accordingly.

### **10. 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:

- The latest issue of The Bulletin magazine was distributed before the holidays, featuring Dr. Cunsolo and the Academic Programming and Schedule H work.
- A successful Halifax Holiday Reception was held at Ashburn Golf Course, with strong attendance and positive feedback.
- Giving Tuesday in support of the ASU Food Cupboard raised over \$10,000 and more than 1,000 food items, marking a record year.
- A year-end appeal supporting women in sport was completed.
- The Alumni Awards celebration will take place April 24 at Festival Theatre in Wolfville, with all awards presented at a single redesigned event.
- The Alumni Association recently held its full Board meeting and continues to show strong engagement and support.
- Work is underway on a new initiative to more prominently profile Acadia Alumni and strengthen connections between alumni and current students through mentorship and engagement.
- Significant effort is being directed toward reviewing and cleaning up Special Reserve accounts and long-standing funds to support future budget planning.
- The 2025 tax year closed and was the most successful fundraising year in Acadia's history, exceeding the annual goal.

Praise was extended to N. Handrigan and Chancellor McCain on the incredibly successful fundraising year.

### ***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 / M. Suter

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

***CARRIED.***

## **11. Senate Update**

President Hennessy provided an update on Senate.

## **12. Update from the Presidents**

### ***Acadia Divinity College (ADC) –A. Robbins***

A. Robbins provided an update:

- The Divinity College reported its strongest intake in recent memory, with a total headcount of 240 students, driven by growth in the Master of Divinity and a new counselling program.
- The largest recent cohort of international students will graduate.
- this year and plans to shift recruitment toward international students already in Canada.
- Financially, Divinity College expects to finish the year with a small surplus, supported significantly by donors and community supporters.
- Curriculum renewal is underway, including revisions to the Bachelor of Theology and ongoing changes to the Master of Divinity. The focus is shifting toward formation, application, and flexibility in response to changes in higher education and the rise of AI.
- Alternative assessments and innovative uses of AI are being explored as part of academic renewal.
- A move to per-credit tuition is planned to better align costs for part-time students, alongside a restructuring of bursary funds to provide more consistent student support.
- Work continues to advance the strategic vision, with formation as a central theme this year.

A comment was made recognizing Dr. Robbins as a tremendous asset to the University, noting her reputation as a forward-thinking thought leader nationally and in the U.S.

### ***Acadia Students' Union (ASU) – Y. Jawad***

No update.

### ***Acadia Alumni Association (AAA) – P. Black***

It was noted that C. Luckasavitch had to leave the meeting early.

P. Black provided an update in C. Luckasavitch's absence:

- Links to the Alumni Awards were shared, with upcoming nomination deadlines of February 28 for Outstanding University Service and March 15 for Student of the Year.
- The former Alumni Dinner has been redesigned as an Awards Night in Wolfville, focused on celebration rather than a sit-down dinner, and scheduled to coincide with the next in-person Board meeting. Governors were encouraged to attend.
- The Alumni Association Board recently approved its annual budget and has directed continued support toward External Relations and broader university priorities where capacity and strategic alignment permit.

- The Alumni Association AGM will take place virtually on May 6, with further details to be circulated.
- Following the AGM and reconstitution of the board, attention will turn to anticipated university Board restructuring, including planning for potential changes in board size and appointments to ensure an orderly transition.

A question was raised about how Board members can support the upcoming Alumni Awards event, particularly given that tables are no longer being sold.

Governors can attend by purchasing tickets and may also sponsor student tickets for those who wish to participate. A sponsorship package is being developed to reflect the new event format.

A suggestion was made that a direct email be sent to the Board with clear links to purchase tickets and support student attendance, making participation easier.

A suggestion was made about exploring transportation options from Halifax to encourage greater alumni attendance.

### **13. Other Business**

There was no further business.

The Chair called for a motion to move to Closed Session

**IT WAS MOVED** by C. Coll / T. McGillivray

**THAT the meeting move into Closed Session.**

**CARRIED.**

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

### **14. Adjournment**

The meeting continued in Closed Session until it was adjourned.

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**Henry Demone, Chair**

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**Sonya Pineo, Recording Secretary**