



Meeting of the Board of Governors

June 19, 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, June 19, 2026, at 10 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, Cathy Simpson, Rev. Dr. Dan Green, Ed Barrett, Emma Boles, Gale Colpitts, Dr. Jeff Banks, Rev. Judith R. Tod, Mark Adam, Martin Suter, Nancy McCain, Nastasya Kennedy, Paul Black, Payton Wood, Robert McGregor, Ross Langley, Shanna Lespere, Shelley Fleckenstein, Stan Thomas, Tracey McGillivray, and Treyvon Nichols.

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

Regrets: Clive Anderson, Cora Tolliver, Karen Hutt, and Tim Formuziewich.

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 new Board members, Emma Boles, President of the Acadia Students Union and Treyvon Nichols, Acadia Student Union VP Finance & Operations, and Payton Wood, Alumni Association Vice-President. He also welcomed Paul Black to his first meeting in his new role as the Acadia Alumni Association President.

The Board Chair noted that this was Mark Adam's final Board of Governors meeting and thanked him for his valuable contributions.

Rev. Dr. Anna Robbins opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda

IT WAS MOVED by M. Suter / S. Fleckenstein

THAT the Meeting Agenda be approved as amended.

CARRIED.

3. Approval of Consent Agenda

IT WAS MOVED by D. Green / C. Coll

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 M. Suter / E. Boles

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 T. Nichols / P. Black

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:

- The Tick Research Centre continues to expand, with significant research funding secured, growing national and international recognition, and increasing collaborations and grant activity across related research areas.
- Recent investments in research grant support have resulted in increased funding success, including the allocation of an additional Tier 2 Canada Research Chair and the renewal of an existing Tier 1 Canada Research Chair.
- The Health and Wellness Institute was reported to be progressing well, now comprising more than 30 members, establishing a partnership with Université Sainte-Anne, and signing a Memorandum of Agreement with Nova Scotia Health to establish a formal partnership.
- Preparations are in place to support continuity during Z. Whitman's upcoming parental leave, with transition plans and campus partners in place to ensure Indigenous initiatives continue without disruption.
- The work led by L. Chondoma with the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent at the United Nations in Geneva was highlighted, with many participating students having been offered employment as a result of the experience.

A comment was made that the restructuring process is already fostering positive interdisciplinary collaboration, with work underway on a new multidisciplinary degree.

A question was raised about whether financial viability is being considered in the evaluation of new academic initiatives.

It was confirmed that financial feasibility is a key consideration and is required as part of the Schedule H submissions.

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:

- Significant progress has been made in strengthening budgeting, financial reporting, and decision-making processes following a period of staff turnover within the Finance portfolio.
- Further work is underway to enhance financial reporting, improve data quality and dashboard capabilities, and strengthen the financial oversight of ancillary services through business case reviews and the recruitment of additional support.
- The University's ancillary services team received a national award recognizing excellence in nutrition services.
- The University's new Discrimination Policy has been implemented, with supporting procedures now in place and initial cases being addressed under the new framework.
- Appreciation was expressed to Board members and staff for their patience and support throughout the Finance team's transition and ongoing improvements.

B. Moffatt provided an overview of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee's annual work, noting that it includes approximately 40 recurring oversight activities, including financial reporting, policy oversight, risk management, and whistleblower reporting. Most work plan items are on track, with ongoing priorities including implementation of the University's risk management framework, continued development of risk reporting to the Board, cybersecurity oversight, and an upcoming insurance review. She thanked FARC for their diligence and collaborative approach.

A question was raised about whether regular updates are being provided on AI and cybersecurity.

Cybersecurity is monitored regularly and has improved significantly in recent years, while AI-related risks and policies remain a high priority and are continuing to be developed.

E. Beaudin provided a presentation on the audited financial statements for 2026-2026:

- One-time restructuring and workforce adjustment costs had a significant impact on

the year-end results but were noted as necessary to support the University's long-term financial sustainability.

- Variances from budget were attributed primarily to tuition revenue timing, enrolment-related factors, and accounting adjustments, with offsetting gains from previously unrecognized revenues.
- The debt service ratio remains a key area of focus and will continue to be closely monitored to ensure compliance with lender requirements.
- Cash flow projections indicate that the University is expected to remain cash positive in the near term, although continued attention to financial performance and cash management will be required.

A question was raised about the number of long-standing financial items that had been uncovered and whether additional surprises remained.

Most historical issues have now been identified and addressed, with only a few items remaining, the University is nearing completion of the cleanup process.

The Chair called for a motion.

IT WAS MOVED by B. Moffatt / M. Suter

THAT the Board of Governors accept FARC's recommendations to approve the audited financial statements for 2025-26.

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:

- Current enrolment indicators remain positive, with applications, deposits, and international enrolment tracking closely with the previous year.
- Residence occupancy remains a priority, with additional initiatives underway to increase residence enrolment and meet provincial targets.
- A long-term enrolment strategy is being implemented, emphasizing earlier engagement with prospective students, families, schools, alumni, and community partners, while strengthening recruitment and communications.
- Institutional priorities include refreshing undergraduate programming, enhancing industry and community partnerships, improving the University's digital presence, and fostering a stronger campus culture.

- Student retention and progression remain key priorities, with proposed organizational changes intended to strengthen collaboration across the student experience and academic portfolios.
- Planning continues for the launch of the OneStop Shop for the fall term, alongside the development of a campus-wide mental health plan informed by an external review.

A question was raised about whether there would be sufficient time to train staff and identify issues before the OneStop Shop launches.

The focus over the coming months will be on training and testing, with an intentionally limited initial scope to ensure core services are delivered effectively using existing systems.

A question was raised about how Academic Restructuring would be communicated to prospective students during the recruitment process.

Students will enter existing programs while new programs will be introduced as they are approved, with recruitment messaging evolving accordingly.

A question was raised about how academic advising would be communicated and supported as the new academic structure is implemented.

Advising will remain connected to academic programs, while the OneStop Shop will provide an additional layer of support by helping students navigate processes and connect with the appropriate Academic Advisors.

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:

- A successful Alumni Awards celebration was held in a new awards-style format, and Board members were encouraged to nominate deserving alumni, faculty, staff, and students for future awards.
- Updates were provided on upcoming alumni engagement events, including Alumni Reunion Weekend and the annual golf tournament.
- An overview of the University's estate giving program highlighted the significant contribution of planned gifts to student financial aid, the area of greatest need, and the University's long-term financial sustainability.
- Efforts continue to encourage planned giving through the 1838 Society, with new legacy commitments strengthening the University's future philanthropic support.

A question was raised about preferred wording for charitable bequests.

More general designations provide the university with greater flexibility to address future

priorities. Donors may also choose to support existing funds or specific purposes if they wish.

Named Funds and Spaces

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

T. McGillivray noted that the proposed new named awards represent significant support for students, including a major new Nursing award and two Athletic awards, reflecting strong donor confidence in the university. Appreciation was expressed to the External Relations team for securing these gifts.

IT WAS MOVED by T. McGillivray / M. Adam

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

CARRIED.

9. Senate Update

T. McGillivray reported on the Senate meeting held the previous day, where the Academic Restructuring Proposal was approved by a two-thirds majority following extensive debate and consultation. It was noted that the meeting reflected strong engagement and a fair, transparent process. Appreciation was expressed for the leadership of the Senate Chair in guiding the proceedings and ensuring procedural integrity throughout the meeting.

S. Fleckenstein expressed appreciation for the thoughtful contributions made during the Senate debate and for the significant efforts of the Senior Leadership team in guiding the academic restructuring process.

10. Update from the Presidents

Acadia Divinity College (ADC) –A. Robbins

A. Robbins provided an update:

- Divinity College is implementing a new tuition structure to provide more equitable support for students while increasing curriculum flexibility.
- The Divinity College Board approved allocating one percent of its operating budget to support Indigenous education and initiatives responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
- Planning continues for an outdoor learning space designed to support teaching, gathering, and cultural programming while strengthening connections between the Divinity College and the broader Acadia campus.
- Recent recognition included national awards for Divinity College's magazine and video communications.
- Appreciation was expressed to the University's Senior Leadership team for its

ongoing support and collaboration with the Acadia Divinity College.

Acadia Students' Union (ASU) – E. Boles

E. Boles provided an update:

- ASU Executives recently returned from the Maritime Student Congress, where discussions focused on strategic planning and the future direction of regional student advocacy, including changes to student advocacy in New Brunswick.
- ASU VP Events & Promotions, Danika Pitre was appointed to the Board of Students Nova Scotia.
- Emma Boles and Lily Rich, VP Academic & External, will represent Acadia at the upcoming CASA Policy and Strategy Conference to help shape national advocacy priorities.
- The first Student Life Committee meeting was held. Appreciation was expressed to T. Biskop her work in re-establishing the committee.
- The Students' Union has secured office space in Willett and expects to relocate from 55 University in the near future.
- Five student consultation sessions were held on the Academic Restructuring Proposal, and appreciation was expressed to Senior Leadership for incorporating student feedback into the final proposal.
- A review of Students' Union Bylaws and Senate representation is underway, with the goal of strengthening student representation in Senate.
- A Student Experience Survey has been launched to inform the Students' Union's institutional, municipal, provincial, and federal advocacy priorities.
- Planning is underway to expand student engagement and campus programming, including enhanced Welcome Week activities, Homecoming programming, and the development of additional student events throughout the academic year in collaboration with community partners and the Town of Wolfville.

Appreciation was expressed for the exceptional engagement and leadership demonstrated by the ASU executive team, particularly their contributions to the academic restructuring process.

Acadia Alumni Association (AAA) – P. Black

P. Black provided an update:

- The Alumni Association held its Annual General Meeting and Alumni Board Retreat.
- The Alumni Board Retreat included presentations on the Academic Restructuring Proposal, with members expressing confidence in the thoroughness and integrity of

the consultation process and subsequently providing a letter of support for the process.

- The Alumni Board continues to review how best to utilize its reserve funds to support strategic University priorities while ensuring long-term sustainability.
- The Alumni Association reaffirmed its commitment to supporting University initiatives, including matching donations to the Spring Appeal.
- Appreciation was expressed to the External Relations and Alumni Relations staff for their ongoing support of the Alumni Association's work.

Appreciation was expressed for the Acadia Alumni Association's impactful letter supporting the academic restructuring proposal.

11. Other Business

A discussion took place regarding the next steps following Senate's approval of the Academic Restructuring Proposal, and it was agreed that a Special Meeting of the Board of Governors would be convened shortly to consider the proposal.

The Chair called for a motion to move to Closed Session

IT WAS MOVED by M. Suter / C. Simpson

THAT the meeting move into Closed Session.

CARRIED.

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

12. Adjournment

The meeting continued in Closed Session until it was adjourned.

Henry Demone, Chair

Sonya Pineo, Recording Secretary