



## Meeting of the Board of Governors

October 16, 2025 – 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, October 16, 2025, at 9:00 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, 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, Nastasya Kennedy, Pam Mood, Paul Black, Rev. Dr. Dan Green, Rev. Judith R. Tod, Robert McGregor, Shanna Lespere, Shelley Fleckenstein, Stan Thomas, Tim Formuziewich, Tracey McGillivray, Tove Biskop, Yas Jawad

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

Regrets: Dr. Andrew Davis, Clive Anderson, Ross Langley, and Melinda Daye

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

H. Demone, Board Chair, was unable to attend the meeting in person and attended virtually; therefore, B. Frizzell, First Vice-Chair, Chaired the meeting.

B. Frizzell called the meeting to order, welcomed meeting participants, and provided a territorial acknowledgment.

Dr. A. 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 T. McGillivray / J. Banks

**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 S. Fleckenstein / C. Coll

**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 C. Luckasavitch / S. Fleckenstein

**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 highlights:

- The new Nursing curriculum is scheduled to launch in Fall 2026 and has been approved by the Senate Ad Hoc Committee, with MPHEC documents ready and final Senate approval anticipated by December.
- Developed in partnership with Tajiikeimik, the program is the first in the province to integrate Indigenous health collaboration from the outset and incorporates national and international best practices.
- It is the only nursing program in Nova Scotia with a pediatric focus and also emphasizes mental health and rural health care.
- The program team is highly regarded, and both government and accrediting bodies remain actively engaged and supportive.
- The initiative is generating strong momentum on campus and positioning Acadia as a leader in health and wellness education.
- The Health and Wellness Institute continues to advance, with partnership grants, new research activity, and a growing culture of health-focused collaboration and innovation.
- K. Ashley is leading a major policy renewal initiative, including a new "Policy on Policies" framework and a nearly complete centralized policy website.

A conversation took place.

A question was raised regarding the potential challenges in finding clinical placements given

Acadia's rural setting and limited proximity to hospitals.

When the program first began, placements were more challenging to secure; however, new opportunities have since emerged across the Valley and throughout the province. Students are now completing placements in a variety of locations, and the program has developed new partnerships that did not previously exist.

A question was raised about maintaining diversity in the nursing program.

While progress has been made, the goal of 50 percent representation has not yet been achieved. The Recruitment team, along with L. Chondoma and Z. Whitman, are working closely with the Mi'kmaw Health Authority and community partners to increase awareness, provide support, and attract a more diverse group of students.

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

A. Cunsolo provided an update on Schedule H.

- Schedule H is a large and complex process, forming part of the Bilateral Agreement with Government that requires all universities to review and categorize every academic program.
- The review is organized into three categories: Program Modernization, Program Revitalization, and Program Rationalization, which may include reducing or discontinuing programs.
- Two additional categories have since been added for new programs recently approved by MPHEC and for programs recently reviewed through quality assurance.
- Two major deadlines are in place: February 15, 2026, for detailed data submission, including complement and cost per program, and October 15, 2026, for a full written review of all programs.
- Engagement activities have included six student sessions, two major Town Halls, and multiple meetings with faculties and department heads.
- Bi-weekly meetings are being held to address questions and concerns and to support collaboration across units.
- Two excellent Moodle resources have been created for faculty
- A labour market survey is underway to align program outcomes with emerging workforce needs.
- A campus-wide ideas survey invited faculty input on new programs, restructuring options, and ways to build on existing strengths.
- Approximately one-quarter of the 27 scheduled meetings with Heads and Directors have been completed, fostering open and sometimes difficult but constructive conversations.
- An academic strategic planning retreat is planned for December to align Schedule H work with long-term institutional priorities.

- Senate Committees are heavily engaged in aligning policy and curriculum processes with Schedule H requirements, including defining clear program outcomes.
- The February data report will inform the next phase of work, leading to final program decisions and documentation by May 2026.
- Work continues on developing innovative new programs that reflect Acadia's expertise, as well as exploring embedded certificates and potential program closures where appropriate.
- Although Schedule H is government-regulated, Acadia is establishing its ability to shape its own future within the framework.
- The university is being recognized provincially for its leadership, with Government asking other institutions to consult Acadia on its approach.
- The workload is significant, but the process is viewed as an unprecedented opportunity for transformation and renewal.

A conversation took place.

Appreciation was expressed to Dr. Cunsolo for her comprehensive report.

A question was raised about how conversations with other Nova Scotia universities are unfolding regarding program closures, and whether programs might be maintained at one institution if they are closed at another.

While no decisions have been made, universities in Nova Scotia are actively discussing coordinated approaches to program delivery, including the possibility of shared or joint offerings for critical programs to avoid province-wide loss.

## **7. *Financial Sustainability Plan***

The Financial Sustainability Plan was circulated prior to the meeting.

J. Hennessy provided an update:

- The work on the Financial Sustainability Plan was outsourced to an external consulting firm on the recommendation of FARC, due to limited internal staffing capacity and overlapping priorities such as bargaining and staff turnover.
- This represents the first phase of a broader financial plan, with Schedule H work to be included in a later phase and leadership recommendations already underway.
- The consultant analyzed expenses and revenues and provided recommendations for cost containment and revenue generation.
- The next step is to develop a detailed action plan with timelines, projections, and multi-year budgeting.
- The staff hiring freeze remains in effect and, while difficult, is achieving savings; reductions in part-time and contract positions are also being implemented.
- There has been strong uptake on the retirement incentive program, which will contribute

to future savings.

- The province uses six financial indicators to assess institutional stability; Acadia met one last year and is expected to meet an additional one this year, with further analysis underway on two more.
- A financial health plan will be submitted to the province to demonstrate Acadia's path to long-term stability.
- A comprehensive Financial Sustainability Plan will be brought forward within the next two years, outlining concrete steps for stability and growth.

A conversation took place.

A suggestion was made to include a category for parked or deferred opportunities in the report, to ensure valuable ideas aren't lost and can be revisited as circumstances change.

It was confirmed that policies are in place to support inventorying such opportunities.

## **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:

- The Q1 financial report was included in the meeting package, with Q2 reporting now underway and a return to regular quarterly reporting.
- Efforts continue to improve report content and clarity, with FARC requesting consistent quarterly updates going forward.
- President Hennessy provided clear direction on maintaining budget discipline; when a shortfall was anticipated, all areas implemented a 5% budget reduction, which is reflected in the Q1 results.
- Q2 results will offer a clearer picture of actual year-to-date performance.
- Work continues on land and leasing opportunities identified in the report, including collaboration with the Town of Wolfville through the Housing Accelerator Program, where Acadia now has its own chapter within the municipal planning framework.
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) payments have now surpassed paper cheques for the first time, a small but important operational improvement.
- The Dayforce payroll and HR system remains on track for a January 1 launch; while some transition challenges are expected, enhanced functionality will bring significant efficiencies.
- It is a busy season for athletics, with strong performances across teams and the Women's Rugby team advancing to the Championship Game.
- Discussions continue about Bishop's University's potential withdrawal from the league,

which could yield future cost savings.

- A. Doyle has joined as Enterprise Risk Manager, bringing renewed focus to risk management and environmental sustainability initiatives.

A Conversation took place.

A comment was made about rethinking the use of campus residences in light of deferred maintenance funding, suggesting that while traditionally viewed as student-only spaces, there may be opportunities to approach them differently to support revenue and infrastructure goals.

The University plans to review the residence program to modernize buildings and improve financial sustainability.

A question was raised about whether the university markets residence rooms to commuting students who may need occasional overnight stays due to weather or scheduling.

While commuting students can occasionally be accommodated overnight if needed, the university does not actively market residence rooms for short-term stays. Residences are more heavily used for short-term stays during the summer.

## **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 presented an update and highlights:

- The recruitment team is already in mid-season and actively promoting Acadia with a refreshed brand and redesigned materials.
- All field materials, including the admissions package, now reflect the new brand and present a more professional, high-impact presence at fairs and tours.
- Departments have collaborated to produce program-specific guides that go deeper on courses, outcomes, and student pathways.
- Early application volume is significantly ahead of prior years' applications to date and around 60 confirmations at this early stage.
- International Recruitment continues to face difficulties due to federal Visa restrictions, so markets, price points, program mix, and residence guarantees are being re-evaluated through the Enrollment and Marketing Committee.
- One-Stop-Shop (OSS) Level 1 is nearing launch to deliver a unified, student-centered service experience and reduce friction points across advising and onboarding.
- The university has been making targeted cuts to protect financial sustainability while maintaining domestic enrolment levels.

A comment was made praising the new marketing materials, particularly the effective use of colours.

It was noted that the use of the specific colours was intentional, drawn from the local Valley landscape as part of the brand renewal strategy.

A question was raised regarding whether there has been any uptake from the U.S. market.

Efforts in the U.S. market have increased significantly this fall, with a dedicated recruiter active in several regions.

A question was raised about whether there is any potential change in the international student situation.

International recruitment remains challenging, but evolving international partnerships may help rebuild the relationships over time.

## **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 External Relations team remains highly active, continuing to engage with alumni and donors while advancing new fundraising priorities.
- With the Student Centre Campaign nearing completion, the next phase will focus on expanding scholarships and financial aid to strengthen long-term student support.
- Work is underway to review the endowment portfolio and identify ways to maximize its impact, with recommendations to be brought to the Investment Committee at an upcoming meeting.
- Recent major gifts have positioned Acadia to surpass its annual fundraising target, marking one of the most successful years in recent memory.
- Additional donor commitments are in progress, including support for the tick research initiative and other on-campus projects.
- The team is in its annual reporting cycle, preparing donor correspondence and distributing the Giving Report, which recently earned a national award for excellence in communications.
- Alumni engagement efforts are being refocused to align with reduced staffing and travel, emphasizing new, more efficient ways to connect with graduates.
- The Alumni Awards event will be held on April 24, 2026, with a refreshed format and renewed emphasis on celebrating community impact.
- The Story Campaign for recent graduates received an enthusiastic response, with more than 200 heartfelt responses reflecting Acadia's positive influence; these stories will be featured in future marketing initiatives.
- It's Homecoming weekend! Governors attending on Saturday were invited to collect all-access passes for campus events, including the football game, BBQ, and Sports Hall of Fame celebrations.

A question was raised about whether the Alumni testimonials are currently being shared online.

They are not public yet. The team is working to select and present them strategically. Alumni are the most valuable ambassadors and are eager to support the university.

### ***Named Funds and Spaces***

The Named Funds and Spaces document was circulated to Governors.

N. Handrigan reported that the Named Funds and Spaces document was removed from the Consent Agenda to ensure clarity. Formerly called the Terms of Reference, the updated document now includes both scholarships and physical spaces. Recent updates include the re-establishment of the Eddy Garron Award (funded by Jim Mills), the Walter Eisner Memorial Award (revived by a 2006 graduate), and an amendment converting the former swimming award into a general bursary.

She noted new naming recognitions connected to the Student Centre: the McNeill Commons, the main common area donated by Janice McNeill, and the Clark Community Kitchen, supported by John Clark (Class of '52) through the J.T. Clark Family Foundation. All naming requests were reviewed by the External Relations office and brought forward for Board approval.

***IT WAS MOVED*** by T. McGillivray / D. Green

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

***CARRIED.***

A comment was made noting that the Walter Isenor Memorial Award was very meaningful, as he was a beloved and well-respected professor.

### ***11. Senate Update***

S. Fleckenstein reported that on September 15, Acadia's stand-alone School of Counselling was launched. Significant progress continues on policy development and process renewal, led by Kate Ashley and her team. Extensive work is underway in preparation for Schedule H, which remains the University's most urgent and wide-reaching academic priority and the focus of many ongoing campus discussions.

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

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

A. Robbins provided an update:

- The Acadia Divinity College continues to advance its Strategic Vision of Faith, Shape, and Future, showing strong progress across its four priorities.
- Two new faculty members have joined, one specializing in Church Leadership and the

other in Preaching.

- The Bachelor of Theology program is thriving, with enrollment growth and renewed integration of formation and mentored ministry experiences.
- Achieved higher-than-expected enrollment this year, exceeding last year's numbers and indicating strong interest in programs.
- Ongoing work in pedagogical innovation and AI engagement continues, including tools that help faculty design creative assessments and integrate new teaching techniques.
- Micro-credential and continuing education initiatives are expanding, including a new collaboration under exploration with NSCC that could link Theological Study with trades training, allowing students to earn both a certificate and a degree.
- Board-level work on decolonization has begun, with a focus on developing sustainable approaches to reconciliation and increased access to education for Indigenous learners.
- Faculty are actively engaging in ethical and transparent use of AI in teaching and research, helping to position the School as a national leader in theological innovation.
- The Divinity College has gained national visibility through podcasts, CBC coverage, and leadership roles in national forums.
- A new institutional video now highlights the story, vision, and innovation efforts; the link has been shared and is highly recommended viewing.

### ***Acadia Students' Union (ASU) – T. Biskop provided an update for Y. Jawad***

T. Biskop provided an update:

- The ASU Executive team has been working hard both internally and externally, with several projects nearing completion.
- The Advocacy Team, including Z. Cam and Y. Jawad, will represent Acadia students at Nova Scotia Provincial Advocacy Week in Halifax and at the CASA Federal Advocacy Conference in Ottawa in November, meeting with MLAs, ministers, and federal officials.
- The ASU held its first Student Representative Council (SRC) meeting in September, along with its first SRC training session in nearly a decade, to prepare new council members for their three-year terms.
- Homecoming (HOCO) events are in full swing, including the HOCO Bash outside the ASU building with free food trucks, a photo booth, and the launch of Access in Action fundraising initiative.
- The Access in Action socks are being sold during Homecoming, with proceeds supporting the food cupboard and student access programs.
- A collaboration with the Arts department produced student-designed T-shirts also supporting Access in Action.
- A glow-in-the-dark fundraising run is planned for early November to raise awareness about visibility and safety at night.
- The ASU is also partnering with S. Duguay's team to host a December 1 event in the K.C.

Irving Centre, continuing community engagement efforts.

- Overall, it has been a busy and productive start to the year, with balancing advocacy, event planning, and academic responsibilities.

A comment was made expressing strong appreciation and praise for the ASU Executive Team, noting that their work and leadership are very impressive.

### ***Acadia Alumni Association (AAA) – C. Luckasavitch***

C. Luckasavitch provided an update:

- October is Mi'kmaw History Month, and everyone was encouraged to take time to learn about the history of the lands we live on and explore the excellent resources available through the university library.
- Homecoming is this weekend, with celebrations for the Classes of 2020 and 2021, who will finally have the opportunity to cross the stage in person. A large turnout is expected for these long-awaited ceremonies.
- The Gold Reception for graduates of the last decade will take place on Friday, followed by the Takeover 2.0 Parade on Saturday, hosted by alumni from Barbados and Bermuda. The Backyard BBQ will take place after the parade.
- Because Reading Week coincides with Homecoming this year, the campus will be quieter than usual.
- The Board of Governors meeting will be held on Saturday. The Alumni Association and university leadership continue to collaborate closely to support Acadia and strengthen relationships with Alumni.
- Results from the recent Alumni Survey emphasized the importance of improving communication and engagement with Alumni, aligning with the goals of the Story Campaign now underway.
- The Alumni Association has moved into the implementation phase of its Strategic Direction, ensuring that its efforts complement the University's broader strategic goals.
- Nominations for the Distinguished Alumni Award are open until October 31, and members are encouraged to submit names of deserving candidates who have made outstanding contributions.
- The Alumni Association continues to support EDIAR initiatives on campus, reinforcing representation and inclusion across the community.
- Special thanks were extended to Oonagh Proudfoot, Melanie Jackson, and the Alumni Relations team for their exceptional work and ongoing dedication to strengthening alumni connections.

A question was raised about whether holding Homecoming during Reading Week is now standard practice and whether students can still meaningfully participate in the event.

The timing of Homecoming is driven by academic scheduling constraints and AUS athletics,

making it difficult to shift.

A suggestion was made to bring the conversation back to the Board for further discussion at the next meeting.

### **13. Governance Committee**

#### **Investment Committee Terms of Reference**

The amended Investment Committee Terms of Reference were circulated prior to today's meeting.

***IT WAS MOVED*** by J. Hennessy / M. Suter

**THAT the Board of Governors approve the Investment Committee Terms of Reference as distributed.**

***CARRIED.***

#### **Finance Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference**

The amended Finance Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference were circulated prior to today's meeting.

***IT WAS MOVED*** by J. Hennessy / K. Hutt

**THAT the Board of Governors approve the Finance Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference as distributed.**

***CARRIED.***

#### **Board-By-Laws**

The amended Board-By-Laws document was circulated prior to today's meeting.

***IT WAS MOVED*** by J. Hennessy / J. Banks

**THAT the Board of Governors approve the Board-By-Laws as distributed.**

***CARRIED.***

### **14. Other Business**

B. Frizzell encouraged Governors to complete the online feedback form, noting that the submitted responses to the June meeting were low.

A comment was made suggesting a discussion rather than submitting feedback electronically.

The Chair called for a motion to move to Closed Session

***IT WAS MOVED*** by C. Luckasavitch / M. Suter

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

**CARRIED.**

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

**15. Adjournment**

**IT WAS MOVED** by C. Luckasavitch

**THAT the meeting be adjourned.**

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***Bert Frizzell, First Vice-Chair***

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***Sonya Pineo, Recording Secretary***