



BOARD OF GOVERNORS MINUTES

Thursday, February 11, 2021, 2:00 – 6:00 p.m.

- Present:** Lynda Hawton Kitamura (Chair), Cameron Anderson, Mitchell Bergin, Ryan Brejak, Pam Bryden, Kathie Cameron, Savvas Chamberlain, Sharline Doss, Pegah Jamalof, Dave Jaworsky, Kristine Lund, Scott Lyons, Deb MacLatchy, Patricia McLaren, Shaun Miller, David Monod, Jim Phillips, Patricia Polischuk, Stephanie Ratza, Marc Richardson, Joe Rooney, Ken Seiling, Mark Straub, Cynthia Sundberg, Jillian Swartz, Berry Vrbanovic
- Regrets:** Mary-Louise Byrne, Deniza Januzi, Paul Kwasnik, Eileen Mercier, Karen Redman
- Secretariat:** Ana Juhik, Shannon Kelly, Anna Kornobis, Anne Lukin

A. Open Session

1. **Call to Order**, Lynda Hawton Kitamura
 - a. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest: None.
 - b. Movement of Consent Items to the Main Agenda
Motion (Scott Lyons/Jim Phillips): That the Board of Governors approve the Consent items listed for approval under Item C.1. Carried.

2. **Chair's Report**, Lynda Hawton Kitamura
The Chair welcomed new faculty Board member Pam Bryden; and the new VP Finance & Administration Lloyd Noronha. She expressed thanks on behalf of the Board to Tony Araujo who has served as interim VP. Leanne Hall has stepped down early from her LGIC appointment to the Board due to professional work demands during the pandemic. The Chair encouraged members to consider nominating individuals for honorary degrees and the Order of Laurier award. She also invited members to register for the 4 Seasons of Reconciliation on-line course to grow their understanding of indigenous culture, history and issues.

3. **Leadership Update**
 - a. President's Report, Deb MacLatchy
The President commented on: an emailed summary of Laurier's financial status in light of the recent news of Laurentian University's situation; the provincial stay-at-home order to be lifted on February 16th in Waterloo Region; the potential to move to some in-person labs; a Council of Ontario Universities' letter to the province offering help with vaccination efforts including Laurier's desire to help with clinics on campus; Laurier-hosted events for Black History Month have been well-attended; the Equity,

Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Plan steering committee has started its work, with stakeholder consultations underway; the search committee for the AVP, Indigenous Initiatives hiring committee is finishing its work; the success of the indigenous research symposium; advocacy with the government for green investment and digital infrastructure, and on exemptions for international students for mandatory pandemic-related three-day hotel stays following entry to Canada; VP, External Relations Jason Coolman will attend the provincial pre-budget consultations; universities and colleges to receive an additional ten-year commitment to support deferred maintenance requirements; provincial support for universities and colleges for student mental health; enhanced reporting requirements on incidences of sexual violence; and that that there has been no provincial announcement on approval of Navitas but one is hoped for soon.

b. Senate Reports, Deb MacLatchy

The Strategic Research Plan was approved in the Fall; a new four-credit certificate in digital media production has been created; a number of curriculum changes have been approved; students now have the option to switch to receiving credit instead of grades across the terms affected by the pandemic.

Board members discussed: discussion at Senate on whether the ability to switch to a credit best met the needs of students; that a Senate committee is considering a permanent policy on this practice; that this might provide flexibility to students from one discipline to try a course in a different discipline, thus allowing more personal development; that previously students had to specify the pass/fail option in advance for a course; and that there is sector-wide discussion on online monitoring.

c. Q and A on Reports of the Senior Executives

The Board received written updates from the senior executives on their various portfolios.

Board members discussed: given on-going health concerns due to the pandemic, how will student behavior be controlled after a return to campus next Fall; that the CBC reached out for comment to the mayor of Waterloo well in advance of St. Patrick's Day; and reporting on research results in Brantford.

4. **Laurier Strategy Update**, Deb MacLatchy

The President commented on two sub-themes from the Laurier Strategy, Engaged Research and Credential Innovation. Laurier received \$15.1M in new external funding, for a total of \$82M since 2014/15. A survey of faculty has explored the research culture at Laurier, noting an improvement in this culture over the past five years, and a desire for more supports, training and recognition for research. By Fall 2020, many researchers whose work had been

interrupted by the pandemic have been able to return to their research.

Laurier is expanding its range of credential programs to support professional development and better serve lifelong learners. Credentials provide the opportunity for learners to take modules, with the possibility to combine these into courses; courses into certificates; and certificates into graduate degrees. They also provide the possibility to embed elements of a liberal arts education into skills development. Recent progress includes: the launch of a new e-commerce platform called DestinyOne that provides students a modern and responsive registration process; the launch of the Gladue Principles Certificate, offering courses which provide historical context on the inter-generational impact of colonization, Indigenous law, and restorative justice; Laurier leadership as a partner in the regional Future of Work and Learning discussions; and a partnership with Communitech to offer mid-career workers upskilling in sales and communications.

Board members discussed: the impact on Laurier's budget of new programs; that foundational pieces are being put in place across the university, building on existing knowledge and experience; that through credentialing, Laurier can partner with the Alumni Association and with local businesses; the Board wants to continue to receive updates on credential programs; that marketing programs and recruiting participants can be a challenge; and that DestinyOne will help with this, and will be piloted with professional programs.

5. **Alumni Association Strategic Plan**, Ryan Smith, President, WLUA
The Board received a presentation on the recent work of the Alumni Association Board. The Association represents over 113,000 alumni from all campuses, with 60% of these alumni having graduated in the past 20 years. Through a strategic planning process, the Association has identified three priorities: education for the WLUA Board on the future of work and learning, to support them in being future readiness champions; building bridges between the alumni network, Laurier and the wider community; and to strengthen the governance capacity and diversity of the WLUA Board.

Board members discussed: that the biggest challenge facing the Association is to engage with younger alumni and to add more recent graduates to their Board table; that the Association is looking for alignment with the Laurier Strategy; and the Association has been a generous donor to the University.

6. **Supports for Employees in Response to the Impacts of the Pandemic**, Pamela Cant
The Chief HR & Equity Officer provided an update on the action plan developed from the Employee Engagement Survey taken in December 2018, which saw responses from over 1100 employees. The action plan has focused

on six drivers of engagement identified through the survey. The survey will be repeated next year to measure progress.

Throughout the pandemic, the health and safety of employees has been a priority. HR sought feedback from employees through a wellness survey at the end of 2020, with approximately 800 respondents. Most employees felt supported by their leaders but still challenged; 11% reported that they were struggling. Challenges identified included the volume of work, technology challenges and managing stress. The University has provided extra paid days off and wellness workshops; and will continue to respond to the feedback received in the wellness survey.

7. **Reports from the Standing Committees of the Board**

a. Q and A on Chair's Updates on Committee Activity

The Board received written summaries of recent committee business. There were no questions.

b. Finance and Investments, Jim Phillips

1. 2021-2022 Budget Planning Update, Tony Vannelli/Lloyd Noronha

The VP: Academic and the VP: Finance & Administration provided a presentation on planning for next year's budget, including the context, process and outlook. The challenges of the structural deficit arising from earlier tuition cuts will be seen again in 2021-2022. Budget Town Halls have been held to inform faculty and staff. The Budget Council has received submissions from all departments and is analyzing these submissions. Four areas are seen as essential: teaching and learning; research and scholarship; health, safety and well-being; and regulatory and legislative compliance. Other factors include: the research strategic plan; Milton; the Navitas program and internationalization; and the development of the Indigenization Action Plan. The Board will receive further updates in April as the numbers start to become clearer, with the Budget presented in May to Senate and to the Board for approval in June.

2. Enrolment Update, Tony Vannelli

Results have recently been received from the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) showing Ontario undergraduate applications. The number of Ontario high school seniors (referred to as the 101s) who are applying for post-secondary has increased overall. Laurier's applications from this group were up 3.9% over the last year. Applications from others (out of province or transferring from other schools) were up to the sector average. Specific to the Faculty of Education, all universities were up and Laurier's applications increased by 17%. International applications are flat and stable at Laurier. The hard work of converting applications to registered students will continue through the Spring.

Board members expressed thanks to the recruitment team for very impressive application results for 2021-2022.

3. Internal Loans

Under the investment policy guidelines for University funds, staff proposed that \$10M of the reserve held for operating fund-specific projects be designated as excess cash available for internal loans. This will serve as short-term capital financing for energy efficiency and other capital projects. The proposed 2% interest rate represents the approximate opportunity cost and will avoid the costs of external debt.

Board members discussed: that the use of internal loans is a standard practice at Laurier; that the amount represents a low risk and that these funds are tracked and well-managed; and that senior leaders are looking at the use of internal and external debt.

Motion (Jim Phillips/Patricia Polischuk): That on the recommendation of the Finance & Investment Committee, the Board of Governors approve the amount of excess cash available for internal loans in FY '20/21 as \$10M and that the interest rate be set at 2%. Carried.

d. **Governance Committee, Jillian Swartz**

1. Delegation of Authority to Fill Committee Vacancies Mid-Year

The Board By-Laws allow the Board to create committees; the Governance Committee is mandated to consider the skills required for these committees and recommended individuals for membership on the Board and its committees. Each year in June, a full Roster of committee membership is proposed for Board approval. The Governance Committee has requested delegation of authority to approve mid-year changes, when vacancies occur if an individual steps down from a committee. This will streamline the process and speed up filling any vacancies. The motion was amended slightly to refer specifically to the Governance Committee for this delegation.

Motion (Patricia Polischuk/Scott Lyons): That on the recommendation of the Governance Committee, the Board of Governors delegate authority to the Governance Committee to appoint individuals to committees in between the annual Board approval of the full Committee Roster. Carried.

8. **Other Business: None.**

B. In Camera Session

Motion (Stephanie Ratza/Sharline Doss): to move the meeting *in camera*. Carried.

C. Consent Items

The following items were provided for approval or information. The Agenda, Minutes and items noted for Approval were approved by consent.

1. Items for Approval

- a. Agenda
- b. Minutes, Board of Governors, November 19, 2020
- c. Internal Audit Charter

Motion: That on the recommendation of the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee, the Board of Governors approve the Internal Audit Charter. Carried.

2. Items for Information

- a. Confirmation of Statutory Remittances May – October 2020
- b. UFCW RRSP Plan Update
- c. 2020-2021 6 Month Fiscal Update
- d. External Debt Update
- e. Ancillary Operations Annual Report
- f. Research Funding Update
- g. Q3 Investment Performance Summary - Proteus
- h. Update on Pension Plan Funded Status and Commuted Value Standards