



## BOARD OF GOVERNORS MINUTES

Friday September 10, 2021, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

**Present:** Ryan Brejak, Pam Bryden, Savvas Chamberlain, Simon Chan, Paul Elliott, Chinyere Eni-McLean, Andrew Herman, Dave Jaworsky, Mary Kelly, Lynda Hawton Kitamura, Sarah Lewis, Scott Lyons, Deb MacLatchy, Patricia McLaren, Shaun Miller, Patricia Polischuk, Marc Richardson, Joe Rooney, Ken Seiling, Cynthia Sundberg, Mark Straub, Doug Treleaven, Berry Urbanovic

**Regrets:** Nasik Amanullah, Cameron Anderson, Kathie Cameron, Pegah Jamalof, Kristine Lund, Eileen Mercier, Jim Phillips, Karen Redman

**Secretariat:** Annika Arnold, 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  
The Agenda and previous Minutes were presented for approval. The June 3<sup>rd</sup> Minutes will be corrected to show Cynthia Sundberg in attendance.  
**Motion (Savvas Chamberlain/Shawn Miller):  
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 acknowledged the traditional lands on which Laurier meets; and noted a Lunch and Learn session on November 18 with Dr. Darren Thomas on this topic. She noted that Board members were invited to attend information sessions and meetings over the summer; and commented on the joint event for Senate and Board yesterday on research at Laurier; as well as the Board kick-off event today with sessions on key priorities for the university and on fundraising efforts.

- a. Welcome to Incoming Board Members  
The Chair noted seven new members joining the Board: Nasik Amanullah, Simon Chan, Paul Elliott, Chinyere Eni-McLean, Andrew Herman, Mary Kelly and Sarah Lewis.
- b. Round of Introductions

### 3. Leadership Update

- a. President's Report, Deb MacLatchy  
The President commented on: the successful move-in to campus residences at a 95% occupancy rate, with nearly 3000 students in residence in Waterloo and 400 in Brantford; the recent illegal street gatherings by approximately 1,000 people on Ezra Avenue and King Street North with vandalism; strong messaging sent to the student community regarding these events with notice of serious consequences; 19,395 undergraduates have registered in at least one course for Fall 2021, and increase of 6.1% over this time last year, with graduate registrations staying level at 2,220, noting that these numbers are fluid until the November 1 report to the provincial government; a new Flex Work policy has been implemented with over 500 requests for flexible work arrangements; work continues on the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan; six Black and six Indigenous faculty members are to be hired, with ads to be posted at the end of September; positive media coverage garnered by the announcement this summer of the launch of the Laurier Legacy Project; advocacy work on the need for a vaccine mandate, which the government has announced; the requirement for double vaccine doses for anyone visiting campus, with the second dose required by October 8th; Jill Dunlop, the new Minister for Colleges & Universities, has visited the Waterloo Campus and met with students, with plans to visit Brantford and Milton.

Board members discussed: students eager to gather after the isolation of the pandemic; appreciation for strong messaging from the University regarding street gatherings; and Council of Ontario University discussions on how best to re-open campuses.

- b. Q and A on Reports of the Senior Executives  
Board members discussed: fundraising currently at 10% of goal, due to a mixture of the impacts of the pandemic as well as summer vacation schedules, noting that the number of donors is on track, and that communication with donor messaging is being readied for the Fall.
- c. Report on Senate Activities  
The President as Chair of Senate noted: that Senate met twice over the summer to discuss *in camera* items which also came to the Board for action

and information; that members of Senate joined Governors last night in a joint event; that Senate Committees are starting to meet; and that the first Senate meeting is scheduled for September 28<sup>th</sup>.

4. **Strategic Plan Update**, Deb MacLatchy

The Board received a written summary of progress to date on various areas in support of the Laurier Strategy. The President commented on the strategic priority areas of Sustainability and Internationalization.

With the campuses quiet due to the pandemic, work has been able to be accelerated on energy efficiency projects. The micro-grid on the Waterloo Campus came online over the summer, turning solar energy from rooftop panels into available energy for Laurier electrical system; minimizing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing electricity charges.

A partnership has been announced with Navitas to open the Wilfrid Laurier International College on the Brantford campus. This Fall the first cohort of international students has been welcomed for one year of academic study and support before beginning their degree studies on either the Brantford or Waterloo campus, beginning virtually. In further support of internationalization as a key priority, Sheldon Pereira was named as Senior Executive Officer, Internationalization in the summer, with a strategic plan to be developed. A tandem language program pairs international and domestic students to engage in language and culture; with 45 participants and ten languages currently.

It was noted that the legend for the heat map provided in the package was dated March but should read September.

5. **Return to Campus: Pandemic Recovery Planning Update**, Dan Dawson

The Board received a verbal report on the roll-out of plans for return to campus: employees returning in three phases through October; a Continuity of Education Plan required by the province submitted August 31<sup>st</sup>; a hybrid teaching model for the Fall term; the government having lifted the two-metre restriction and allowing 50% capacity in classrooms; WIFI-enabled quiet spaces made available on campus for attendance at virtual classes; following up with students on the deadline to provide proof of vaccination; a small number of mask exemptions being processed; that faculty and staff are not required to ask students about their vaccination status, but may ask to see the SafeHawk app badge which reflects self-assessment on symptoms; currently, 82% of faculty and staff have provided proof of vaccinations, and 63% of students (from both remote and on-campus).

Board members discussed: appreciation for the leadership shown by staff and faculty; Laurier as a major local employer demonstrating best practice; getting a clearer picture on the number of students vaccinated; speculation on how parents of Laurier students are feeling; whether any religious groups are banning vaccinations, and noting that so far those submitting requests for exemptions are not meeting the thresholds; and required changes to air ventilation systems, based on the age of the buildings.

6. **Budget & Fiscal 2021-2022 Update**, Tony Vannelli / Lloyd Noronha

- a. **Review of Fiscal 2020/21 Year-End**, Lloyd Noronha  
The Operating Fund ended the 20/21 fiscal year with a \$9.6M surplus, compared to a projected budget deficit of \$4.6M. The actual surplus amount has obligations against it of \$9.8M in go-forward commitments, so funding for any 2021/22 deficit and any additional projects will require identification of a funding source. Revenues for the year had a positive variance of \$1.3M compared to budget; while expenses had a positive variance of \$12.9M.

Ancillary operations, which are intended to be run on a cost recovery basis, ran at a deficit in 2020/2021 due to the pandemic. A \$17M deficit was projected but ancillaries finished the year overall at a \$16.3M loss, due to cost containment. Residences will be at near to full occupancy for 2021/2022 which is better than originally anticipated; this will assist the ancillaries in paying back the deficit over time faster than anticipated.

Internally Restricted Net Assets (IRNA) ended the fiscal year at \$53M, down significantly from the previous year, due in part to the deficit ancillary operations. The IRNA will need to be carefully monitored and replenished.

The DBRS Credit Rating for Laurier was reported this summer as continuing as A with stable trends.

Board members discussed: residence beds supply and demand, noting that Laurier was able to meet the guarantee to first-year students for residence accommodation despite higher than projected demand.

- b. **Enrolment & Budget Update**, Tony Vannelli / Lloyd Noronha

Senior leaders provided an update reflecting a positive enrolment impact, with June 2021 numbers up by 800 undergraduates over the numbers originally budgeted, exceeding the target for both domestic and international

students. This represents Laurier's largest ever incoming class of undergraduate students. The growth was attributable principally to enrolment in the BBA program and to a subset of programs in the Faculty of Science. This year-over-year growth of about 18% was the highest in the sector; with a sector average growth of under 2%. Graduate numbers were down slightly from projections for Fall 2021. Revised budget projections were provided, noting increased revenue from tuition, offset by costs related to delivery (scholarships and teach supports). It was noted that enrolment numbers remain fluid until final numbers are reported to the province as of November 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

7. **A Climate Charter for Canadian Universities\***, Lloyd Noronha/  
Zeynep Danis

Staff continue to pursue implementation of the Board's directives for climate change action. Earlier this year, the Board approved implementing carbon footprint reduction targets, and exploring the creation of a fossil-fuel-free endowment fund. Staff noted that a Climate Charter has been created, with fifteen Canadian universities as signatories. The Charter commits participating universities to four practices, which align with previous recommendations accepted by the Laurier Board. A briefing note spelled out these practices, which are held to be goals.

Board members discussed: that Board approval is not required to join the Charter, but is felt to provide a clear indication of support; that a technical group will be formed among the Charter members to share information; that stakeholders see this topic from various perspectives, noting that some will feel progress is too slow while others feel that the actions are too ambitious; and that the Board will receive updates twice a year on progress in this area.

**Motion (Patricia Polischuk/Marc Richardson): That the Board of Governors endorse Wilfrid Laurier University joining as a signatory to the Climate Charter. Carried; with one abstention.**

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

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

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

b. Audit & Compliance Committee, Paul Elliott

1. WLU Audited Financial Statements Update

a. Approval of Audited Financial Statements as at April 30, 2021

The Financial Statements for fiscal year 2020/2021 were audited by KPMG; and were presented to the Audit, Risk and Compliance (ARC) and Finance, Investments and Property (FIP) Committees jointly on

September 2<sup>nd</sup>, where they were discussed in depth. The ARC chair noted that KPMG reported a clean unqualified audit, with no significant control deficiencies; and that the audit process went smoothly and the finance team met expedited deadlines.

**Motion (Paul Elliott/ Shaun Miller): That on the recommendation of the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee, the Board of Governors approve the Wilfrid Laurier University Audited Financial Statements for the year ended April 30, 2021 and authorize any two members of the Board of Governors to sign the financial statements as evidence of such approval. Carried; with one abstention.**

2. Commentary to the Audited Financial Statements  
Management accompanied the statements with written commentary providing context for various components of the Statements.
3. Management Report on Budget vs. Actuals 2020-2021  
The Board also received a written report on performance for the previous fiscal year.

9. **Other Business:** None.

#### **B. *In Camera* Session**

**Motion (Patricia Polischuk/Scott Lyons): to move the meeting *in camera*. Carried.**

#### **C. Consent Items**

The Agenda, Minutes and items noted for Approval were approved by consent.

1. **Items for Approval**
  - a. Agenda
  - b. Minutes, Board of Governors, June 3, 2021