



BOARD OF GOVERNORS MINUTES

Thursday, November 16, 2023

Hybrid at 45 Lodge, Waterloo and via Zoom

Attended: Paul Elliott (Chair), Mohammad Abu-Rshaid, Royce Bodaly, Shelley Boettger, Simon Chan, Ling Chu, Catharine Dutt, Ryan Eldred, Chinyere Eni, Adam Grogan, Chantal Huinink, Abas Kanu, Mary Kelly, Lindsay Lawrence, Deb MacLatchy, Ken Maly, Avvey Peters, Jim Phillips, Patricia Polischuk, Michael Ras, Marc Richardson, Ken Seiling, Rick Sterne, Cynthia Sundberg, Doug Treleaven, Peter Urquhart, Tyler Van Herzele, Brandon Vale

Regrets: Andrew Herman, Kristine Lund, Eileen Mercier, Janis Monture, Berry Vrbanovic

Secretariat: Ana Juhik, Anna Kornobis, Anne Lukin, Phil Marfisi

A. Open Session

1. **Call to Order**, Paul Elliott, 2:00 p.m.

a. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest: None.

b. Movement of Consent Items to the Main Agenda

In addition to the Agenda and Minutes, there were a number of policies and items for approval.

Motion (Patricia Polischuk/Jim Phillips): That the Board of Governors approve the Consent items listed for approval under Item C.1. Carried.

2. **Chair's Report**, Paul Elliott

The Chair commented on: Laurier's response to the conflict in the Middle East, urging all Laurier community members to respect one another and stay safe; the release yesterday of the Blue Ribbon Panel's report on post-secondary education (PSE) which offered support for the challenges faced by universities and colleges, as well as recommendations; the DBRS Credit Rating report on WLU; that Savvas Chamberlain stepped down from the Board in September, noting thanks for his engagement and generous support; encouraging Board members to attend the Education Session on Financial Sustainability and Revenue Generation set for December 4th; and that the April Board meeting will be held in Brantford and the June meeting in Waterloo in conjunction with a celebration at the Music Building.

3. **Leadership Update**

a. President's Report, Deb MacLatchy

The President commented on: attacks in Israel and Palestine, with related safety concerns and supports for students; the successful

Homecoming and campus open houses this Fall; government relations and the Blue Ribbon Panel Report which highlighted financial challenges for universities and the importance of investing in PSE, with more advocacy and op-ed pieces to come as the province considers its response to the Report.

- b. Q and A on Reports of the Senior Executives
Board members received written reports on recent activity within the various senior portfolios. There were no questions.
- c. Report on Senate Activities
Catharine Dutt commented on recent Senate decisions and discussion on research activities, the outcomes from the annual Senate Survey; and English Language Proficiency requirements.

4. **Academic Update: Faculty of Arts**, Sofie Lachapelle

The Dean of Arts provided a presentation on trends, statistics and curriculum review within the Faculty. She noted that the Faculty of Arts encompasses 23% of all full-time faculty; 21% of undergraduate students and 10% of graduate students at the University. Dr. Lachapelle commented on: a decline in Arts generally but variable between majors; recruitment efforts and outreach to high school students and teachers; co-op opportunities within Arts; a retention campaign; programming designed to appeal to science and business students; and careful analysis through a curriculum review with changes to the number and focus of programs.

Members discussed: any changes to the profile of a 'typical' arts student; the transition of co-op opportunities to the Winter term for credit; comparisons between Arts enrolment at Laurier to provincial and national sector; the need to look at course title and descriptions rather than content, as well as staffing and structures; and preliminary consideration of hybrid courses or multi-campus offerings.

5. **Strategic Academic Plan**, Heidi Northwood

The Provost and VP: Academic presented the new Strategic Academic Plan (SAP) for 2023-2028, recently approved by Senate. Part of an integrated network of plans growing out of the Laurier Strategy, the SAP focuses on three themes: 'delivering transformative education'; 'thriving comprehensive university'; and 'communities integrated into a vibrant whole'. It is designed to help tackle the complex challenges facing the University and to support the attraction of students who are curious and engaged.

Members discussed: Key performance and risk indicators, with metrics, noting a request for a dashboard; how to identify the qualities Laurier hopes for in its students, and how to identify those students; that consultation on the SAP was internal and focused on academics, and did not include students

or employers; and plans and targets for increasing enrolment, particularly in the Faculty of Arts.

6. **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 meetings. There were no questions.

- b. Finance, Investments and Property Committee, Jim Phillips

1. **3-month Fiscal Update 2023-2024**, Zeynep Danis / John Fraser

The Board received written analysis of fiscal performance for the first three months, noting that revenue is typically smaller in Q1. The summary noted a positive variance overall, with higher operating revenue than anticipated and delays in hiring contributing positively. Staff noted the continuing challenge for 2023-2024, working to address a Board-approved deficit, including \$5.8M in austerity measures. Each unit has non-salary savings targets.

2. **2024-2025 Budget Planning Process Update**, Heidi Northwood / Lloyd Noronha

The VP: Finance & Administration noted that budget leaders are working their respective templates and deciding on budget reduction targets. The recommendations by the Blue Ribbon Panel announced yesterday do not immediately affect the budget, as the official response from the province, yet to be received, will determine impacts to tuition, funding, etc. Staff are running budget scenarios. There remains a multi-year budget challenge ahead, and the University needs to find ways to grow across campuses and faculties, using existing resources

Members discussed: achieving growth using existing resources, with a focus on recruitment and retention; the need to identify and create career-aligned and market-aligned programs; that Laurier is seeing growth in graduate-level professional course; demographic, including sustainable growth in the GTA and Southwestern Ontario; whether Laurier has appropriate tools in place to measure and report on provincial metrics, noting that tools are in place but could be improved; and thanks from the Board to all leaders, faculty and staff who are implementing cost-cutting and coping with the impacts.

3. **Update on Blue Ribbon Panel Recommendations**, Heidi Northwood / Lloyd Noronha

The Report was released yesterday, so now the real work of advocacy to the government begins, as the Report will have no

impact until the province acts. Recommendations came in six key areas and included: a tuition increase of 5% for universities, with a 2% increase the following year, and offsetting increases to student OSAP funding; a change updating the midpoint for corridor funding which could allow more funded growth; implementing a financial accountability framework with reporting metrics that require Board oversight and which rank universities and impose consequences; enhancing cost effectiveness and emphasizing a need for increased efficiency; proposed changes for northern institutions; international students; and a need to match federal research grants. The MCU Minister has noted that any financial changes will be tied to performance metrics.

c. Governance Committee, Chinyere Eni

1. **Working Group on Climate Risk Management Terms of Reference, Anna Kornobis / Zeynep Danis**

The Board has approved the creation of a working group to research, analyze and make recommendations on next steps in responsible investing and sustainability efforts.

Motion (Simon Chan/Patricia Polischuk): That on the recommendation of the Governance Committee, the Board of Governors approve the Working Group on Climate Risk Management Terms of Reference, as proposed. Carried.

7. **Other Business:** None.

B. In Camera Session

Motion (Rick Sterne/Chantal Huinink): to move the meeting *in camera*. Carried.

C. Consent Items

The following items under C.1. were approved by consent during Item A.1.b.

1. **Items for Approval**

a. Agenda

b. Minutes, Board of Governors, September 15, 2022

c. Revocation of Policy 9.2, Principles that Govern the Selection, Implementation, and Application of Information Technologies and Services at Laurier

Motion: That on the recommendation of the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee, the Board of Governors approve the revocation of Policy 9.2, Principles that Govern the Selection, Implementation, and Application of Information Technologies and Services at Laurier.

- d. Financial Statements of WLU Press (and Independent Practitioners' Review Engagement Report)
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee, the Board of Governors approve the Financial Statements for the Wilfrid Laurier University Press for the year ended April 30, 2023.
- e. Computer Science Tuition Approval
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Finance, Investments & Property Committee, the Board of Governors approve a tuition fee for the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Computer Science of \$1,500 per 0.5CR, for a total Certificate cost of \$9,000 (across six required courses), effective for the Winter 2024 term, pending approval by Senate.
- f. Policy 6.1, Prevention of Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Human Resources Committee, the Board of Governors approve Policy 6.1, Prevention of Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct, as revised.
- g. Policy 5.12, Investment Policy for University Funds
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Finance, Investments & Property Committee, the Board of Governors approve Policy 5.12, Investment Policy for University Funds, as revised.
- h. Pension Plan Statement of Investment Policies & Procedures Review
Motion: That on the joint recommendation of the Finance, Investments and Property and Pension committees, the Board of Governors approve the Wilfrid Laurier University Pension Plan Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures, as revised.
- i. Statements of Investment Policies and Procedures (SIPP) Review
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Finance, Investments & Property Committee, the Board of Governors approve the revised Wilfrid Laurier University:
- **Endowment Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures**
 - **Lazaridis Gift Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures**
 - **Sinking Fund Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures**
 - **Fossil Fuel Free Fund Endowment Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures**

- **The Investment Policy of the Jarislowsky Chair in Sustainable Water Futures.**

2. **Items for Information**

- a. 2022-2023 Audited Financial Statements Minor Update
- b. Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy 2022-2023 Annual Report
- c. Enrolment Audit Report
- d. Summary of Policies Approved in 2022-2023
- e. Policy 8.17, Employee Indemnification – Special Constable Service
- f. DBRS Credit Rating Report
- g. Pension Plan Funded Status at July 1, 2023
- h. Responsible Investing Annual Report
- i. Q2 2022 Summary Investment Performance – HUB Proteus
- j. Laurier Employment Context
- k. Update on Employee Insights Pulse Check
- l. Donor Engagement: Thank You Videos

Note: If you need assistance or have a question about this agenda or the Board of Governors, please contact the University Secretariat office, by email to alukin@wlu.ca.