



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

St. Francis Xavier University Board of Governors

Friday, February 23, 2024 – 9:00 am

Charles V. Keating Centre Conference Rooms

- Present:** Paul Ash, Bill Burke, Francisco Chang, Ron Chisholm, Cynthia Dorrington (virtual), Dennis Flood (Chair), Sophia Fabiano, Marc Furlotte, Karen Gardiner, Andy Hakin, Lynda Harling Stalker, Wayne Kirkpatrick, Alfred LeBlanc, Greg MacEachern, Peter Marzlin, Jamie O'Reilly, Sylvia Paris Drummond, John Peacock, Marc Rodrigue, John Peacock, Lisa Raitt (Vice-Chair) (virtual), Kathleen Sheridan, William Sweet, Marie Walsh
- Regrets:** Rose Paul
- Guests:** Eileen Alma, Amanda Cockshutt, Lisa Craig, David Graham, Monica Foster, MJ MacLellan, Ian Pye, Elizabeth Yeo

1. CALL TO ORDER

WELCOME, ROLL CALL, LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND PRAYER

D. Flood called the February 23, 2024, meeting of the Board of Governors to order at 9:00 am. Roll Call was taken followed by a Land Acknowledgement from A. Hakin. W. Kirkpatrick offered a prayer to open the meeting.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

MOTION: That the agenda be approved as circulated (W. SWEET/K. GARDINER) **Motion carried.**

D. Flood asked if any Governors had a conflict of interest with agenda items and none were declared except for board members who are being nominated for committee roles and positions (see 12.3 L. Harling Stalker and C. Dorrington – Chancellor Selection Committee; R. Chisholm – Committee Chair; L. Raitt – term extension; D. Flood – term extension).

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: That the minutes from the Board of Governors meeting held on October 20, 2023, be approved as circulated. (P. MARZLIN/S. PARIS DRUMMOND). **Motion carried.**

MOTION: That the minutes from the Board of Governors meeting held on December 6, 2023, be approved as circulated. (K. SHERIDAN/W. KIRKPATRICK). **Motion carried.**

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Hakin provided a written report for circulation and highlighted recent successes on campus:

- StFX Interdisciplinary Health professor Dr. Arlinda Ruco received a Canadian Cancer Society Emerging Scholar Research Grant valued at almost \$600,000.
- In early December, a new endowed Research Chair in Mental Health and Addiction was announced.

- February is African History Month. We mark the month with the Pan African flown in the Alumni Flag Pavilion and during the month, many activities are planned to celebrate and recognize the history and culture of people of African descent.
- StFX is undergoing an independent review of the university's Sexual Violence Response Policy and practices, as well as relevant intersecting University policies and practices, for the period 2020-2024. The review includes consideration of the broader campus culture relative to sexualized violence, including but not limited to, power dynamics, attitudes towards consent, and the impact of social norms on reporting, particularly within the context of residence and athletics.
- Our annual Homecoming celebration will be held from October 4-6, 2024.
- Planning for the Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Institute for Innovation in Health continues with consultations with proposed faculty occupants to optimize the design. It is estimated that construction will start in the fall of 2024 and will take approximately two years to complete.
- A recent trip to the United Kingdom facilitated meetings with Victor and Mona Dahdaleh as well as with young and established alumni in the London area.
- Agreements have been reached with the AUT and NSGEU. Special thanks to Daniel Draper and his negotiating teams for their work.

Dr. Hakin introduced the metrics to support the Strategic Plan and thanked I. Pye, Director of Institutional Research and Planning, for his work as it has been a significant project to gather the key data sources. These metrics provide an indication of how the University is progressing and tell the story of StFX based on our values; academically driven, EDIA, community, responsive and sustainability. This data will help the university to make data-driven decisions as key areas are highlighted. These will continue to evolve and help the build our story.

5. ACADEMIC VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST REPORT

Dr. Cockshutt, Academic Vice President and Provost, provided a written report for circulation and offered some highlights:

- Applications, offers of admissions and confirmations continue to trend well for the 2024-25 academic year. There is continued optimism for increased enrollment for the next academic year. The University is still awaiting its quota of applications for new undergraduate international student visas.
- Confirmation numbers in the BScN program are down slightly which is attributed to the growing number of Nursing program options in the province. Discussion ensued with respect to potential solutions, i.e. introduction of scholarships, etc.
- The volume and diversity of research applications from StFX faculty continues to grow. These provide exceptional opportunities for our students. There has been marked growth in research funding over the recent year with much success over the past year.

6. FINANCIAL UPDATE

6.1 2023-24 FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

L. Raitt and M. Foster shared the 2023-24 fiscal year projections to December 31, 2023. Operations is currently projecting a deficit of (\$1.779 million) along with a projected surplus in Ancillary of \$1,111 million netted with a capital fund deficit of (\$7.2 million). This is an improvement from the September 30, 2023, projections. The Board approved a deficit budget of

(\$5.7 million) and by year end, with continued strong financial management, we hope to be closer to this amount. Questions ensued and M. Foster agreed to present an outline/model of our cash flow issues for the Board meeting in June 2024.

6.2 2024-25 BUDGET

L. Raitt and M. Foster shared the 2024-25 draft budget for information purposes. M. Foster provided an overview of key budget considerations including:

- Government Operating Grant – 1% Increase. The MOU expires the end of March and at this point, the new MOU has not been completed. Some funding has been added for the accelerated nursing seats because there has been some uptake. However, the University does not have confirmation of the amount that might be received.
- Enrolment – The assumption is that enrollment will increase by 50 domestic students and 50 international students (or 150 tuitions).
- Student Fees
 - Tuition increases of 3%; Other fees increasing 3%
 - Ancillary Fees – Room rentals and meal plans increasing 2.65% on average
- Salaries – The Collective Agreement has been ratified by the AUT and is factored in the budget. NSGEU completed negotiations and Unifor’s collective agreement expires September 30, 2024. A cost estimate has been added for these groups along with nonunion/management employees.
- Residence Occupancy – There are 1,883 beds on campus (including FX Hall). Occupancy is being budgeted at 1,627 which is 86% of the total beds on campus.
- Food Service – Traditional meal plans are being budgeted at 1,175.
- Other considerations:
 - Deferred maintenance items being funded by the money from the Province of NS have not been included in the budget since they net to zero.
 - Critical digital initiatives include the next phase of the payroll system, remaining phone system costs and a new admissions system. These initiatives are included in the budget.
 - There is vulnerability around enrollment and residence/food service. The exposure is approximately \$10k per student for tuition (\$20k for an international student) and \$20k per residence-based student (\$30k for an international student).

It was suggested that given the importance of full enrollment in our Nursing program (we need to achieve enrollment of 97% capacity or receive a full grant reduction of 3%) and that there have been positive returns of the university endowment, this might be a mechanism to fund additional scholarships for incoming nursing students. It was agreed that this will be investigated as budget preparation continues.

Cognizant of the changes that must be made to the budget document, Board members agreed that difficult decisions must be made, and significant work expected to bring forward a budget for 2024-25 that is sustainable.

7. VP STUDENTS REPORT

E. Yeo, Vice President, Students, provided an update on Student Services activities. A written report was circulated to the Board. Highlights from her report included:

- The VP Students cochaired the Nova Scotia Post-secondary Committee on Health & Wellness with Dr. Robert Strang. The primary focus of this committee will be to evolve campus alcohol policies and harms reduction strategies. Dr. Kara Thompson, StFX Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Collaborating Scientist Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR) will bring her research contributions on alcohol policy, and substance use in young adulthood to collaborate on the work of this committee.
- Student Life is part of an AAU Healthy Campuses committee that meets several times a year. This committee has been asked if we would help to build a regional health promotion network in collaboration with the provinces. This is in the beginning stages but there is a lot of interest from the institutions and ideas to use the network to promote the adoption of the Okanagan Charter, broader training for faculty and staff who see students in crisis, and suicide intervention work.
- Much work has been done to support student culture and a more inclusive environment
 - This year we have been developing the First Year Experience model, focusing on two main priorities; the development of the programming plan for the first year that guides successful transition to university and strengthening the whole student whole campus approach to fostering student success.
 - Recognizing the Objects that govern the university, the PACAR Religious Inclusion Working Group will develop recommendations to promote the inclusion of currently and historically excluded and minoritized religious, spiritual, and secular groups within the StFX community.
 - A gift from the late Jeannine Deveau '44 coupled with a gift from the McCall MacBain Foundation will create the Black Student Success Centre which aims to support Black students' academic journey by providing Afrocentric spaces and programming that remove the barriers of social isolation and anxiety, as well as academic and financial stress. An increase in our retention rate for African Nova Scotian students is anticipated.

8. STUDENTS' UNION REPORT

S. Fabiano, President, Students' Union, highlighted a few points from her written report submitted to the Board including:

- Board members Francisco Chang will be the Students' Union President for 2024-25. Voter turnout for elections continues to be low.
- S. Fabiano and Matthew Doyle, VP External Affairs, attended Students' Union Nova Scotia Advocacy Week and Canadian Alliance of Students' Association Advocacy Week in Ottawa in November. Advocacy documents were produced from both sessions – [Students for Nova Scotia: A Postsecondary Pathway to Innovation](#) and [Reframing the Future: A Strategy for Student Talent and Quality of Life](#).
- The Golden X Inn reopened in January for regular hours.
- TheU's Executive team met with Sexual Violence Prevention Committee and the team from Watershed to share concerns and provide feedback.
- TheU continues to be interested in the residence renewal project and is anxious to provide feedback regarding student involvement in residence.

9. VP ADVANCEMENT REPORT

D. Graham, Vice President, Advancement, provided an update on Advancement activities. A written report was circulated to the Board. Highlights from his report included:

- Day of Giving is set for March 26, 2024, and we encourage your support.
- Messaging to alumni regarding donations has been focused on deepening engagement to encourage donors to find their purpose at StFX and connect themselves through their donation to the university.
- StFX welcomed a further \$14.5 million from the late Jeannine Deveau '44 to champion equity and create new campus centres; Black Student Success Centre and the Deveau Centre for Indigenous Governance and Social Justice. With matching funds, Jeannine Deveau's two gifts total more than \$22 million dollars.
- An in-person meeting with the Right Honorable Brian Mulroney is scheduled for early March. Mr. Mulroney plans to attend Spring Convocation and is anticipating his 65th Homecoming in October.

Discussion ensued with suggestions risen such as: implementation of an event attendee tracking system, Philanthropy 101 for alumni to demonstrate the value of giving, campaign phone trees, etc.

10. ALUMNI ASSOCIATION REPORT

K. Sheridan, President, Alumni Association, highlighted a few points from her written report submitted to the Board including:

- The Association recently approved its budget for the upcoming fiscal year
- The Association will host Alumni Councillors and Chapter Leaders on campus from May 31-June 1, 2024, to strengthen and serve the alumni network. EDIA training will also be offered.
- The affinity agreement between the Alumni Association and TD Insurance continues to grow and represents the biggest affinity partnership.
- Nominations are encouraged for the Alumni Association Recognition Awards.
- This will be the last Board meeting for Kathleen Sheridan in the role of Alumni Association President. Michael Gillis '87 will assume the President's role on April 1, 2024, and K. Sheridan will then assume the Past President role. This will also be Marc Rodrigue's last Board meeting and K. Sheridan thanked Marc for his contributions to his alma mater and the StFX Alumni Association.

M. Rodrigue thanked K. Sheridan for her work as Alumni Association President particularly her strong leadership, her support of EDIA initiatives and for the delivery of a strong strategic plan for the Association.

11. VICAR OF THE FOUNDER REPORT

W. Kirkpatrick, Vicar of the Founder and Bishop of the Diocese of Antigonish, highlighted a few points from his written report submitted to the Board including:

- StFX alumnus David Rankin '14 '18 will be ordained in the Diocese of Antigonish this spring.
- Administrative support and funding for the Vicar of the Founder Lecture series is needed and much appreciated.

12. RECEIVING OF REPORTS

12.1 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

D. Flood (Chair, Executive Committee) advised that the University has recently completed negotiations with two on-campus unions and now have signed contract agreements with the AUT and NSGEU.

12.2 AUDIT & INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

M. Furlotte (Chair, Audit & Investment Committee) advised that the Committee has not met since November and will meet again in March to review audit plans and the investment portfolio.

12.3 GOVERNANCE & NOMINATING COMMITTEE

K. Gardiner (Chair, Governance & Nominating Committee) provided an overview of their recent meeting and indicated that they continue to review bicameral governance and recommendations on code of conduct and EDIA policies. She also brought forward the following motions:

L. Harling Stalker, C. Dorrington, R. Chisholm, L. Raitt, and D. Flood exited the meeting for relative motions having previously declared a conflict of interest.

MOTION: That on the recommendation of the Governance and Nominating Committee, Lynda Harling Stalker be appointed as the faculty representative on the Chancellor Selection Committee. (K. GARDINER/M. FURLOTTE). **Motion carried.**

MOTION: That on the recommendation of the Governance and Nominating Committee, Cynthia Dorrington be appointed as the member at large of the Board of Governors on the Chancellor Selection Committee. (K. SHERIDAN/ M. WALSH). **Motion carried.**

MOTION: That on the recommendation of the Governance and Nominating Committee, Ron Chisholm be appointed as the Chair of the Property and Risk Management effective April 1, 2024. (K. GARDINER/M. RODRIGUE). **Motion carried.**

MOTION: That on the recommendation of the Governance and Nominating Committee, Lisa Raitt be appointed for her second term on the Board ending on June 30, 2027, and that she continues in the role of Vice Chair for another year expiring June 30, 2025. (K. GARDINER/A. LEBLANC). **Motion carried.**

MOTION: That on the recommendation of the Governance and Nominating Committee, Dennis Flood's term as Chair of the Board be extended by one year ending on June 30, 2025. (P. ASH/ R. CHISHOLM). **Motion carried.**

12.4 FINANCE COMMITTEE

L. Raitt. (Chair, Finance Committee) advised that all items discussed in the most recent Finance Committee meeting had been covered earlier in the Board's agenda. She brought forth a motion regarding electronic signing authority.

MOTION: That on the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the electronic signing authority for banking and investment be updated to any one of the Manager, Finance & Control or the Manager, Restricted Funds plus any one of President; Vice President, Finance and Administration; or Director, Finance. (L. RAITT/W. SWEET). **Motion carried.**

12.5 PROPERTY & RISK COMMITTEE

M. Rodrigue (Chair, Property & Risk Committee) advised that Saputo Centre renovations continue and there have been significant roadblocks with this project which has caused a cost overrun and time delay. The I2H project continues, and the square feet of the project has now been reduced by 20,000 square feet. It is imperative that the I2H project be delivered on budget. The Risk Registry was also highlighted and a presentation on the updated registry will be given at the Board's June meeting as well as a reconciliation of the deferred revenue monies from the Province. Leon MacLellan, Director, Facilities Management, will be retiring at the end of April 2024.

12.6 ADVANCEMENT & EXTERNAL RELATIONS

D. Graham reported on behalf of G. MacEachern (Chair, Advancement & External Relations Committee) and advised that work continues in Advancement & External Relations with highlights from the last meeting including the upcoming Day of Giving, Campaign planning, launch of new website www.stfx.ca, on target to raise \$30 million in gifts during this fiscal year, upcoming President's Gala on June 15, 2024, etc.

13. HOUSEKEEPING AND FUTURE BUSINESS

D. Flood noted that the next regular meeting of the Board would be on April 16, 2024, to review and consider the proposed 2024-25 Operating Budget. This meeting will take place virtually.

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm. (W. KIRKPATRICK).