



## BOARD NOTES

St. Francis Xavier University Board of Governors  
February 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 2021

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The Board of Governors met on Thursday and Friday, February 18 & 19, 2021. The following is a summary of proceedings at the meetings.

### President's Report:

President Hakin updated the Board on a number of topics:

- COVID related challenges and response
- Sexual Violence issues
- Student Union Presidential Candidate Comments-A student running for election as President of the Student Union made remarks that were upsetting to black students on campus. The matter is being reviewed by the University's Manager of Human Rights & Equity.
- Integrated Planning Framework Update-Review is currently underway of progress made in relation to the 2017-22 Strategic Plan
- Capital Project Update
- Maple League Activity
- Scholar in residence-During week of January 25<sup>th</sup> the University welcomed Lawrence Hill for a virtual residency
- NSERC Funding-On January 7<sup>th</sup> the University celebrated the award of approximately 1.5M in new and renewed funding
- Naming of Indigenous Student Centre-Kiknu Centre (Our House in Mi'kmaq)
- African Heritage Month
- Extraordinary Lives Series-February 18<sup>th</sup> Annette Verschuren '77, Honorable Frank McKenna '70

### EXECUTIVE UPDATES

Ms. Elizabeth Yeo, VP Students provided an overview of activities that had been undertaken associated with the return of students returning for the Winter Term. Topics covered in Ms. Yeo's report included:

- Student Safety, Health & Wellbeing
- Community Collaboration
- Return to Campus

Mr. Murray Kyte, VP Advancement provided an overview of activities within the Advancement area since the October Board meeting. Advancement's activities have been focused in the areas of supporting communication outcomes related to the pandemic, particularly the adherence to public health and safety protocols and enhancing external relations between the university and Antigonish communities.

## **GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Ms. Mary-Lou O'Reilly, chair of the Governance & Nominating Committee provided an overview of the recommendation coming forward from the Governance & Nominating Committee related to the structure of the Board's Standing Committees

## **ACADEMIC UPDATE**

Dr. Kevin Wamsley provided an update on activities in the academic area.

- On 13 January, 2021, StFX began its Winter Term online. On 25 January, delayed by the collapse of the New Brunswick bubble, we started in-person classes. StFX provided 64% of its classes in person in the Fall Term. In the Winter Term, we will deliver 75% of our classes in person.
- We experienced significantly decreased melt rates from the Fall Term and welcomed an additional 83 students, 41 international and 42 domestic to StFX. Our contingent of international students online remains significant and we realized a decrease of approximately 30 international students in 2020-21.
- We have seen an increase of 130 transfer students this year and experiences another successful year in our online Nursing upgrade program during the summer. 22 students transferred in during January.
- Applications for the 2022-22 Academic year continue to be strong, up 460 (14%) from last year. Confirmations are up 181 (32%) from last year. Information on current application/confirmation levels for various programs were also presented. Direct from High School applications are up: +421 or +16%. Direct from High School confirmations are up: +163 or 31%.
- Work is underway on development of the Academic timetable for 2021-22 which will include consideration of whether or not there will be a Fall Reading Week.
- On 1 July, 2021 Dr. Bailey Gerrits will join StFX and the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government as the inaugural Mila Mulroney Research Chair in Women, Policy, and Governance Leadership.

## **2020-21 FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS**

Mr. Andrew Beckett advised that projections for the 2020-21 fiscal period had been completed based on actual results to the end of December, 2020. We are now projecting that we will achieve a break-even result for the year. This is a significant improvement from the \$7 million shortfall that was projected in October based on actual results to the end of September.

## **2021-22 OPERATING BUDGET**

Mr. Beckett introduced the latest draft of the 2021-22 operating budget. The budget shows a deficit of \$4,324,000 on a consolidated basis made up of a surplus of \$868,000 in general operations and a deficit of \$5,192,000 in Ancillary Services. A report providing information on key budget assumptions and background on various revenue and expenditure areas was provided to the Board.

## **LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY**

Mr. Beckett discussed the recent action taken by Laurentian University to file for Creditor Protection as it sought to restructure its operations to address on-going operational deficits. This unprecedented move has understandably raised a lot of questions regarding the financial health of other Universities. A brief overview was provided on how our financial conditions compares with that of Laurentian. Mr. Beckett then provided information on how St. FX's status on these items compares with that of Laurentian. This matter will continue to be monitored closely to see what lessons can be learned and assess the implications from actions that are eventually taken.

## **GOVERNMENT FUNDING – NEXT STEPS**

Dr. Andy Hakin noted how pleased the University was with the funding support received from the Province this year in support of COVID related costs. The government have left the door open to discuss revenue loss impacts moving forward. This is the major issue facing the University in 2021-22, particularly as relates to Ancillary operations. CONSUP are meeting with the Province regularly to discuss financial challenges.

## **Students' Union Report:**

Ms. Sarah Elliott, Student Union President presented an update on activities being undertaken by the Students' Union Executive. Mr. Jack Irvin has been elected as the next Student Union President.

## **Alumni Report:**

Mr. Marc Rodrigue, Alumni Association President welcomed Kathleen Sheridan to the Board as a new Alumni Association appointee. As reported at previous meetings, all in-person Alumni events have been cancelled as a result of the pandemic. Planning is underway for what a relaunch of in-person activities will look like once public health restrictions are lifted. Some virtual events are being hosted to continue contact and engagement with alumni.

## **Committee Reports:**

The Board's Committees presented reports on their activities.

On recommendation of the Governance & Nominating Committee Ms. Lisa Raitt was appointed to the Board of Governors for a three-year term commencing July 1, 2021.