



BOARD OF GOVERNORS' 132nd REGULAR MEETING

Minutes of the Public Session of the Meeting of April 18, 2024 12:34 p.m. to 1:44 p.m. Hybrid

GOVERNORS IN ATTENDANCE:

Laura Elliott, Board Chair
Lynne Zucker, Vice-Chair and Chair of Strategy & Planning Committee
Steven Murphy, President
Eric Agius
Ahmad Barari
Carla Carmichael, Chair of Audit & Finance Committee
Frank Carnevale
Mitch Frazer, Chancellor
Matthew Mackenzie
Lisa McBride
Mike Rencheck
Hannah Scott
Gaurav Singh
Dwight Thompson
Tega Ubor
Michael Watterworth
Emily Whetung

REGRETS:

Dale MacMillan
Maria Saros, Vice-Chair and Chair of Governance, Nominations & Human Resources
Kim Slade
Roger Thompson, Vice-Chair of Audit & Finance Committee

BOARD SECRETARY:

Krista Hester, Interim University Secretary

STAFF:

Kirstie Ayotte, *Assistant University Secretary*
Jamie Bruno, *Vice-President, People and Transformation*
Jacquelyn Dupuis, *Director, Risk Management*

Kaitlynn Gambier, *Administrative Assistant, Vice President Research*
Sara Gottlieb, *General Counsel*
Lee Hays, *Executive Director, Advancement*
Barb Hamilton, *Legal Executive Assistant*
Lori Livingston, *Provost & Vice-President, Academic*
Brad Maclsaac, *Vice-President, Administration*
Joanne Nickle, *Senior Executive Assistant, External Relations*
Ruth Nyaamine, *Assistant Vice-President, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging*
Peter Stoett, *Dean, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities*
Joe Stokes, *University Registrar and AVP International*
Sarah Thrush, *Associate Vice-President, Planning and Strategic Analysis*

GUESTS:

Chelsea Bauer
Bradley Chicoine
Jake Desailler
Mikael Eklund
Kevin Farlie
Carolynn Howard
Kimberley McCartney

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the public session to order at 12:34 p.m. and read aloud the Land Acknowledgement.

2. Agenda

Upon a motion duly made by M. Mackenzie and seconded by E. Agius, the Agenda was approved as presented.

3. Conflict of Interest Declaration

None

4. Chair's Remarks

The Chair began by welcoming attendees to the April board meeting, those virtually and in-person.

The Chair reminded governors about upcoming convocation ceremonies and thanked them for their volunteer contributions during National Volunteer Week. She praised the recent retreat's focus on diversity, belonging, and inclusion, thanking Ruth

Nyaamine for her leadership. Noting today's full agenda, she encouraged efficient discussion.

In response to a request to address safety concerns at the Conlin and Simcoe St. intersection, the Chair proposed deferring the discussion to a subsequent meeting for more thorough examination.

5. President's Report

The President expressed gratitude for the collective efforts as the term winds down. He highlighted the University's achievements, including being named the top research University for small Universities in Canada. He also praised faculty and staff for their dedication, mentioning teaching awards and acknowledging those whose work often goes unrecognized.

Addressing financial uncertainty, he discussed the challenges related to the government funding allocation, emphasizing the need for clarity and sustainability in the sector. He recognized the ongoing efforts to attract international students despite regulatory challenges, noting that despite the challenges, the University remains optimistic and proactive managing the situation.

Responding to a question regarding the University's readiness to respond to funding allocations given the restrictive timelines, the President noted the delay primarily hinges on determining the allocation percentage and that the University is ready to act promptly once clarified. However, it was noted that the funding may not be disbursed until a later date, potentially in September or beyond, as it's been designated for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

5.1. Board of Governors Award Recipient

The Chair introduced the recipient of the 2023-2024 Board of Governors award Jake Desailler.

J. Desailler expressed gratitude for the experiences that have shaped him. He shared his passion for problem solving and engineering. Despite challenges, he has found fulfillment in his chosen path and emphasized the importance of perseverance. Receiving this award has served as motivation to continue pushing him through difficult times and celebrating achievements. He thanked his supporters and acknowledged the role of others in his success.

The Chair congratulated Jake and thanked him for sharing his story. She wished him success in all his future endeavors and encouraged contributions to the Board of Governors Award to support scholarships, highlighting the meaningful impact of financial assistance on students' motivation and success.

J. Desailler and C. Howard left the meeting.

6. Academic Council

T. Ubor presented the Academic Council reports from February and March. She highlighted discussions on various student-related topics, including mental health support, academic advising, student retention initiatives, programming for at-risk students, and financial aid. Additionally, she noted approvals for 10 major program modifications and information on 20 minor program adjustments. Academic Council also approved a revised grading system and academic standing policy as well as providing consultation on three others.

6.1. New Program Proposal: Sustainability

P. Stoett introduced the new program proposal: Sustainability, which aims to establish an interdisciplinary program with a focus on sustainability. He emphasized the program's distinctiveness in fostering graduates capable of cross-sectoral work. The proposal underwent a consultative process involving Deans from various faculties.

Upon a motion duly made by D. Thompson and seconded by M. Watterworth, pursuant to the recommendation of Academic Council, the Board of Governors hereby approves the establishment of a Bachelor of Arts and Science in Sustainability, as presented.

Committee Reports

7. Strategy and Planning Committee (S&P) Report

E. Agius advised that L. Jacobs had provided an update on the University' five-year strategic plan, highlighting its importance for meeting federal and provincial research funding requirements. He outlined the upcoming comprehensive consultation process aimed at strengthening key areas, including optimizing connections to enhance core strengths, and differentiating Ontario Tech University through its research. The consultation will involve both internal and external stakeholders to ensure transparency and inclusivity.

7.1. Information Technology Update

E. Agius noted the announcement of the new Executive Director of Information Technology, A. Oyemade, who was promoted internally and celebrated for her extensive experience in digital innovation. The digital strategy overview highlighted achievements enhancing student engagement and experience, including digital access for students, 24/7 online support, transcript accessibility, employee training extensions, mobile learning, and automation of back-office processes. Security enhancements like multiple-factor authentication were also emphasized. Looking ahead to 2024-2025, the focus will remain on student experience and AI, with a primary focus on ERP implementation. As the current system can no longer support one enterprise instance with separate focus for each institution the College and University have agreed to work together to create separate instances prioritizing automation, streamlining processes, and minimizing customization costs during the

transition. The complexity of this transition was acknowledged, with more details expected in the future.

C. Carmichael joined the meeting.

8. Governance Nominations & Human Resources Committee (GNHR) Report

G. Singh provided an update regarding the board practices assessments survey noting several improvements including combining board and committee assessments for efficiency and incorporating assessments for the Board Chair and Committee Chairs. He also noted that it has been shortened to focus questions and avoid repetition. The assessment has a target completion of 100% and will be administered shortly for two weeks and he encouraged the governors to prioritize participation.

9. Audit & Finance Committee (A&F) Report

9.1 Approval of 2024-2027 Budget

C. Carmichael highlighted key aspects of the balanced budget presentation, highlighting revenue increases primarily from enrollment. She noted a significant portion of new revenues is allocated to restricted and targeted expenses such as employee contracts, limited faculty and staff hiring, student experience, research, and capital infrastructure. She mentioned the new approach to budgeting, endorsing the idea of setting aside reserves for uncertainties, aiming for a 3% of total revenue target. This conservative approach acknowledges sector uncertainties.

Budget assumptions, including no increase for domestic tuition and a 3% increase in grants were made based on available information, despite ongoing uncertainty. The Committee found these assumptions reasonable given the circumstances.

Extensive discussion continued centering on the importance of building reserves. B. Maclsaac noted plans for a discussion paper to be presented at a future meeting regarding the building of and management of reserves to enhance visibility and decision making. Various reserve categories were outlined, including funds for building maintenance, working capital, a strategic allocation that only draws on investment income and new construction. There was strong agreement on the necessity of reserves.

B. Maclsaac outlined the staggered replacements from the Early Retirement Incentives (ERI) program, noting the Provost has allocated growth funding for replacements and additional faculty hires over the next year. The budget encompasses funding for both replacement hires and four net new faculty positions, emphasizing the importance of ongoing discussion with Faculties, particularly regarding enrolment growth, faculty-student ratios and budget implications.

In response to a question addressing enrollment and revenue projections for executive programs, S. Thrush noted these courses may be classified as credit based or non

credit continuous learning enrollment and pending Ministry approval and will be included in future plans. These programs aim to offset potential gaps in international student enrollment and are exempt from caps.

Upon a motion duly made by E. Agius and seconded by M. Mackenzie, pursuant to the recommendation of the Audit and Finance Committee, the Board of Governors approves the 2024-2025 budget and approves in principle the budgetary projections for 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.

9.2 Policies

- a) Debt Management**
- b) Capital Projects**
- c) Contract Management and Signing Authority**

The Chair introduced the above three policies and explained that they will be discussed together to streamline the meeting.

Addressing concerns about the consultation process for the Contract Management and Signing Authority policy (9.2c), S. Gottlieb clarified that feedback from stakeholders, such as Budget and Planning Officers and the Research Office, was gathered during consultation. This feedback was then integrated into the policy to simplify and consolidate existing documents, resulting in a more streamlined process for contract approvals and expense authorization.

M. Frazer noted the University's extensive policy framework and emphasized the need for streamlining policies, noting that we should see more policies integrated in a single policy coming to the board for review.

G. Singh commended the effort to streamline policies, noting the clarity in defining what the board needs to approve. He stressed the importance of clear guidelines and approval levels for effective internal controls while advocating for target-based policies over principle-based ones, emphasizing the need for clarity to avoid misinterpretation and administrative challenges.

S. Gottlieb noted plans to provide training sessions to operationalize the policies discussed and emphasized the importance of translating policy language into practical implementation.

Upon a motion duly made by D. Thompson and seconded by M. Mackenzie, the following motions were approved as presented:

9.2 a)

Pursuant to the recommendation of the Audit & Finance Committee, the Board of Governors hereby approves the Debt Management Policy by the Board of Governors as presented.

9.2 b)

Pursuant to the recommendation of the Audit & Finance Committee, the Board of Governors hereby approves the Capital Projects Policy by the Board of Governors as presented.

9.2 c)

Pursuant to the recommendation of the Audit & Finance Committee, the Board of Governors hereby approves the Signing Authority and Approval of Expenditures Procedures, as presented.

10. Consent Agenda

Upon a motion duly made M. by Mackenzie and seconded by E. Agius, the Consent Agenda was approved as presented.

- 10.1. Minutes of Public Session of Board Meeting of February 22, 2024**
- 10.2. Minutes of Public Session of A&F Meeting of February 15, 2024**
- 10.3. Minutes of Public Session of GNHR Meeting of February 1, 2024**
- 10.4. Minutes of Public Session of S&P Meeting of February 8, 2024**
- 10.5. Board Practices Assessment**
- 10.6. Endowment Disbursement**
- 10.7. Credit Rating Update**
- 10.8. Research Strategy**

11. Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made by M. Frazer, the public session adjourned at 1:44 p.m.

Krista Hester, Interim University Secretary