



**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**  
**Draft Minutes of the Meeting (Open Session) held on**  
**Tuesday, February 11, 2025, 3:00 p.m.**  
Videoconference

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Cheryl Fraser (Chair), Eshan Arora, Paul Beesley, Kim Brooks, Ryan Dee, Randolph de Gooyer, Ahsan Habib, Kristan Hines, Jay MacIsaac, Merle MacIsaac, Catherine MacPherson, Angela Siegel, Rustum Southwell, Louise Spiteri, Caroline Zayid, Jo Galarneau, Joyce Hoeven, Shona Kinley, Mariam Knakriah

**MEMBERS REGRETS:**

Catherine MacPherson

**NON-MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Matt Hebb (Vice-President Government and Global Relations), John Hope (General Counsel & University Secretary), Grace Jefferies-Aldridge (Vice President People & Culture), Gitta Kulczycki (Vice-President Finance and Administration) Jennifer Bain (Acting VP Research & Innovation), Wanda Costen (Provost & VP Academic), Judith Ng'ethe (Associate Secretary of Senate)

**GUESTS:**

Erin Stewart- Reid (Senior Advisor, President's Office and Communications), Graham Gagnon (Vice President Research and Innovation, Kate Winterton (Minute taker), Cheryl Earle (Assistant Vice-President, Financial Services)

**1. Approval of Agenda / Opening Remarks**

The agenda was approved as presented.

**2. University Research Partnerships: Reflection from a Researcher and Future Opportunities**

C. Fraser welcomed Graham Gagnon to the meeting and thanked him for having provided this presentation. She stated that G. Gagnon is the current Dean of Architecture and Planning and the incoming Acting Vice-President Research and Innovation.

G. Gagnon thanked the Board for the opportunity to present.

G. Gagnon shared his journey since joining Dalhousie in 1998, emphasizing partnerships in water research. He highlighted collaborations with industry, Indigenous communities, government, and utilities, which have provided students with hands-on experience, such as operating water treatment facilities and conducting wastewater research during COVID-19.

Key projects included:

- Halifax Water Lead Program (1998): Lead pipe replacement at no cost to residents.
- Atlantic First Nations Water Authority (2009): A First Nations-owned water utility.
- LuminUltra (2012): Development of wastewater surveillance for COVID-19.

- UV LED Wastewater Treatment: Research attracting international interest.
- Joint Regional Transportation Area: Policy-driven wastewater infrastructure planning.

He stressed the importance of capacity development, particularly in increasing female participation in water engineering. He also outlined significant industry investments in Dalhousie, with 32 companies contributing over \$1M since 2016.

C. Fraser concluded by emphasizing the university's vital role in water treatment research.

### **3. Consent Agenda**

#### **3.1 Search Committee for AVP Facilities Management Appointment**

**THAT the Board of Governors, on the recommendation of the Governance and Human Resources Committee, approves the appointment of Paul Beesley to the search committee for the Assistant Vice-President Facilities Management.**

**Approved by CONSENT.**

#### **3.2 Honorary Degrees Committee Appointment**

**THAT the Board of Governors, on the recommendation of the Governance and Human Resources Committee, approves the appointment of Shona Kinley to the Senate Honorary Degrees Committee.**

**Approved by CONSENT.**

### **4. Business Arising From the Minutes**

There was no business arising noted.

### **5. Chair's Report**

The Chair's Report was circulated with the meeting package.

C. Fraser provided condolences from the Board of Governors to the friends and family of Alexandria Wortman who was a Faculty of Arts student who tragically passed away on January 27, 2025. She announced that the flags at both King's and Dalhousie would be lowered to half-mast on February 12, 2025, which would have been Alexandria's 22 birthday.

C. Fraser extended a thanks to Gitta Kulczycki, the financial services team, and all others who had an input, for the difficult work that they have done in regard to the University budget.

C. Fraser congratulated Sachin Seth on being elected the new Chair of Senate effective July 1, 2025.

## 6. President's Report

The President's Report was circulated with the meeting package, K. Brooks took the time to discuss higher-order issues that the University had in their sights with a presentation entitled *10 Things That Keep University Presidents Up At Night*. Five were shared in this meeting, and five will be shared at the next board meeting.

K. Brooks highlighted **financial sustainability** as a key concern for universities globally, citing low productivity gains as a major challenge. She acknowledged CPFC's efforts, especially given Dalhousie's infrastructure demands.

K. Brooks emphasized the need for **new leadership approaches** to address evolving university challenges. Efforts are underway to improve leadership training and attract top faculty, staff, and students amid rising competition and workforce shifts.

K. Brooks highlighted threats to **university independence** from rising nationalism and populism. She stressed the need to protect academic freedom, foster critical debate, and balance open knowledge with national security concerns.

K. Brooks emphasized the **mental health crisis**, citing burnout, isolation, and the need for belonging and civil discourse in a polarized world.

K. Brooks noted **EDIA tensions**, with differing views on its extent and impact.

## 7. Dalhousie Student Union President's Report

The Dalhousie Student Union President's Report was circulated with the meeting package.

M. Knakriah highlighted key initiatives:

- **Maternity & Wellness Room:** Positive feedback from students, faculty, and staff.
- **Food Security:** Launched Beet Street Market; expanding with a permanent space. Increased food bank funding by \$40K.
- **Student Spaces:** Revamped The Grawood into a café/bar, boosting revenue and engagement.
- **Extended SUB Hours:** Now open 365 days, 6 AM–12 AM, with support available.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Participated in Bilateral Agreement discussions, advocating for student support and affordability.
- **DSU AGM:** Amended bylaws, restructured VP Student Life role.
- **Events:** Successful SnoFest (\$30K revenue) and record-high Late Night Breakfast attendance.
- **Global Support Fundraiser:** Partnering with Palestine Student Scholars at Risk, raising \$30K to support displaced students.

## 8. Items for Information

### 8.1 Report on ethical investing and divestment

J. MacIsaac informed the Board that a full report will be presented at the next meeting, as the current one is unfinished and unvetted.

Since the November Board meeting, various individual meetings have taken place, starting with the December 12 FAIR committee meeting. The DSU president was invited to present a report and motion for consideration. The FAIR committee sought advice from the investment committee, which

reported back in early February. FAIR then requested additional information and expects to receive it soon.

## **8.2 Update on the 2024-25 SAP and the 2025-2026 Bilateral Agreement**

K. Brooks reported positive progress on the Strategic Alignment Plan, including the receipt of several holdbacks from the Province, including the 97% occupancy of health seats and housing-related funds. The remaining housing holdback will be received after a development permit is submitted by February 15.

She mentioned submitting a report on 5% administrative savings, completing finance reporting, launching committees, and preparing an EDIA report due on February 15. Conversations about the next Bilateral Agreement with the Province are underway, with positive feedback from the new Minister about Dalhousie's alignment with government priorities. They've been asked to provide feedback by February 18.

M. Hebb added that the government's focus on economic issues creates more alignment opportunities for Dalhousie, but he remains cautious about fiscal challenges.

## **8.3 Draft Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) Report**

The Draft Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) Report was shared with the meeting package.

W. Costen highlighted that due to declining enrollment and a forecasted deficit for 2024-2025, BAC can't recommend a balanced budget for 2025-2026 but projects balance by 2027-2028. Cost reductions of \$26.7 million by 2027 - 2028 are expected through administrative transformation, and absorption of compensation increases in units and faculty budgets are expected to yield approximately \$50 million over the same time period. Total expense reduction will approximate \$75 million by 2027- 2028. The budget conservatively predicts flat enrollment, but efforts are focused on improving retention and increasing enrollment.

Some transformation initiatives will require investment in systems and project resources leading to an increased allocation for strategic initiatives. A 2% government grant increase is assumed in the budget.

W. Costen explained that program efficiency improvements would include better use of classroom space and more appealing academic offerings, with faculties responsible for ensuring program quality. L. Spiteri emphasized that program terminations should be based on academic, not financial reasons.

## **9. In-Camera Session**

The Board moved to a brief in-camera session.

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm.