

Item: Board of Governors Minutes, February 2005
Call Number: UA-1

Additional Notes:

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BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING
Dalhousie University
February 15, 2005

MINUTES

Members Present: Alison Archibald, Jamie Baillie, Elizabeth Beale, Bill Black, Robert Chisholm, Lorne Clarke, Murray Coolican, Jim Cowan, David Craig, Ezra Edelstein, Daurene Lewis, Cathy MacNutt, Sunny Marche, Curtis McGrath, Don Mills, Robert Radchuck, Suzanne Rosson, Michael Shepherd, Jim Spatz, Bruce Towler, Tom Traves.

Also Present: Carl Breckenridge, Bryan Mason, Eric McKee, William Maes, Ian Nason, Sam Scully, Kim Thomson, Jim Vibert, Gillian Wood, Catherine Young.

Regrets: Mo El-Hawary, Jay Forbes, Richard Goldbloom, Lynn Irving, Alasdair Sinclair.

Absent: Wesley Campbell, Kevin Grundy,

Approval of Proposed Agenda

1. The proposed agenda was approved as circulated.

2. Approval of Board Minutes

The Minutes of the November 23, 2004 meeting were approved as circulated.

3. Report of the Chair

- a. Mr. Jim Cowan reported the Dalhousie United Way Campaign reached its target of \$180K. He acknowledged this is a significant achievement for the organizers and Dalhousie community.
- b. He also reported Reg Milley has resigned from the Board as he has accepted the position of CEO with the Edmonton Airport Authority. A letter withdrawing his recommendation as an Order in Council appointment has gone to the Provincial Government.

4. Report of the President

- a. Dr. Tom Traves deferred his report as Sam Scully and Eric McKee will be discussing in detail the items he would normally report on during today's presentations to the Board.

5. Report of the Student Union President *circulated at meeting*

Mr. Curtis McGrath circulated a report to all members and gave a brief synopsis as follows:

- a. Student Union Elections will be held March 8 to 10 to elect a new Student Union Executive for the upcoming year.
- b. There will be a referendum held during the election to determine if there is interest in adding dental coverage to the health plan. The results of this referendum will be reported to the Board at a future meeting.
- c. The DSU and representatives of the graduate student societies recently met to discuss issues surrounding graduate student representation and the provision of Union services. A tentative agreement was reached subject to endorsement by the graduate student societies and ratification by the DSU Council.
- d. Tsunami Relief efforts by the student body resulted in a donation of over \$5K to the Canadian Red Cross.

- e. In November, at a recent Canadian Alliance of Students Associations conference in Ottawa, members met with over 160 Federal Government representatives. Students focused their lobby efforts on changes to the student aid, the creation of a pan-Canadian accord on post-secondary education and increased and dedicated funding from the federal government to the provinces for post-secondary education.
- f. On March 15-19, DSU and SMUSA will co-host the Annual General Meeting of CASA to assess past activities and future initiatives to accomplish long-term goals.
- g. The Executive Director of the Alliance of Nova Scotia Student Association and Mr. McGrath met with representatives from the Dept of Education to discuss a means to enhance student consultation.
- h. Mr. McGrath expressed that although he thought the MOU with the Province was "a step in the right direction", he regretted there was not student representation during those discussions and that students in the Faculties of Law, Medicine and Dentistry and international students are exempted from the MOU. The students unions will continue to lobby government and universities for inclusion in future discussions that impact student bodies.
- i. In a recent meeting with MetroTransit, student leaders were informed that the 2005 U-Pass is not feasible.
- j. Mr. McGrath then summarized DSU's response to the BACXXX report giving a brief critique of the three scenarios presented to increase international student differential fees. He expressed the DSU is not, in principle, opposed to charging differential fees to international students, and recognize the University's need to find alternate sources of revenue. However, the DSU do not believe the proposals are in the best interests of the students and the University.

Committee Reports

- 6. Audit Committee Report (*circulated in Board briefing package*)
 - a. Ms. Daurene Lewis, Chair, reported that Bryan Mason, Bruce Towler and she will be holding interviews for an internal auditor. Mr. Mills expressed his concern that Dalhousie University does not deem it necessary for the re-tendering of auditors on a regular basis.
- 7. Investment Committee Report (*circulated in Board briefing package*)
 - a. Mr. Robert Radchuck, Chair, reported that line 5 of the report should read ..."Canadian overseas and equity markets generated returns of 7.2% and 9.2% during this three-month period," ...
 - b. The Endowment Fund, The Pension Trust Fund and the Retirees' Trust Fund had returns of 7.6 and 7.8% for a nine-month period ending December 2004. Over the last ten years returns were 10.4%, 10.9% and 9.8% respectively, with inflation at 2%.
 - c. Mr. Radchuck reported there is a \$40M deficit in the Pension Fund. The actual evaluation of the plan's liability and funded status is scheduled for the end of June 2005.
 - d. There have been a number of changes to the membership of the Investment Committee and Trustees and Mr. Radchuck noted with thanks the work of the following members during their terms:
 - Peter Stuart resigned
 - Colin Latham's term on the Board ended
 - Bob Winters and Don Keith completed their terms
 - e. He also welcomed Bill Black and Jay Forbes to the Committee. He also advised that Ms. Ann Marie Thomas is the new consultant.

8. Staff Relations Committee (*circulated with Board briefing package*)

- a. Mr. Lorne Clarke, Chair, reported that there is some fallout from the Board's decision to eliminate the practice of permitting withdrawals from the Pension Plan after 1 July 2005 for employees who are entitled to an immediate pension upon termination of employment. This has led to arbitration and possible court action. Arbitration will soon be completed and we will wait for a report from the Arbitrator, Ms. Gail Brent.
- b. The Committee is pleased with the financial status of the Life LTD and Dental Plans.
- c. Contract negotiations with Local 77 of NSGEU are continuing and it is hopeful that progress will continue to be made.
- d. The Grievance Reports are encouraging with very few grievances relative to the number of employees. Mr. Clarke noted Mr. Roughneen and his employees deserve a great deal of credit for the matter in which the grievance process is handled.
- e. Mike Shepherd expressed concern that the 1 July 2005 deadline for employees who are entitled to withdrawal their pensions should be extended until a final legal decision on this issue is made. Mr. Traves responded that it is the expectation that this matter will be resolved before the end of June and therefore everybody will be in a position to take their own counsel on how to proceed. In the event that the Board's position is overturned in arbitration, then clearly the policy will no longer be in effect. However, in the event it is upheld people will at least know which option they may pursue. Should a decision not be made closer to the end of the academic year, then individual cases will be looked at and suggestions such as Mr. Shepherd's will be taken under advisement.

Other Committee Business

Student Relations and Residence Committee Report

- a. Ms. Suzanne Rosson, Chair, reported that at the Committee's April and November meetings the University's funding formula and financial models were discussed. Further discussions will be held by the Committee and the results of these discussions will be taken to the Budget Advisory Committee.

Items Requiring Action

9. Appointment of Secretary to the Board

- a. It was moved by Tom Traves and seconded by Lorne Clarke:

THAT Bonnie Van Buskirk be appointed as Secretary to the Board of Governors.

Motion carried.

10. Investment Committee and Pension Trust Revisions (*circulated with Board briefing package*)

- a. Mr. Mason reported that the proposed revisions were circulated with the Board package. A review of the membership and terms of reference for the two groups of Trustees - Pension Fund and Retirees Fund was undertaken. It was determined that ex-officio members of the Trustees who found it difficult to impossible to attend meetings might create potential legal problems for themselves, the Trustees and ultimately the Board. Therefore a minor change is suggested in the revised membership so that the Chair of the Board, who under Board practice and policy is ex-officio of all Board committees, will no longer be an ex-officio member of the two groups of Trustees. Mr. Mason also reported that the terms of reference were also reviewed and it was found that the Board had agreed to amend the terms of reference for the two Trust Funds and that change was not reflected in the By-Laws of the Board that govern these terms of reference. The change relates to the authority of the Trustees to employ suitable agents and counsel, and the following change requests that the University appoint such agents and counsel as required.

It was moved by Tom Traves and seconded by Bob Radchuck

THAT the proposed changes to the composition and terms of reference for the Investment Committee, Pension Fund Trustee and the Retirees Fund Trustee be amended as circulated. Motion carried.

Items for Discussion

The following is a brief synopsis of the presentations to the Board by Dr. Scully, Mr. McKee and Mr. Bill Maes. Each presentation is available in power point format on the Board of Governors website.

11. Enrolment Management and Planning Report #7 (circulated with Board briefing package)

- a. Dr. Scully gave a brief overview of today's presentations. He commented that Dr. Maes' presentation will reveal how today's information technology has revolutionized the library system and the way we retrieve information.
- b. Dr. Scully reported there is a great deal of nervousness around our enrolments. Dalhousie's enrolments have grown by 25% over the last decade. All faculties have seen enrolment growth with the exception of Computer Science in the undergraduate and graduate levels. He briefed the Board members on Dalhousie's enrolments figures, the planned increase and the three major contributing factors to the shortfall. He advised high school enrolments will drop by 20% by 2015 in each of the four Atlantic Provinces. He explained the importance of Ontario as a source for enrolment and the recruitment measures undertaken to increase enrolments. He advised that Dalhousie's goal to have 18,000 students enrolled by the end of the decade is possible and explained the two major items required to attain that goal: 1. to convert applications into accepted offers, and 2. to improve retention rates. He ended with the three guiding principles to overall student body: quality, shape and composition, and sustainability.

12. Student Survey Report

- a. Mr. McKee reported on the results of the Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium of First-Year University Students: Spring 2004. He briefed the Board on the reasons why students choose to come to Dalhousie, the kinds of students Dalhousie is attracting and retaining, their experience both academically and socially once they are here, and the issues highlighted by the survey results:
 - transition to university
 - registration/class selection process
 - academic advising
 - HRM/commuter experience (including parking)
 - Maclean's
 - residence
 - quality of teaching
 - career information/services

13. Curriculum and Program Development: *Some Themes and Issues*

- a. Dr. Scully highlighted that Dalhousie University has been very successful in allowing students to cross borders between faculties. He explained how a diverse range of study abroad opportunities for individuals and student groups is a growing issue of importance to Dalhousie University. He described the growing importance of languages and cultural studies within the curriculum. One of the major issues the university will have to deal with

in the immediate future is the study of Asia and Chinese languages as the Chinese fact will affect all of us. A global international and rapidly developing enrolment climate at Dalhousie has led to International Studies as one of the most popular majors at this time in the Faculty of Arts and Social Studies in any of the graduate programs. Another development in student support is our Co-op Education Program. Our experiential learning program draws very large numbers especially in Engineering and Management. The numbers indicate that one in five undergraduate students is involved in co-op learning.

- b. Issues that require significant discussion and investment are:
- Writing: students are under prepared for university.
 - IT literacy: Dalhousie is investing significantly from the strategic initiative money to try to build our capacity.
 - Academic Integrity: a major issue in modern universities and connected to IT. More discussion is needed to address this very serious issue.
 - Quality of Teaching: Students are very generous when rating their professors and it is clear that although Dalhousie University has many fine professors there is room for improvement.

14. Academic Support Developments

- a. Mr. McKee reported that Dalhousie is further developing several academic support initiatives, those being:
- Academic Advising: additional advisors are available in the different faculties, Registrar's Office, as well as the Student Advising Office.
 - Writing: A writing resource centre is available; however, Mr. McKee feels it will only be fully effective if it is part of a larger strategy that is being developed. As part of the Learning Connections project, a full credit writing tutor course is being developed in FASS. This course will train senior undergraduate students to serve as writing tutors in other courses.
 - Expanding support for students in academic difficulty: by further developing the study skills program, hiring a full-time counselor for students with learning difficulties, instituting an academic initiative program in the residences to allow students to live in clusters according to their academic programs, and by creating an information literacy program. Finally, in September, the electronic portfolio program will be available.

At the end of these presentations Dr. Scully added that a lot of the information presented is focused on the transition of students from first contact through until the completion of year one. The literature suggests that if the first sixteen months are good ones, students will not only be successful academically, but successful in other ways. On the other hand, there is a component that says that the University does not provide the necessary help to succeed when students find themselves in academic difficulty. The Learning Connections project which Mr. McKee is leading is designed primarily to try to get to the students when they need the help. He is confident this will pay off for our students and the University.

15. The Library, On Line and On Shelf: A Resource and Learning Environment for Students

- a. Mr. Maes reported that although Dalhousie is referred to as a traditional university, the library is by no means traditional. Libraries have changed tremendously in the past five years in response to new technology opportunities. He provided an overview of today's library users and the expectation to have simple direct access immediately on demand

regardless of the complexity of the environment; where library funding is spent; the differences in the way we retrieve information from the resources available; how information is stored and archived; and the importance of the library to the University goals and students needs. He concluded with the necessary requirements for the libraries of tomorrow.

Mr. Cowan thanked Mr. Maes for his presentation and to all those who presented today.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Don Mills
Honorary Secretary

James Cowan
Chair

The meetings of the Board of Governors are recorded and the tapes are available for review in the office of the Secretary.