



## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

St. Francis Xavier University Board of Governors

Friday, June 14, 2024 – 9:00 am

Charles V. Keating Centre Conference Rooms

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

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

#### WELCOME, ROLL CALL, LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND PRAYER

D. Flood called the June 14, 2024, meeting of the Board of Governors to order at 9:00a. 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/P. MARZLIN) **Motion carried.**

D. Flood asked if any Governors had a conflict of interest with agenda items and none were declared except for board members/staff who are being nominated for committee roles and positions (see 12.3. A. Vadnai – Advancement & External Relations, Governance & Nominating and Property and Risk Management Committees; F. Chang – Finance Committee; M. Gillis – Audit & Investment Committee; MJ MacLellan – Board Secretary).

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**MOTION:** That the minutes from the Board of Governors meeting held on February 23, 2024, be approved as circulated. (W. SWEET/R. CHISHOLM). **Motion carried.**

**MOTION:** That the minutes from the Board of Governors meeting held on April 16, 2024, be approved as circulated. (W. KIRKPATRICK/M. GILLIS). **Motion carried.**

### 4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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

- Luke White, a third-year student in the Gerald Schwartz School of Business was one of eight students from across Atlantic Canada recognized for their outstanding achievements by the award of a prestigious \$45,000 Frank H. Sobey Awards for Excellence in Business Studies.
- The achievements of four StFX faculty members were celebrated at Convocation. Dr. Leona English, Department of Adult Education, received the distinction of professor emerita; Dr.

Dan Robinson, Faculty of Education, was awarded the University Research Award; and Outstanding Teaching Awards went to Dr. Peter Kikkert, Public Policy and Governance, and to Dr. Riley Olstead, Department of Sociology.

- Dr. Erin Austen, psychology professor and department chair, was the recipient of a 3M National Teaching Fellowship.
- The recent Deveau gift of \$13.5 million allowed the University to match a gift, from the McCall MacBain Foundation, to create the Centre for Black Student Success. Providing full funding for the Centre's first two years, the Deveau gift will support the academic journey of our Black students' by providing Afrocentric spaces and programming intended to remove barriers associated with social isolation and anxiety, as well as academic and financial stress.
- The university was once again pleased to host the Paqtnkek Powwow in April this year. University staff and students supported the event which demonstrated Mi'kmaq culture at its finest with traditional drumming, dancing, traditional regalia, Indigenous crafts and more.
- During our Spring Convocation weekend, the university celebrated with the first-ever Pin Ceremony for our Indigenous, Inuit, and Métis graduates. Graduands were honored with special pins designed by Elder-in-Residence Kerry Prosper '09.
- On February 29, we lost a member of our community; a true Xaverian, leader, mentor, and friend to StFX, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney. Mr. Mulroney was an extraordinary man. The campus community will miss his visits. He had a remarkable impact on and a deep love for his country, for StFX, this community, and most importantly, his family. His impact on campus will be felt for generations to come.
- Spring Convocation 2024 saw more than 1,000 graduates convocate from across Canada and the world. Four extraordinary individuals, who have helped improve society, in education, business, and philanthropy, were recognized with honorary degrees. Doctor of Laws *honoris causa* were presented to Stephen A. Schwarzman, philanthropist, and chairman, CEO, and co-founder of Blackstone, one of the world's leading investment firms; Christine Schwarzman, lawyer, philanthropist, and patron of arts and culture; Elder Sister Dorothy Moore, educator, activist, and respected Mi'kmaw elder; and Tom Langley, former StFX Vice-President Finance and Administration.
- In connection to the recent conflict between Israel and Palestine, the university administration and Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Governors have received demands to disclose, divest and terminate partnerships with Israeli institutions. An initial university response to the demands was made but to date, no formal response has been received. University administration continue to monitor and take advice on the situation.
- In April, at the annual Spring meeting of Universities Canada, President Hakin was pleased to represent Maritime universities in a Cross Canada Checkup session and was voted onto the Board of Directors of Universities Canada.
- The President and Advancement team have been active in looking for continuous student scholarship support for the Gerald Schwartz School of Business.
- Over \$162,000 was raised at the StFX Day of Giving, held on March 26. These contributions will ensure more students will be able to afford a StFX education and dream big for the future.
- The University is continuing to work diligently with the Province of Nova Scotia to submit a Strategic Alignment Plan in response to the government's new approach to funding postsecondary institutions.

## 5. ACADEMIC VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST REPORT

Dr. Cockshutt, Academic Vice President and Provost, provided a written report for circulation and offered some highlights regarding enrollment and the strategic alignment plan:

- Applications, offers of admissions and confirmations continue to trend well for the 2024-25 academic year. At present, we are at 87 more direct from high school confirmations than last year at this time. We are comparable to the incoming class of the 2020-2021 year. There are increased confirmations in our BEd program as well as from our international applicants.
- Residence applications also continued to be higher than previous years.
- There is continued growth in the PBD programs.
- Much work is being done to complete the Strategic Alignment proposal submission. Completing the submission is an incredible toll on the resources of the university but this work is crucial as it will help to determine the critical funding from the Province of NS.

A. Cockshutt welcomed questions on the university recruitment landscape, the impact of the additional funding to attract BScN students and the recent IRCC restrictions and challenges.

## 6. FINANCIAL UPDATE

### 6.1 2023-24 FINANCIAL RESULTS

M. Foster, Vice President, Finance and Administration, presented the financial results for 2023-24 fiscal year. There was an overall deficit of \$2.066 million (an operations surplus of \$2.88 million, with an ancillary surplus of \$1.165 million, netted against capital fund deficit of \$6.11 million). In February, it was projected, based on actual results to the end of December 2023, that the University would end the year with a deficit of \$8.022 million. M. Foster outlined budget highlights that attributed to the difference. Discussion and questions ensued.

### 6.2 2024-25 FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

M. Foster advised that, at present, the current 2024-25 budget is on target. Both confirmations and residence applications are on target. Departments continue to be mindful and every opportunity to minimize expense will be maximized to ensure sustainability.

### 6.3 MULTI-YEAR FORECAST

M. Foster shared a multi-year financial outlook to 2026-27 and indicated that for the 2024-25 year, much deferred money will be used to ensure the approved budget is met. As the years progress, the available cash will be further depleted, and larger deficits may be anticipated as we are unable to predict government funding, etc.

## 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 Health and Counselling Centre expanded staff through the reallocation of existing budget, new grant funding and successful physician recruitment to better meet students' medical, sexual, and mental health needs, including attracting additional physicians to fill the 1.0 provincially allocated and funded complement. A new full-time (sessional) Clinical Therapist position was added partway through the year, giving us a total of four full-time Clinical Therapists. We also hired a full-time Counsellor (grant funded) who is dedicated to the Black

Student Success Centre and will also provide mental health support to students from the wider student body through the Health and Counselling Centre.

- The Religious Inclusion Working Group of PACAR has developed draft documents on inclusive dates, and an inclusive calendar with associated communication, guidelines for religious accommodations, and an inclusive holiday guide. Next steps include continued dialogue and collaboration to bolster religious inclusion and update the PACAR accountability framework.
- The Transition and First Year Experience Working has provided advice on several initiatives: pathways to access for historically underrepresented groups, living learning communities in residence, and orientation and transition with diversity engagement programs.

E. Yeo welcomed questions on the Xaverian experience and inclusivity.

## 8. STUDENTS' UNION REPORT

F. Chang, President, Students' Union, highlighted a few points from his written report submitted to the Board including:

- The Golden X Inn renovations are now complete, and opportunities are available for alumni to financially support with recognition provided through a donor wall.
- The new executive team and board of directors are transitioning to their new roles and are excited about the opportunities to collaborate and build positive relationships.
- The Maritime Student Congress was held at StFX in late May. The Congress provided an opportunity to learn more about governance and to understand how different student unions operate.
- Two members of executive team will hold board positions at student advocacy organizations this year: Islam Tariq Ahmed, VP External Affairs, will serve as Vice-Chair of StudentsNS (SNS) and Francisco Chang will serve as Treasurer of Canadian Alliance of Students Association (CASA).
- Shyanna Denny will serve as the National Indigenous Advocate Committee (NIAC) delegate to CASA.
- Thanks to the StFX Alumni Association who supported the DriveU program with a gift of \$28,000.
- TheU's food resource centre, Kevin's Corner, is being renovated. The renovation will allow for better traffic flow and organization of food, along with a new food preparation area.
- Over the past few months, there has been growing support for the student-led group "StFX Students For Palestine." This group has been actively emailing the StFX administration and board members regarding three specific requests: to disclose, divest, and end partnerships with Israeli academic institutions. On behalf of The U, F. Chang, wants to bring awareness to the existence and grievances of this group.

## 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:

- Kudos to the team in Advancement for their recent work on the Convocation activities. There were several special guests on campus who left with memories of a remarkable experience.
- The hiring of a new social media manager has resulted in some wonderful elevation of our social media channels.

- Robin Levy has been hired in the campaign manager position. Robin brings many years of fundraising and campaign strategy design and implementation to StFX.
- The sod turning for the Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Hall is scheduled for July 5, 2024. Board members are invited and encouraged to attend.

#### 10. ALUMNI ASSOCIATION REPORT

M. Gillis, President, Alumni Association, highlighted a few points from his written report submitted to the Board including:

- The Association is well positioned with a strong strategic plan and in a strong financial position as we look to the years ahead.
- The Association is committed to a productive year as leaders and chapters will be challenged to track deliverables to measure our progress.
- Partnerships with TheU and the University as a whole are critical to the Association's success.
- Promotion of the University and the Xaverian spirit are critical to the Association's mission.

#### 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:

- On May 31, StFX alumnus David Rankin '14 '18 was ordained to the Priesthood at St. Ninian's Cathedral.
- This year, the Vicar of the Founder Lecture series will feature Dr. Darlene O'Leary, Coordinator of the Martha Justice Minister, who will present on the theme of *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation*.

#### 12. RECEIVING OF REPORTS

##### 12.1 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

##### 12.4 FINANCE COMMITTEE

##### 12.6 ADVANCEMENT & EXTERNAL RELATIONS

D. Flood referred Board members to the draft minutes circulated from each recent committee meeting for updates.

##### 12.2 AUDIT & INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

**MOTION:** That the Audit and Investment Committee recommend to the Board that the Investment Committee Report for the quarter ended March 31, 2024, be approved as circulated. (M. FURLOTTE/J. O'REILLY). **Motion carried.**

##### 12.3 GOVERNANCE & NOMINATING COMMITTEE

K. Gardiner (Chair, Governance & Nominating Committee) brought forward the following motions:

A. Vadnai, F. Chang, M. Gillis and MJ MacLellan exited the meeting for relative motions having previously declared a conflict of interest.

**MOTION:** That the Governance and Nominating Committee recommend to the Board that student representative Avery Vadnai be appointed to the Advancement & External Relations Committee, the

Governance and Nominating Committee, and the Property & Risk Management Committee. (K. GARDINER/R. CHISHOLM). **Motion carried.**

**MOTION:** That the Governance and Nominating Committee recommend to the Board that Students' Union President Francisco Chang be appointed to the Finance Committee. (K. GARDINER/R. CHISHOLM). **Motion carried.**

**MOTION:** That the Governance and Nominating Committee recommend to the Board that StFX Alumni Association President Michael Gillis be appointed to the Audit & Investment Committee. (K. GARDINER/W. SWEET). **Motion carried.**

**MOTION:** That the Governance and Nominating Committee recommend to the Board that Mary Jessie MacLellan be appointed as Acting Secretary to the Board commencing July 1, 2024, and continuing until such time as a candidate can be hired in this position. (K. GARDINER/S. PARIS DRUMMOND). **Motion carried.**

#### **12.5 PROPERTY & RISK COMMITTEE**

**MOTION:** That the Property and Risk Committee recommend to the Board to move forward with discussions with the Province for a land lease with the Province on International House and for StFX to accept the negotiated insurance settlement (R. CHISHOLM/W. SWEET). **Motion carried.**

#### **13. HOUSEKEEPING AND FUTURE BUSINESS**

D. Flood noted that the next regular meeting of the Board would be on October 18, 2024.

Special thanks to John Peacock for his time, treasure and talent in his role as Chancellor.

#### **14. ADJOURNMENT**

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