

Item: Board of Governors Minutes, April 2009
Call Number: UA-1

Additional Notes:

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BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Approved Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, April 14, 2009 (Open Session) University Hall, Macdonald Building

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Spatz (Chair), Jamie Baillie, Nancy Barkhouse, Elizabeth Beale, Level Chan, Robert Chisholm, James Cowan, Fred Fountain, Lloyd Fraser, Lynn Irving, Courtney Larkin, Sunny Marche, Gail Tomblin Murphy, David Russell, Chris Smith, Stan Spavold, Lawrence Stordy, Bruce Towler, Tom Traves, Jim Wilson, Shannon Zimmerman, and Susan Brousseau (University Secretary)

REGRETS: Jay Abbass, Michelle Awad, William Black, Wadih Fares, Nancy MacCready-Williams

NON-MEMBERS: Mary Jane Adams, Ken Burt, Martha Crago, Floyd Dykeman, Jeff Lamb, David Mensink, Bonnie Neuman, Alan Shaver

GUESTS: John Crace, Trevor McIntyre, Larry Sherman, Jamie Wright (IBI Group consultants) [Item 8.2]

1. Approval of the Agenda

J. Spatz proposed that Items 6 and 7 be reversed on the agenda in order to allow the President time to arrive following the first *in camera* session.

Moved by R. Chisholm, seconded by L. Chan:

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

The motion CARRIED.

2. Approval of Minutes of the Meeting held on February 17, 2009.

Moved by Bruce Towler, seconded by S. Marche:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on February 17, 2009 be approved as circulated.

The motion CARRIED.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising.

4. *In Camera* Session

At the conclusion of this *in camera* session, J. Spatz, Chair of the Board, announced that the Board had unanimously approved the reappointment of President Tom Traves for a three-year term from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2013.

5. Chair's Report

J. Spatz reported on the resolutions passed by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Board since the last meeting of the Board. The resolutions are as follows:

THAT the Board of Governors, on the recommendation of the Operations Committee, approve the contract for sale of the land and building known as Fenwick Place to Templeton Properties. (Approved February 26, 2009)

THAT the Board of Governors, on the recommendation of the Operations Committee, approve the projects identified as institutional priority for submission under the Federal Government's Knowledge Infrastructure Program. (Approved March 26, 2009)

Dr. Spatz thanked Courtney Larkin and David Russell who are completing their terms as student Board members on April 30, 2009, and presented both with a gift as a small token of the Board's appreciation. He noted that Shannon Zimmerman will return to the Board as the newly elected DSU President for 2009-10. Her nomination, and the nominations of the two new student representatives, Janet Conrad and Adam Harris, are on the agenda today for approval.

6. Dalhousie Student Union President's Report

C. Larkin referred members to her written report and noted a number of recent highlights, including the election of a new DSU Executive and Board and Senate representatives who will begin their terms on May 1st; the DSU's annual general meeting which generated significant discussion around several issues; and the annual Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) Lobby Conference in Ottawa. With respect to the latter item, she noted the CASA lobby document attached to her report which details a number of proposals CASA is advancing in support of strengthening post-secondary education in Canada to ensure that it is accessible, affordable and of the highest quality.

Ms. Larkin noted that this is her last report as Dalhousie Student Union President and expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the Board and its various committees. She expressed her wish that Board members will continue their dedicated work on behalf of Dalhousie students.

7. President's Report

T. Traves noted that there have been almost daily developments in the discussions with the provincial government over the last number of weeks and for this reason he is presenting a verbal report in order to provide the Board with the most up-to-date information. With respect to the government operating grant, he reviewed the recent communication with government representatives concerning the second year of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the various proposals that have been presented to the universities for consideration. Under the agreement, the University system was to have seen an increase of \$30 million in 2009-10 to cover increases in operating costs and the impact for the universities of continuing to hold tuition fees at current levels. He reported that, on March 31, 2009, the government transferred \$256 million to the University system from its operating surplus as a pre-payment of funds committed for 2009-10, with an indication that the remaining \$62 million would be transferred as part of the base budget for 2009-10. This pre-payment of funding has been the government's practice over the past number of years and, while these funds are welcome, it continues to raise serious concerns for the universities

around how the government will continue to sustain this practice of relying on its surplus to meet its commitments, particularly given the more difficult economic circumstances. Currently, it is anticipated that there will be a cut to the operating funding committed under the MOU and this will be somewhere in the range of \$1.5 million to \$4.5 million (a roughly \$750,000 to \$2.3 million cut for Dalhousie). On the positive side, the provincial government is proceeding with the changes to the funding formula and this will certainly benefit Dalhousie in terms of recognizing its enrolment growth. Additionally, the government has committed some funding to allow the universities to participate in the federal Knowledge Infrastructure Program (KIP), although the amount is not yet known.

Dr. Traves also reported on the planned Health Sciences complex and noted that, based on recent discussions, the government may provide the University with an increase in its operating grant which would be sufficient to allow the University to borrow \$10 million to commence the project. Dalhousie would then need to find approximately \$20 million to complete the complex. This project has been included as one of the University's submissions under the Knowledge Infrastructure Program and if the University is successful in this competition, it should be in a good position to proceed.

Lastly, Dr. Traves reported on the significant concerns around the design and funding of the Dalhousie Pension Plan which, if unresolved, will have a major impact on the University's operating budget. There have been preliminary discussions with the employee groups concerning potential reforms, but these will become much more focused in the near future.

Given all of these continuing issues and uncertainties and the renewal of his term for an additional three years, Dr. Traves announced that he intends to begin a new strategic planning process over the next several months. He anticipates preparing a beginning discussion paper for review by the Board and the University community in the fall.

8. ITEMS FOR PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION

8.1 Budget Advisory Committee Update

A. Shaver, Vice-President Academic and Provost, provided an update on the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) budget planning process. He reported that much of the uncertainty that the BAC was dealing with in developing its draft report in December has continued and noted briefly the various areas where fluctuations have been felt. The strategy of BAC in recent deliberations has been to maintain the bottom line at a \$3.7 million shortfall (which is approximately equal to a 2% unit budget cut). Any gains and losses in revenue have been reflected in the strategic priorities budget line to build as large a fund in this area as possible. It was anticipated until recently that the strategic priorities fund would be in the order of \$7.7 million; however, if Dalhousie's share of the provincial government operating grant cut is closer to \$2.4 million, this could be more in the range of \$5.3 million. The use of strategic priorities funding has not changes substantially; it is anticipated that these funds will support some existing commitments from last year, various capital projects (to take advantage of the federal infrastructure funding program, etc.), as well as requests from other areas of the University aimed at strengthening academic programming, enrolment and recruitment.

Dr. Shaver noted that the University is also considering other options including the elimination of credit card payments for tuition and residence fees which currently cost the University approximately \$1 million in fees.

8.2 Campus Master Plan – Progress Report #1

K. Burt, Vice-President Finance and Administration, provided a brief status report on the Campus Master Plan process, which was followed by a presentation by the project consultants, IBI Group. The consultants reported that they have completed their first progress report and this has been circulated to Board members. The consultants reviewed the eight key themes that have evolved through their consultations with a wide variety of groups and that will help to shape the Plan. These are: Dalhousie's need to compete; the integration and connectivity of the campuses; the urban role and intensification of the University; the importance of Sexton Campus in the "downtown"; a focus on student experience; University Avenue as a significant corridor; transportation demand management; and a continuing commitment to sustainability. The consultants outlined the five development strategies they have advanced in the report and shared with the Board their preliminary conceptual planning for each of the campus areas – Main (Studley), Health Sciences (Carleton) and Downtown (Sexton) – as well as the important corridor of University Avenue which connects the three campuses.

The discussion following the presentation included a variety of questions and comments on such areas as the determination of the University's actual space needs (versus "wants"), the balancing of heritage and contemporary styles in developing the Plan, and parking and transportation issues. Board members were particularly interested in understanding how the Plan will encourage and support greater integration among the three campuses (and the teaching and research activities that occur on all three), and internal and external connectivity.

The consultants reported on the next phase of the project which will involve focused project and area planning, a variety of technical studies (some of which have already been undertaken) and continuing consultation within and outside the University. It is anticipated that the Phase Two progress report will be circulated in the fall.

8.3 Federal Infrastructure Fund Projects - Update

K. Burt briefly updated Board members on the University's submission under the federal Knowledge Infrastructure Program. Dalhousie has submitted ten projects totaling \$160 million, as detailed in the materials provided in the agenda package. The top two priorities are the Life Sciences Centre (LSC) retrofit and the Health Sciences and Business Incubation Complex. According to the information the University has at this point in time, the federal government will adjudicate each project and determine which ones will be funded. The provincial governments have been asked to provide a list of provincially approved projects and the LSC project was on the list submitted by the Nova Scotia government; the province has also confirmed that the other Dalhousie projects are approved priorities as well. At this point, the Nova Scotia government has committed \$20 million for infrastructure projects and Dalhousie should receive roughly half of that funding.

8.4 Long Term Financial Planning Committee Report

Board members agreed to defer this item until the next meeting due to time constraints.

8.5 Enrolment Management Steering Committee Update

Board members agreed to defer this item until the next meeting due to time constraints.

9. ITEMS FOR DECISION

9.1 Appointment of Student Board Members

Moved by B. Towler, seconded by J. Wilson:

THAT the Board of Governors, on the recommendation of the Governance Committee, approve the appointment of Shannon Zimmerman as a student Board Member from May 1, 2009 to April 30, 2010, and the appointments of Janet Conrad and Adam Harris as student Board Members from May 1, 2009 to April 30, 2011.

The motion CARRIED.

9.2 2009-10 Student Fees

9.2.1 2009-2010 Residence Fees

Moved by E. Beale, seconded by S. Marche:

THAT the Board of Governors, on the recommendation of the Operations Committee, approve the 2009-10 Residence Room and Board Rate Schedule as presented, consistent with the terms of the Provincial MOU.

The motion CARRIED.

9.2.2 U-Pass Fee

Moved by E. Beale, seconded by N. Barkhouse:

THAT the Board of Governors, on the recommendation of the Operations Committee, approve the 2009-10 U-Pass fee of \$118 for full time students consistent with the terms of the Provincial MOU.

The motion CARRIED.

9.2.3 Student Services Fee

Moved by E. Beale, seconded by J. Cowan:

THAT, based on the recommendation of the Operations Committee, the Board of Governors approve the 2009-10 Student Services Fee at \$113 per term for full-time students with other fees adjusted accordingly consistent with the terms of the Provincial MOU.

Following the introduction of this motion, S. Zimmerman moved and C. Larkin seconded an amendment to the motion:

THAT the original motion be divided to consider separately the proposed \$8 per term increase for the athletics fee component of the 2009-10 Student Services fee and the proposed \$5 per term increase for the health services component of the 2009-10 Student Services fee.

The motion CARRIED.

E. Beale reported that the proposed Student Services fee will mean an increase of \$13 per term for full-time students. She briefly reviewed the discussion of this proposal at the recent Operations Committee meeting and noted that there was some concern about the increase, the precedent it may set in terms of how students are asked to pay for services, and the fact that student consultation had not taken place before the proposal came to the Operations Committee. The Operations Committee approved the motion for recommendation to the Board, but felt that the issue merited wider discussion at the Board level.

Lengthy discussion followed with questions particularly focused on the nature and extent of the student consultation and how the various services for students have been funded in the past. It was noted that athletics is an ancillary operation and the services have primarily been covered by student fees. The inclusion of counseling services under the health fee is new; these services have previously been funded out of the operating budget. It was also noted that this fee increase is permitted by the MOU and that students will still pay less in 2009-10 as a result of the provincial government bursary; asking students to pay a small increase is perhaps not unreasonable, particularly when the University is facing cuts to its operating grant. Students would essentially be contributing about \$76,000 for the additional counseling services while the University provides about \$550,000 to support this area.

Board members agreed that counseling is a critical service for students and deserves support but questioned whether it is appropriate to shift a portion of the cost to students through the fee increase. There was also concern that student Board members (and other students they heard from), felt that the consultation process was inadequate given that it occurred during the last week of classes. Following this discussion, the Board voted on the following motions.

THAT the Board of Governors approve the 2009-10 increase in the athletics fee component of the Student Services fee of \$8 per term for full-time students with other fees adjusted accordingly consistent with the terms of the Provincial MOU.

The motion CARRIED.

THAT the Board of Governors approve the 2009-10 fee increase in the health services component of the Student Services fee of \$5 per term for full-time students with other fees adjusted accordingly consistent with the terms of the Provincial MOU.

The motion CARRIED.

9.2.4 Facilities Renewal Fee

Moved by E. Beale, seconded by J. Cowan:

THAT, based on the recommendation of the Operations Committee, the Board of Governors approve an increase of \$1 in the 2009-10 Facilities Renewal Fee to \$45 per term for full-time students, consistent with the terms of the Provincial MOU.

The motion CARRIED.

9.3 Interim Spending Authority

Moved by E. Beale, seconded by R. Chisholm:

THAT in order to allow the continued operation of the University until such time as the 2009-10 operating budget is given final approval, the Board of Governors authorize expenditures of up to 25% of the 2008-09 approved operating budget amounts. The President or his designate, in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Board, is authorized to approve expenditures in excess of 25% in special cases to permit the orderly management of the University.

The motion CARRIED.

10. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

10.1 Board Standing Committee Reports

J. Spatz referred members to the reports of a number of standing committees which were distributed in the agenda packages. The brief presentations on the Steering, Executive and Governance Committees were deferred until the next meeting.

11. IN CAMERA SESSION

The Board moved *in camera* for the remainder of the meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.