

Item: Board of Governors Minutes, February 2010
Call Number: UA-1

Additional Notes:

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BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Approved Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, February 16, 2010 (Open Session) University Hall, Macdonald Building

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Spatz (Chair), Jay Abbass, Michelle Awad, Jamie Baillie, Nancy Barkhouse, Wadih Fares, Fred Fountain, Lloyd Fraser, Adam Harris, Lynn Irving, Nancy MacCready-Williams, Sarah MacDonald, George McLellan, Chris Smith, Stan Spavold, Lawrence Stordy, Gail Tomblin-Murphy, Bruce Towler, Tom Traves, Jim Wilson, Shannon Zimmerman, and S. Brousseau (University Secretary)

REGRETS: Andrew Bennett, Bill Black, Robert Chishom, Janet Conrad and Jennifer Smith

NON-MEMBERS: Ken Burt, Martha Crago, Floyd Dykeman, Thomas Marrie, Terry Mitchell, Bonnie Neuman, Alan Shaver, and Katie Smith (University Secretariat, Minute Taker)

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by J. Abbass, seconded by L. Stordy:

THAT the agenda be approved as presented.

The motion CARRIED.

2. Consent Agenda

J. Spatz noted that the Consent Agenda is being introduced for the first time at this meeting. He reviewed the purpose of the Consent Agenda and the process for the disposition of items on this agenda. No requests were received to move items from the Consent Agenda to the Regular Agenda.

Moved by W. Fares, seconded by L. Stordy:

THAT items 2.1-2.2 be approved by Consent.

The motion CARRIED.

2.1 Approval of Minutes of Meeting of December 1, 2009

Motion: **THAT the minutes of the meeting held on December 1, 2009 be approved as circulated.**

Approved by Consent.

2.2 Appointment of Audit Committee Member

THAT the Board of Governors, on the recommendation of the Governance Committee, approve the appointment of Louise Upton as a public member on the Board Audit Committee for a term from February 16, 2010 to June 30, 2010.

Approved by *Consent*.

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

3.1 Faculty of Medicine Accreditation Process

T. Marrie presented a brief report to update Board members on the current status of the undergraduate medical education program accreditation and the Faculty of Medicine's progress in addressing the "accredited on probation" status handed down from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) last year. He also noted that the Faculty recently received news that its students achieved the highest mean score in the country on the first part of the licensing exam just completed. This is the first time this result has been achieved since at least 1996.

Questions following this report focused on the projected budget to return to positive accreditation status, how this is being funded, and the timeline for the process. The goal is still to resolve all issues within 18 months and to implement the first year curriculum changes in September 2010.

3.2 Report on Current University Accreditation Processes

Alan Shaver, Vice-President Academic and Provost, briefly reviewed the report provided to Board members. He noted that the report takes the form of an audit that identifies the programs subject to accreditation and evaluates the University's situation in terms of current accreditation status, processes in place to ensure compliance, and an assessment of the risk of a change in current program status at the next accreditation.

Questions and discussion following the presentation focused on the estimation of risk noted with respect to a couple of programs, and whether the University should consider the creation of a position responsible for accreditation processes on a university-wide basis. Dr. Shaver responded that the University is continuing to consider an additional Associate Vice-President appointment which would have accreditation as part of the responsibilities. Dr. Shaver also acknowledged the work of Susan Spence Wach, Associate Vice-President Academic Programs, in preparing the report; this first document will provide a base to build on in terms of more formal collection and reporting of this information.

4. Chair's Report

J. Spatz reported briefly on the joint meeting of the officers of the Board and Senate which took place on January 20th. This fulfills the statutory requirement for an annual meeting of Board and Senate representatives and was a very useful opportunity to have a general discussion of issues facing the University and a more focused discussion of the draft Strategic Focus document.

J. Spatz congratulated Michelle Awad on receiving her Queen's Council (QC) designation, and congratulated Wadih Fares on raising the most funds in the Salvation Army's 2009 "Great Stocking Stuffer" campaign.

5. President's Report

T. Traves referred members to his written report in the meeting package and indicated that he would like to speak further on a number of issues addressed in his report during the *in camera* session.

6. Dalhousie Student Union President's Report

S. Zimmerman highlighted several items in her written report, including a recent meeting of the Alliance of Nova Scotia Student Associations (ANSSA) with the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP), and ANSSA's meeting with the Province's commissioner appointed to review the Nova Scotia university system. In response to questions, Ms. Zimmerman spoke to the recent DSU meeting with Michael Ignatieff, federal leader of the Liberal Party, and the priorities for the upcoming annual Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) lobby conference in Ottawa. These priorities include the federal funding distribution; First Nations, Métis and Inuit access to post-secondary education; international students' accessibility; and a Pan-Canadian policy on education.

7. Items for Presentation/Discussion

7.1 University Strategic Plan

T. Traves introduced the draft of the University Strategic Plan. He reported that he intends shortly to circulate the document to the broader community to seek further feedback before bringing a final document back to the Board and Senate for consideration. Dr. Traves indicated that the draft Plan sketches out a number of environmental challenges and opportunities, proposes a framework within which to articulate a strategy for success, and develops a series of 28 objectives under eight broad university goals. Each objective is accompanied by either a project deadline for "one-off" items and/or a series of performance measures through which to track the University's progress towards realizing its goals and objectives. He noted that, in most areas, the University has good performance measures (some of which have been tracked for many years already); in other areas the University needs to do more work to determine appropriate measures and that part of the report is subject to some evolution over the coming months. The Plan strategy itself revolves around 4 core principles: differentiation, excellence, focus and flexibility.

In response to questions following his remarks, Dr. Traves noted that he believes that the numbers and assumptions underpinning the plan (particularly around enrolment and faculty/student ratios), are reasonable and sustainable given what the University knows today, but this will be reviewed constantly as circumstances evolve, and changes will be reflected in the budget models presented to the Board. He would describe the model as reflecting a "steady as we go" approach, but one that allows the University to be successful in a competitive market. He noted that the objectives in the Plan are not dissimilar from those identified by other universities in North America and the eight major goal areas are already within the designated portfolios of one or more members of senior management.

Within this discussion of the Plan, Dr. Traves also provided an update on the Dalplex renewal project and the proposal for the implementation of a modest student fee to allow this project to move forward.

7.2 Budget Advisory Committee Process Update

A. Shaver reported that the consultations on the context document released in late 2009 resulted in a significant amount of feedback from the University community. These consultations focused on the kind of budget model the University should pursue. One constant refrain coming out of the feedback was support for the idea of trying to make a difference in those areas over which the University has some control. Three major uncertainties continue to cause concern: the pension plan, the next Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the province and government funding, and student enrolment. This latter area is where the University can perhaps make a difference by continuing to focus on recruitment and retention.

Dr. Shaver reported that the Budget Advisory Committee is in the process of developing a budget model, and for the first time, the model will cover two years: 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. The 2010-2011 model will attempt to address the challenge of the pension issue and the 2011-2012 model will address the next MOU with the provincial government. It is anticipated that the budget model will be developed by the end of February and will be released to the University community for further consultation and feedback.

In response to questions, Dr. Shaver and Dr. Traves noted an important principle in the budget model, which is that there needs to be innovation within the University, both in good times and bad times. The senior team believes that the University can deliver on the Strategic Plan at the same time it is dealing with budget issues. Currently, many universities are in the position of cutting their budgets; if Dalhousie can invest in strategic initiatives during this time, there is a double benefit for the University. This underlines the importance of maintaining a strong strategic initiatives fund.

7.3 Navitas Proposal

A. Shaver gave a presentation on a proposal to partner with Navitas, an Australian-based global higher education company, to operate a first-year transition program for international students on the Dalhousie campus. Dalhousie is in the early stages of exploring a partnership with Navitas and views this as a promising option for increasing the number of international students at Dalhousie, as well as improving the progression rate for these students. Dr. Shaver also reported on a Task Force on International Students he has established, to look into supports and services for international students. The work of this Task Force will proceed regardless of whether a partnership with Navitas goes forward.

There was significant discussion following the presentation with a number of questions raised regarding maintaining the University's admission standards, reputational risks, quality control, government awareness and support for such a partnership, and whether the University has done its "due diligence" work in terms of the business case for a partnership with Navitas. Dr. Shaver acknowledged that the idea of a partnership with a "private" organization raises serious ideological issues on campus. He noted that if there is no support for this issue on campus, it will not be pursued. Discussions with a variety of groups on campus are underway and Senate will also need to agree to the proposal.

Terry Mitchell, President of the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) and Board of Governors Observer, requested to speak before the Board and noted that the DFA has serious concerns about a possible agreement between Dalhousie and Navitas. The DFA Executive President and President-Elect have issued an open letter to DFA members and will be meeting with Dr. Shaver next week to discuss the proposal. Dr. Shaver undertook to distribute the DFA letter to Board members following the meeting.

8. Items for Information

8.1 Board Standing Committee Reports

J. Spatz noted that reports for committees that have met since the last Board meeting are in the agenda package. A fuller presentation on the work of the Board Executive, Steering and Governance Committees was deferred to the next meeting due to time constraints.

IN CAMERA SESSION

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

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.