

Item: Board of Governors Minutes, November 2006
Call Number: UA-1

Additional Notes:

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BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the Meeting held on
Tuesday, November 28, 2006
University Hall, Macdonald Building

Members Present: James Cowan (Chair), Jay Abbass, Bill Black, Daniel Clark, Lorne Clarke, David Craig, Ezra Edelstein, Richard Evans, Richard Goldbloom, Lynn Irving, Nancy MacCready-Williams, Natalie MacLean, Cathy MacNutt, Sunny Marche, Don Mills, Alasdair Sinclair, Jim Spatz, Bruce Towler, Tom Traves, and Bonnie Van Buskirk (acting-University Secretary)

Regrets: Elizabeth Beale, Robert Chisholm, Mo El-Hawary, Robert Radchuck, Chris Smith, Jerome Singleton

Non-Members: Carl Breckenridge, Susan Brousseau, Floyd Dykeman, Larry Maloney, Bryan Mason, Bonnie Neuman, Alan Shaver, Jim Vibert.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by B. Towler, seconded by J. Spatz

THAT the agenda be approved as distributed

The motion was CARRIED

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on October 17, 2006

Moved by C. MacNutt, seconded by J. Abbass

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on October 17, 2006 meeting be approved as distributed.

The motion was CARRIED

3. Chair's Report

Board Chair J. Cowan introduced Susan Brousseau who will become Acting- University Secretary on January 1, 2007. Jim also congratulated Bill Black on his appointment to the Board of the Bank of Canada.

4. President's Report

A copy of the President's Report was distributed with the agenda package for information. T. Traves gave an update on the discussions of the Memorandum of Understanding between the universities and the Province on funding and tuition levels. The Government will proceed with the third year of the MOU which means an increase in the provincial operating grant and the agreement by the Universities to limit their fee increase to 3.9% next year. Given the government's desire to see tuition levels go down for an extended period of time it would be his expectation that they will come back to us shortly and propose that rather than Dalhousie increasing its fees by 3.9% that we hold them flat or reduce them and they will substitute their money for the money that we had anticipated the students would provide. He anticipates that the government will announce discussions in the coming year for a new MOU. These discussions are expected to be a more complicated and elongated process due to the

possibility of a new funding formula which speaks not only to the size of the funding envelope but the distribution among the different Universities. Dalhousie will insist on putting into the discussion something about capital funding and, of course, the government has its own agenda with respect to tuition levels and dealing with raising costs to operate the institutions. He expects to have more information by the time the Board meets in February 2007.

He also reported on the Federal Minister of Finance's economic and fiscal update where he outlined the Federal Government's vision or plans for the economic policy. From our prospective within the University community he would say that the framework of the approach looks positive. All issues of importance to Dalhousie: research, access to university, the possibility of some kind of infrastructure funding and a variety of other issues were flagged. We should begin to see some clearer evidence of what actually will unfold in the next few months as the Government works its way towards a federal budget.

The President also reported on issues relating to Dalhousie's involvement with the Commonwealth Games Project. He outlined the various discussions and options discussed regarding Dalhousie's involvement. At this time, for financial reasons and due to the lack of a facility fitting in with the campus plan, and our intended priorities from a fund-raising point of view, we indicated to the Bid Team that we were happy to continue to cooperate but not as one of the major sites.

In the question and answer period following the President's report he gave an update on the Queen Street parking lot issue. He reported that there is a ninety-nine year lease on the property and Dalhousie intends to occupy it for the length of the lease. The position of the University is that we will need the space for future development but for now the space will be used for our parking needs.

T Traves also reported on the series of projects across the University with implications for every grouping on campus fundamentally aimed at improving the learning and social space available to students. At the February Board meeting the President will give a more detailed presentation.

5. Dalhousie Student Union President's Report

A copy of the DSU President's Report was distributed with the agenda package for information. E. Edelstein reported on DSU representation at the CASA's annual lobby conference in Ottawa in November. They met with over 150 MPs and asked members to note the achievements written in the report. He also echoed Dr. Traves' optimism on the economic update. He stated that the Federal Finance Minister posted on the finance website a call for consultations. He stated that student union provincial and federal lobby groups will respond to that consultation. The consultations on Advantage Canada will be focusing on the impacts on post-secondary education. He also added the Provincial Lobby group's Lobby Day on November 16 was successful. The group met with over a dozen MLAs including the Minister of Education, the Premier and the Liberal and NDP caucus. The focus was on three policies: the establishment of a provincial needs based grants program, a call for a comprehensive review of post-secondary education in Nova Scotia and an access guarantee that would guarantee that any Nova Scotian attending a Nova Scotia university would not be hindered from obtaining a post-secondary education due to financial reasons alone.

Items for Decision

6. Board By-law Amendments

T. Traves commented briefly on the two Board By-law Amendments included in the briefing package.

Article 7.5.12 – In response to a concern raised in June 2006 when the revised By-laws were approved. This Article has been amended to clarify that members of Standing Committees who are not members of the Board shall have access to the records of proceedings for that Committee.

Moved by T. Traves, seconded by R. Evans

THAT, the Board of Governors approve the revision to the Board of Governors By-law Article 7.5.12 as presented.

The motion was CARRIED

Article 14.1.1 – University Legal Counsel has suggested that Article 14.1.1 regarding investments be revised to state that all policies in relation to the management of the investment of funds under the control of the University shall be approved by the Board taking into account the recommendations of the Investment Committee.

Moved by B. Black, seconded by J. Abbass

THAT, the Board of Governors approve the revision to the Board of Governors By-law Article 14.1.1 as presented.

The motion was CARRIED

Items for Information

7. Board Standing Committee Reports

The Academic Affairs and Research Committee Chair Alisdair Sinclair reported that the Committee meets monthly either in person or conference call. He reported on the appointment of a new Vice-Chair and new members and that discussions on the role of the Committee, how strategic decisions should be made in the University, and some aspects of the collective agreement have taken place. Most recently, the Committee approved that the Brian Repair Centre become a university institute. He stated that there is no policy on the difference between a Centre and an Institute but that discussions will be held to sort out the differences. The Committee also approved a degree program in the Gambia.

The Audit Committee Chair Bruce Towler reported that the Committee met recently to review in detail the 2007 plan with KPMG external auditors. The second half of the meeting was to review the work schedule for the internal audit department headed by Margaret Sterns. She reviewed her priority areas to review over the next twelve months and will be looking at the Purchasing Department, Payroll and Admissions. She is also preparing an overall risk assessment document for the University which hopefully will be available late in the Spring.

The Human Resources Committee report was circulated with the Board package for information. Committee Chair Lorne Clarke reported that several issues were discussed: the changes to the Benefits Programs, the work of the Joint Board/DFA Panel on Mandatory Retirement, an update on the current collective bargaining process with CUPE Local 3912, an update on the matter of transitioning the deferral option under the Registered Pension Plan, and, the Committee was briefed on the recent retention benchmarking study conducted by the

ISI member universities in relation to the Insured Benefits Program. Detailed information on the report can be found in the November 28, 2006 Board package. Further updates will be reported to the Board as discussions continue on these issues.

8. Interuniversity Services Incorporated (ISI) Annual Report

T. Traves stated that due to the Board's interest regarding the values of cooperation around a variety of business services among different universities and agencies the report was included in the Board package as a matter of interest. J. Cowan added that there is a significant amount of cooperation amongst the universities.

Items for Discussion

9. Long-Term Financial Planning Committee Report

Committee Chair J. Spatz began by thanking the Committee members and University staff for their help in the process. He went on to present the Committee's short-list of strategic recommendations and a longer list of operational recommendations stemming from the process. Three general conclusions follow:

1. That the University faces the future from a position of financial strength relative to where we were some years ago;
2. That Dalhousie has achieved this position despite the fact that we operate under some significant structural and financial disadvantages compared to other universities across Canada; and
3. That given the vast array of financial variables that impact the University, our financial future is unpredictable, but there are strategies we can adopt and have already adopted that will improve our prospects.

A lengthy discussion followed. The matter will be brought back to the next Board meeting at which time the Board will be asked to formally endorse the report and the recommendations. In the meantime the report will be widely circulated on campus and discussed with key groups. The President will report at the next meeting on those discussions. A copy of the report is included in the November 28 Board Information package.

In Camera Session

10. Board Roundtable

Board members met in the absence of administration

11. Motion to Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Jim Cowan, Chair

Don Mills, Honorary Secretary