

Item: Board of Governors Minutes, October 2008  
Call Number: UA-1

Additional Notes:

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## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

### Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, October 14, 2008 (Open Session) University Hall, Macdonald Building

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jim Spatz (Chair), Jamie Baillie, Nancy Barkhouse, Elizabeth Beale, William Black, Wadih Fares, Fred Fountain, Lloyd Fraser, Lynn Irving, Courtney Larkin, Nancy MacCready-Williams, David Russell, Chris Smith, Lawrence Stordy, Tom Traves, Jim Wilson, Shannon Zimmerman, and Susan Brousseau (University Secretary)

**REGRETS:** Jay Abbass, Michelle Awad, Level Chan, Robert Chisholm, James Cowan, Sunny Marche, Stan Spavold, Bruce Towler

**NON-MEMBERS:** Ken Burt, Martha Crago, Floyd Dykeman, Asa Kachan, Jeff Lamb, David Mensink, Bonnie Neuman, Amanda Pelham, Alan Shaver, Jim Vibert, Gillian Wood

#### 1. Approval of the Agenda

J. Spatz proposed that the agenda be re-ordered so that Item 6.3 would be dealt with before Item 6.2.

Moved by E. Beale, seconded by N. MacCready-Williams:

**THAT the agenda be approved as amended.**

**The motion CARRIED.**

#### 2. Approval of Minutes of the Meeting held on June 24, 2008.

Moved by J. Wilson, seconded by C. Larkin:

**THAT the minutes of the meeting held on June 24, 2008 be approved as distributed.**

**The motion CARRIED.**

#### 3. Chair's Report

J. Spatz welcomed new Board members who were present: Nancy Barkhouse and Wadih Fares. He also welcomed Dr. Martha Crago, Vice-President Research, who was also attending her first meeting of the Board. Dr. Spatz extended congratulations to J. Baillie, B. Black, L. Chan and W. Fares who recently received Community Mentoring Awards from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Halifax.

Dr. Spatz reported on the resolutions approved 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 Governance Committee, approve the appointment of Wadih Fares to the Board of Governors of Dalhousie University for a term from September 1, 2008 to June 30, 2011.**

**THAT the Board of Governors, on the recommendation of the Governance Committee, approve the appointment of Sarah MacDonald as a public member on the Board Human Resources Committee for a term from September 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009.**

#### **4. President's Report**

As Dr. Traves had provided a fairly recent report on current issues to the Board at the September retreat, he proposed that the Board spend some time discussing the potential impact of the current financial climate. He noted that he would welcome feedback from Board members that would assist the senior executive group in developing a risk analysis and mitigation agenda. Dr. Traves noted that Dalhousie is now in a very good position financially in many areas of its activities, but he asked the Board to consider what the impact might be for the University if the economy slides into a recession over the next couple of years. He noted that he and others had identified a variety of potential areas of concern including: enrolment (tuition income), government grants, fund-raising, endowment income, pension income, federal research grants, construction project planning, recruitment of personnel, energy prices, etc.

Discussion followed with Board members offering various suggestions or possible approaches to the issues and options for mitigating the potential impact in certain areas like fund-raising, pensions and enrolment/tuition. It was also suggested that it might be helpful to look back at Dalhousie's experience in past recessionary environments.

Dr. Traves also reminded Board members that Fall Convocation would be taking place the following weekend and invited members to participate in one or more of the three ceremonies planned.

#### **5. Dalhousie Student Union President's Report**

C. Larkin referred members to her written report and the DSU Annual Report as an indication of the wide range of initiatives in which the DSU has been engaged. She also noted the extensive work the DSU has undertaken in recent weeks to encourage students to vote in the upcoming federal and municipal elections.

#### **6. ITEMS FOR PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION**

##### **6.1 2008-09 Enrolment Update**

A. Shaver, Vice-President Academic and Provost, reviewed the Dalhousie and AAU enrolment reports distributed at the beginning of the meeting, noting that the numbers for Dalhousie are generally quite good. Overall, enrolment is up by 174 students; this is very positive given the projected decline of 155 students in the 2008-09 budget model. In commenting on the positive numbers, Dr. Shaver noted the contributions of staff in a number of units including the Registrar's Office, Student Services and Communications and Marketing; the integrated approach to enrolment management that has been employed in the last few years has helped the University to make and maintain gains in the Maritime region and elsewhere.

In the discussion that followed questions were raised respecting the current gender distribution of Dalhousie's student population and about international enrolment numbers in the nursing program. Dr. Shaver undertook to respond to these questions at the next meeting. There was also some discussion of the impact of community college enrolment. T. Traves noted that Dalhousie has not seen the community college data for this year but the University will certainly be looking at the information to understand the trends, etc. He noted that the University needs to develop a range of strategies for a variety of different markets.

## **6.2 Capital Campaign Update**

F. Dykeman, Vice-President External, gave a presentation on the capital campaign platforms and priorities. He noted the importance of demonstrating to potential donors that we have a clear plan through a focus on the seven strategic priorities. The four pillars of the fund-raising platform are: Student Learning and Engagement; Inter-professional Health Education; Environment, Sustainability and Society; and Design and Innovation. Mr. Dykeman noted that Dalhousie has set a challenging goal for its campaign and that it will need to have a national and international reach to be successful. The overall goal is \$237 million and it is anticipated that more than 70% of the campaign target will come from gifts of \$1 million or more. The time frame for the campaign is 5-7 years with the campaign currently in the leadership development phase. In closing, Mr. Dykeman noted that a good fund-raising campaign is not just about raising money; it should also be fully integrated into the work of the institution and should inspire donors around that work and engage them as partners in facilitating transformational change.

## **6.3 President's Strategic Expenditures Framework, 2009-2011**

T. Traves noted that, at the Board retreat in September, it was agreed to provide some additional time for discussion of his framework document. He noted that it is his view that it is important to do something transformational with the additional provincial funding expected by the University under the current MOU. At the same time, there will be pressures to deal with current issues including those that may arise out of the recent market volatility. This is something that those within the University community will need to wrestle with over the next while – whether to maintain the status quo or whether to look at opportunities and initiatives that potentially will be transformational for Dalhousie. It is his belief that an investment in the areas indicated in his document (capital projects and strategic initiatives), will make Dalhousie better for the future; these are initiatives from which the University could see significant payback in the long-term. If we deal only with short-term financial pressures we may have little to show for it ten years from now.

Dr. Traves noted that it will be prudent for the University to spend the anticipated \$15 million in extra funds only as they are received, and that they be designated through the University's annual budgeting mechanism. He is looking to get a sense from the Board, faculty, students and others in the University community on whether the balance he has proposed is appropriate.

Discussion followed with questions touching on the impact that the campus planning process may have on the list proposed, plans for seeking input from members of the campus community, and the impact that recent market volatility might have on community reception to the proposal. It was also suggested that it might be useful to think about strategic initiatives that will make Dalhousie a "citizen of the world" (in terms of less reliance on the local market for its enrolment numbers), and that will assist in attracting and retaining outstanding academic and research personnel; these are the kinds of initiatives that may make a difference to Dalhousie in the next ten years in terms of establishing itself as an outstanding institution.

#### **6.4 University Branding Update**

Jim Vibert, Assistant Vice-President Marketing and Communications, made a presentation on Dalhousie's recent activities in the area of marketing directed to prospective students. He reviewed the history of Dalhousie's branding exercise and the evolution of the various platforms the University has employed in this one aspect of its marketing plan and activities over the past several years. He then introduced the new creative platform that the University will introduce in various markets shortly; this campaign will particularly highlight students and faculty who have found or created great experiences outside of their classes at Dalhousie.

Mr. Vibert responded to several questions following the presentation. He confirmed, in response to a question, that Marketing and Communications is not currently satisfied with its ability to control the quality and consistency of information appearing on the Dalhousie web site.

### **7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

#### **7.1 Capital Projects Update**

K. Burt, Vice-President Financial Services, provided an update on various capital projects currently underway, including the Chemical Storage Facility (completed on time and under budget); the New Academic Building (ahead of schedule and slightly under budget at this early stage); and the Life Sciences Research Institute (currently experiencing some delay and extra costs due to soil contamination issues).

#### **7.2 Board Standing Committee Reports**

B. Black, Chair of the Academic Affairs and Research Committee, gave a brief verbal report on the recent meeting of that Committee. He noted that members have spent some time understanding the issue of student course evaluation data and have identified several areas of concern, including the lack of a consistent core to the course evaluation instrument, the absence of a well-enforced process in terms of data collection, and a poor level of transparency (particularly in terms of student access to the information). It is the Committee's view that student course evaluation is important strategically in terms of student recruitment and retention and in terms of faculty promotion (something that AA&R is responsible for overseeing). The Committee has asked for these concerns to be referred to Senate and will continue to follow this issue.

### **IN CAMERA SESSION**

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

### **Motion to Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.