

Board of Governors Minutes of the Meeting – Open Session

Peterborough, December 8, 2023

Present – In Person: D. Kirk (Acting Chair), L. Groarke, E. Kaszecki, M. Keefer, M. Lavallée, V. Lovekin, S. Martic, Y. Craig, C. Nelan, A. Ramsay, J. Smith, H. Uluorta, (Vice-President, Finance & Administration) T. Al-idrissi, (Vice-President, Research & Innovation) C. Bruce, (Vice-President, Communications & Enrolment) M. Burns, (Vice-President, External Relations & Development) J. Davis, (Provost & Vice-President, Academic) M. Khan, (Vice-President, Human Resources) S. Williams (Associate Vice-President, Finance) C. Turk, (University Secretary) B. Blackburn, R. Hall (Recording Secretary).

Present – Virtual: K. Honey, J. McGarrity

Regrets: D. Cooper Burger (Chair), D. de Launay, T. Gervais, A. Mishra, K. Scaldwell

[The Secretary confirms that quorum was present for this meeting.]

- 1. Welcome and Adoption of Agenda.** The Chair called the open session of the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Hearing no amendments to the agenda, and no conflicts of interest declared, it was moved/seconded (Ramsay/Keefer),

That the Board approve the agenda as presented. Carried

- 2. Consent Agenda.** It was moved/seconded (McGarrity/Nelan),

That the consent agenda be approved as presented. Carried

- 2.1 Approval of Minutes.** The Open Session of October 13, 2023, approved as presented.
 - 2.2 Financial Update.** Received for information.
 - 2.3 Capital Project Update.** Received for information.
 - 2.4 Investment Performance Summary (Pension) – Q3.** Received for information.
 - 2.5 Investment Performance Endowment/Sinking Fund – Q3.** Received for information.
 - 2.6 Sustainability and Energy Management Plan.** Received for information.
- 3. Chair’s Remarks.** The Chair noted that the Board Chair was unable to attend the meeting, therefore he was taking on the role of Acting Chair in her absence.
 - 4. President’s Report.**

4.1 General Update. The President reported on various activities and events since the last meeting, including:

- October 29 – Governor Craig and VP Burns presented the Champlain Report at the Canadian Association for Communicators in Education Conference.
- November 7 – Champlain College and the Political Studies department hosted a panel discussion about the conflict in Israel and Palestine. Governor Uluorta reported on the well-attended event noting that they plan to run similar events in the future.
- November 13-18 – Trent annual Thrive Week took place immersing students, staff, and faculty in a wide variety of activities designed to promote mental, emotional, and physical health.
- November 15 – The name of the new college, Gidigaa Migizi, in honour of Elder Doug Williams, was unveiled at a sunrise ceremony.
- November 15 – The University recognized National Philanthropy Day, where Trent thanked all supporters for their generosity and celebrated the ‘Potential’ Pinecone Sculpture Series which is supported by philanthropy. The day was a huge success with \$1.4M raised.
- November 15-16 – President Groarke, who is Chair of the Ontario Council of Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) attended the ONCAT Student & Pathways Conference.
- November 20 – The Financial Intelligence and Innovation Hub featuring state-of-the-art Bloomberg financial terminals opened.
- December 2 – Chancellor Stephen Stohn and Linda Schuyler were inducted into Canada’s Walk of Fame for their work on Degrassi.

4.2 Government Relations Update. The President recently attended a Mayor’s breakfast in Peterborough. The breakfast was attended by a vice-president from VIA Rail for a discussion about bringing high-frequency rail to Peterborough.

4.3 Academic Planning. Provost Khan reported that Trent is one of the most active universities in Ontario in regard to program development. Key highlights in the past three months include the introduction of the BA in Software Engineering, BA in Human Rights & Social Justice, and post-graduate certificate in artificial intelligence.

4.4 Enrolment Report/International Initiatives. The President reported that Trent was focusing international enrolment efforts on diversification. Administration is traveling to Trinidad and Tobago, Italy, the Middle East, Turkey, and possibly Africa to recruit students and to look at additional possibilities for Trent students to study abroad. It was noted that applications from India were currently down, due in most part to political reasons, but it was too soon to determine if this was a short-term drop or reflective of future enrolment from India.

VP Bruce reported on the various strategic partnerships Trent has formed internationally. Recent partnerships that have been formed include Trento University in Italy, Ho Chi Min City University of Technology in Vietnam, and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. As a result of this work, Trent was named to the winner's circle as the number one undergraduate university in Canada for growth in international partnerships and collaborations in the 2023 Research Infosource rankings.

5. **Board of Governors 2023-2024 Leadership Scholarship.** The Chair recalled the letter sent to governors from the Board Chair regarding the Board of Governors' Leadership Scholarship and the 2023 recipient, Siobhan Cadigan. He reported that to date over \$20K had been raised, and encouraged Governors to join in supporting the scholarship in order to achieve the goal of \$25K and 100% participation.

- 5.1 **Presentation from Recipient.** While Ms. Cadigan had hoped to come to the meeting in person, she had a conflict with her exam schedule and instead sent a pre-recorded video to be shared with the Board. In the video she expressed how the scholarship impacted her and thanked the Board for their generosity.

6. **Trent Durham Task Force Report.** The Chair presented the report noting that the task force was struck to assess a strategic path forward for the rapidly growing Trent Durham GTA campus. The Task Force made recommendations in six areas, including academic programs, communications, colleges, administrative structure, governance, and real estate and facilities. Short, medium, and long-term strategies were presented in regard to expanding facilities to accommodate the short-term stresses while also taking steps to fully build out the campus in the long-term. One key factor in Trent's plan for growth is the positive and supportive relationships the University has with the City of Oshawa and Region of Durham. Concern was raised regarding the ability of smaller academic departments to support programs in Durham, especially as the growth continues. Dean Henderson stated that the number of Associate Chairs has increased, and new Associate Chair positions are being created to be the Durham face for the programs.

The Chair thanked the task force for their work and noted that various recommendations in the report will require Board approval at a future date.

It was moved/seconded (Nelan/Ramsay),

That the Board of Governors approve the Trent Durham Task Force Report as presented. Carried

7. **Audited Pension Financial Statements.** Governor McGarrity, as Chair of the Audit & Investment Committee, presented the 2022-23 Annual Pension Financial Statements of the OPSEU/Exempt plan for approval. It was noted the auditors found that the financial statements present fairly in all material respects. The auditors did not identify any uncorrected presentation or disclosure differences in respect of the financial statements, nor did they identify any adjustments requiring correction in the financial statements. Further, no significant control deficiencies in

internal control were identified in this audit. As at June 30, 2023, the Plan had net assets available for benefits of \$176.4M and a pension obligation of \$186.9M resulting in a deficiency of \$10.5M. Following approval, the registered plan statements would be filled with the Financial Services Regulatory Authority.

It was moved/seconded (Craig/Uluorta),

That the Board of Governors approve the Financial Statements of the Contributory Pension Plan for Employees Represented by OPSEU Local 365 and Exempt Administrative Staff of Trent University (Registration Number 0310409) dated June 30, 2023 as presented. Carried

8. **Athletic Centre Pool Renovation Update.** Governor Lavallée, on behalf of the Finance & Property Committee, reported that during the pool renovation hollow sections below the pool deck were found. This caused the tile around the pool to break away. Administration made the decision to remove the old tile to create a new base and do a full replacement of the deck tile. This increased the cost of the project by approximately \$147K, which required approval by the Board. It was noted that no further funds would be needed to see this project through to completion.

It was moved/seconded (Nelan/Smith),

THAT the Board of Governors approve an increase in the contract value with Acapulco Pools from \$2,106,000 to an upset limit of \$2,246,147. Carried

The intention is to open the pool mid-January, once staffing was in place, with an official grand opening to take place in February.

9. **2024-25 Operating Budget – Fiscal Environment, Budget Processes and Timelines.** Multi-year planning continues to be key for Trent to strategically plan its future financial sustainability and promote longer-term budgeting and more efficient use of our critical resources. A conservative approach to enrolment projections is recommended largely due to the continuing uncertainties and challenges of the current fiscal environment.

While the core operating grants have been adjusted slightly for graduate growth and nursing expansion, there is no mechanism under SMA3 to fund domestic enrolment growth. The government had deferred the link of funding to performance for the first three years of SMA3 due to the pandemic. Performance-based funding has been activated for the final two years of SMA3. The at-risk funding for 2024/25 will be determined following the provincial response to the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel. The current tuition-fee framework is set to expire at the end of 2023-24, with no framework yet in place for the upcoming budget cycle. While the sector is waiting for the government's response to the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations on tuition fee policy, Trent is assuming tuition will be frozen. Inflation has a significant impact, affecting almost every aspect of the University's operations. Despite the various challenges in the fiscal environment Trent was in a good position due to prudent fiscal management, enrolment growth, program development, good relationships with unions, and sound decision-making.

It was moved/seconded (Craig/Lovekin),

That the Board of Governors receive this report for information. Carried

10. Alumni Review. President Groarke presented a report following a review of the office of Alumni Engagement & Services. The review was conducted by former and current alumni affairs staff from St. Francis Xavier. The report listed 45 recommendations which have been put into 3 separate categories – collaboration and communication, alumni engagement, and the development of a strategic plan to 2027. The President introduced the new Director of Alumni Engagement & Services, Naomi Handley, who commented on the recommendations noting that the department will be focusing on their website, communications, benefits and program offerings, and recognizing the needs of the various types of alumni. She reported that the department has embarked on a listening tour that will continue into the new year. It was noted that there was a joint integrated communications team that looks at work being done all across the campus and discussions are underway regarding the development of a brand journalism approach.

It was moved/seconded (Keefer/Ramsay),

That the Board of Governors receive this report for information. Carried

11. Meeting Adjournment. The open session of the meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Brenda Blackburn
University Secretary

Douglas Kirk
Acting Chair