

Thursday, November 14, 2024, 2:00 – 6:00 m.

Senate & Board Chamber, One Market, Brantford and hybrid via Zoom

Present: Simon Chan (Chair), Shelley Boettger, Ling Chu, Catharine Dutt, Paul Elliott, Miguel Gonzalez, Chantal Huinink, Abas Kanu, Lindsay Lawrence, Kristine Lund, Deb MacLatchy, Ken Maly, Fabricio Perez, Avvey Peters, Jim Phillips, Patricia Polischuk, Michael Ras, Marc Richardson, Ken Seiling, Reina Stewart, Cynthia Sundberg, Doug Treleaven, Peter Urquhart, Jin Wang

Regrets: Royce Bodaly, Ryan Eldred, Chinyere Eni, Adam Grogan, Janis Monture, Ife Odeleye, Nadir Patel, Berry Vrbanovic

Secretariat: Ana Juhik, Anna Kornobis, Anne Lukin, Phil Marfisi

A. OPEN SESSION

1. **Call to Order**, Simon Chan

- a. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest: None.
- b. Movement of Consent Items to the Main Agenda

Motion (Chantal Huinink/Paul Elliott): That the Board of Governors approve the Consent items listed for approval under Item C.1. Carried.

2. **Chair's Report and Meeting Roadmap**, Simon Chan

The Chair commented on: the 25th anniversary of the Brantford campus; the Laurier Golden Hawks football team recent win of the Yates cup; encouraging Board members to use the on-line question forum to share questions in advance of meetings; recent provincial directives requiring action on Anti-Racism/Anti-Hate and Student Mental Health; and a focus on talent and human capital in today's Board agenda.

3. **President's Report**, Deb MacLatchy

The President & Vice-Chancellor commented on: the final year of Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA) 3; preparing preliminary data to support negotiations for SMA4 when Laurier meets with the province in January; hopes that SMA4 will address corridor levels and underfunding; federal advocacy on international permit caps; sector advocacy with Universities Canada and COU to encourage more permits going to universities over colleges; and that the search for the VP: Student Affairs is underway.

STRATEGIC DISCUSSION/DECISION ITEMS

4. **Laurier Strategic Action Plan: Our People**, Pam Cant

The Chief HR & Equity Officer presented on the talent pool at Laurier as an

critical component supporting Laurier's mission. She reported on workforce demographics, EDI factors, plans for continued employee surveys, employee supports and programming, and working from home statistics. HR goals including enhancing the talent acquisition strategy to attract a diverse workforce; fostering an inclusive workplace; refreshed employee recognition; enhanced professional and leadership development; employee surveys every other year; promoting mental and physical wellness, safety and work-life balance. Laurier is seeing a slight decline in turnover. Exit interviews indicate that individuals are motivated to leave Laurier for career advancement and better pay, with salary competition a challenge in the Broader Public Sector (BPS).

Members discussed: appreciation for metrics provided; challenges to diverse hiring due to immigration restrictions; statistics for Laurier compared to externally available pool using StatsCan data; the need to reduce barriers and encourage an inclusive community to help attract more candidates among people with disabilities and Indigenous scholars and staff; a request to see more detail on the split between voluntary, involuntary and retirement departures from Laurier; that HR is creating a dashboard of quick stats; that regular benchmarking is done to compare Laurier salaries with other Ontario comprehensive universities; that there is more volatility in staff than in full-time faculty, where there is little turnover; and that the internal postings required by unions can limit diversity which can be offset by the greater turnover occurring.

5. **Proposed Amendment to Board By-Law #2**, Paul Elliott

A proposed change would remove the reference to employees from the By-Law #2. Board members would retain protection on legal matters as mandated in the By-Law, while indemnification coverage for employees would be ensured through a Board-approved policy. A clause has been proposed for the By-Law that would prohibit a Board member from indemnification where that individual is engaged in litigation with the University.

Motion (Paul Elliott/Jim Phillips): That on the recommendation of the Governance Committee, the Board of Governors approve the amendment to Board By-Law #2, as revised:

- **pending the Board's approval of proposed revisions to Policy 8.17, Employee Indemnification Policy; and**
- **that the revised By-Law #2 will take effect on the date the Board approves a revised Employee Indemnification Policy. Carried.**

6. **Divestment Request Policy**, Paul Elliott

A new policy is proposed to create a formal structured process for groups to submit divestment requests, providing transparency and a fair process. This issue is a major topic of discussion at all universities. The draft policy was provided to the Board for consideration, with the related procedures provided as information. Groups who wish to submit a request for divestment from

specific companies, sectors, or industries in the University's investment portfolio due to ethical, environmental, social, or governance concerns would be able to submit a request accompanied by a petition, which would then trigger consideration of the request through a governance process.

Members discussed: how a requirement for a number of signatures based on a percentage would be affected over time by campus growth; the timing of dealing with requests to balance fairness and responsiveness with capacity to respond; that the procedures could evolve over time as they are tested by use; that a sector scan showed other universities with lower requirements for numbers of signatures, noting that a higher percentage would help ensure a rigorous process; that the policy is meant to be flexible and leave the Board with discretion to react; that submissions will be delegated as appropriate to a group to review; that it is a good measure to require signatures from both students and faculty/staff; and that the move to the University Pension Plan (UPP) will dramatically impact the scale of investments held by the University. There was significant discussion on the petition requirements for a flat number of signers vs a percentage. An amending motion was proposed to change this requirement from a flat number of 400 to a percentage but that amendment failed. Voting was then held on the original motion.

Motion (Paul Elliott/Jim Phillips): That on the recommendation of the Governance Committee, Board of Governors approve Policy 5.16, Divestment Requests, as proposed. Carried.

Motion (Patricia Polischuk/Lindsay Lawrence): to move the meeting *in camera*. Carried with 2 abstentions.

(Return to the open session after an in camera session)

FOR DECISION

7. **WLU Pension Plan Amendments related to UPP Conversion**, Pam Cant
With the proposed move to the UPP, that larger sector pension plan will have to administer the current WLU Pension Plan terms for past service, including those members who retire before January 1, 2026. To meet legal requirements to proceed with the move to the UPP, necessary amendments to the current WLU Pension Plan based on external counsel were outlined in the Briefing Note provided.

Motion (Jim Phillips/Abaas Kanu): That on the joint recommendation of the Finance, Investments & Property and Pension Committees, the Board of Governors approve amendment #2 to the WLU Pension Plan effective January 1, 2026, contingent on the regulatory approvals required for conversion and transfer of assets of the WLU Pension Plan to the University Pension Plan. Carried.

Motion (Patricia Polischuk/Abas Kanu): That on the recommendation of the Pension Committee, the Board of Governors delegate authority to the Pension Committee to approve any further non-substantive amendments to the Wilfrid Laurier University Pension Plan related to the UPP conversion. Carried.

FOR DISCUSSION

8. Reports from the Standing Committees of the Board

a. Finance, Investments & Property Committee, Jim Phillips

1. 3-Month Fiscal Update, Zeynep Danis / Christine Dale

A report was provided for budget to actual variances for the period May 1 – July 31, 2024. Q1 results reflect a consolidated operating and ancillary fund deficit of (\$17.9M) vs. budget expectations of (\$23.1M), a favourable variance of \$5.2M to budget. The Operating fund was favourable overall by \$4.5M, with the Ancillary fund showing a small favourable variance. Staff noted that Q1 is early in the reporting cycle and that Q2 will provide a more defined picture, including Fall enrolment numbers, noting that enrolment is looking good.

2. 2025-2026 Budget Planning Process Update, Lloyd Noronha / Heidi Northwood

Senior leaders provided an update on budget building blocks and challenges including international enrolment and provincial corridor funding. The multi-year forecast provided last year has been affected by several factors. Laurier has cut its budget by \$40M over the past several years through a number of cost-cutting measures. The Budget Committee has asked units across the University to try and achieve a small across-the-board cuts for next year. There is some hope of adjustments to the corridor funding a couple of years out through SMA4. An Academic Structure Sub-Committee is proposed to look at whether Laurier Faculties and programs are optimally designed. Staff are aiming to bring the 25-26 Budget for recommendation and approval in the March/April cycle.

3. Digital Strategy Update, Nela Petkovic / Kyle Harris

Staff have been implementing the Digital Strategy approved in 2022 although financial constraints have made it hard to meet demand. Successes include Wi-Fi expansion across multiple campuses, near-completion of the telephony transformation project, and implementation of a new computer lab strategy. Budget allocation falls significantly short of required funds, making full implementation of the Strategy difficult. An updated Digital Strategy Roadmap will realign with the new Strategic Action Plan taking plans through 2028. Members discussed investments in ICT.

9. **Other Business:** None.

B. IN CAMERA SESSION

Motion (Lindsay Lawrence/Patricia Polischuk): to move the meeting *in camera*. Carried.

C. CONSENT ITEMS

The Agenda, Minutes and items noted for Approval were approved by consent.

1. Items for Approval

- a. Agenda
- b. Minutes, Board of Governors, September 13, 2024,
- c. Financial Statements of WLU Press and Independent Practitioners' Review Engagement Report
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee, the Board of Governors approve the unaudited Financial Statements of the Wilfrid Laurier University Press for the year ended April 30, 2024.
- d. Policy 7.8, Smoke-Free
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee, the Board of Governors approve Policy 7.8, Smoke-Free, as revised.
- e. Policy 10.4, Information Governance
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee, the Board of Governors approve Policy 10.4, Records Management, as revised including the name change to Information Governance.
- f. Policy 5.14, Safe Disclosure
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Audit, Risk & Compliance Committee, the Board of Governors approve Policy 5.14, Safe Disclosure, as revised.
- g. Policy 5.1, Business Expenses
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Finance, Investments & Property Committee, the Board of Governors approve Policy 5.1, Business Expenses, as revised.
- h. Updated Non-Tuition Fee Report for 2024-25
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Finance, Investments & Property Committee, the Board of Governors approve the updated 2024–2025 Non-Tuition Fee Report, to reflect the removal of the Milton Faculty Association Fee.
- i. Policy 7.20, Fitness for Work
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Human Resources Committee, the Board of Governors approve Policy 7.20, Fitness for Work, as revised.
- j. Statements of Investment Policies and Procedures (SIPP) Annual Review
Motion: That on the recommendation of the Finance, Investments and Property Committee, the Board of Governors approve the revised Wilfrid Laurier University:

- **Lazaridis Gift Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures**
- **Sinking Fund Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures**

2. **Items for Information**

- a. Updates on Recent Activity of the Standing Committees
- b. Gendered and Sexual Violence Policy Report
- c. Government Submitted Audit Reports - Enrolment Audit Report 2023-2024
- d. DBRS Credit Rating Full Report
- e. Pension Plan Funded Status Update at June 30, 2024
- f. Responsible Investing Annual Report
- g. Q2 Summary, Investment Performance – Hub Proteus
- h. 2023-24 Policy Changes
- i. Laurier Employment Context
- j. Update on Employee Insights Pulse Check
- k. Thank You Video
- l. Report on Senate Activities, September 24 and October 22, 2024
- m. Pension Plan Statements of Investment Policies and Procedures (SIPP) Annual Review

Note: If you need assistance or have a question about this agenda or the Board of Governors, please contact the University Secretariat office, by email to alukin@wlu.ca.