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McMaster University

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

April 22, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

via Videoconference (Zoom)

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**PRESENT:** Mr. B. Merkel (Chair), Ms L. Allan, Ms J. Allen, Dr. D. Brooks, Dr. L. Bronsard, Ms L. Brown, Mr. R. Clarke, Mr. J. Coles, Ms. S. Cruickshanks, Dr. J. Daniel, Mr. S. Donnelly, Mr. P. Douglas, Dr. D. Farrar, Mr. D. Feather, Mr. M. Ferencich, Dr. C. Filipe, Ms. Z. Hassan, Mr. D. Horwood, Mr. D. Huctwith, Ms R. Jamieson, Dr. R. Kleiman, Dr. N. Lishchyna, Mr. J. Mancinelli, Ms S. McLarty, Mr. K. Nye, Dr. L. Parker, Ms M. Pool, Ms J. Rowe, Ms F. Samji, Mr. N. Skelding, Ms C. Stefankiewicz, Dr. E. Szathmáry, Dr. S. Tighe, Dr. R. Walker, Ms A. Thyret-Kidd (University Secretary), Ms M. Zheng (Associate University Secretary), Ms A. Sless (Governance Coordinator)

**OBSERVERS:** Mr. R. Couldrey, Ms E. Davies, Ms D. Henne, Ms A. Farquhar, Dr. B. Levy, Ms D. Martin, Ms W. McKenna, Dr. P. O’Byrne, Ms M. Williams

**INVITED:** Dr. Susan Denburg, Executive Vice-Dean and Associate Vice-President, Academic  
Dr. Jeremiah Hurley, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences  
Dr. Maureen MacDonald, Dean, Faculty of Science  
Dr. Pamela Swett, Dean, Faculty of Humanities  
Dr. Ishward Puri, Dean, Faculty of Engineering  
Dr. Leonard Waverman, Dean, DeGroote School of Business  
Ms R. Liebersbach, Chief Financial Officer, McMaster Innovation Park  
Mr. T. Shattuck, Chief Executive Officer, McMaster Innovation Park

**REGRETS RECEIVED:**

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**A. OPEN SESSION**

**1. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR**

Mr. Merkel welcomed members to the meeting and reminded members of the Zoom protocols.

Dr. Natalia Lishchyna was introduced as a new member. Dr. Natalia Lishchyna has been a Member of Council in the Town of Oakville since 2015, representing the residents of Ward 6. Dr. Natalia Lishchyna received her B.Sc. (Biology and Psychology) from McMaster University and trained as a chiropractor at CMCC in Toronto. She subsequently obtained her M.Sc. from Bournemouth University. Dr. Lishchyna holds the appointment of Assistant Professor at CMCC and supervises chiropractic interns at a community teaching clinic in Oakville, Ontario.

Mr. Merkel welcomed Faculty Deans to the Board meeting. Members heard that at the request of Dr. Susan Tighe Faculty Deans will be invited to attend the open session of Board meetings.

Mr. Merkel explained that the Executive and Governance Committee met and held a discussion regarding divestment from fossil fuels for university funds. The Committee will be working closely with Ms Henne, Dr. Farrar and members of management. A recommendation will be brought forward to the Board next year.

**2. NOTICE OF MEETING – April 8, 2021**

The Notice of Meeting was circulated on April 8, 2021.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – OPEN SESSION**

Mr. Merkel noted that no requests had been received to move any items from the Consent to the Regular agenda of the Open Session.

IT WAS DULY MOVED AND SECONDED,

**that the Board of Governors approve the Open Session agenda for the meeting of April 22, 2021, and that items 4-6 be approved or received for information by Consent.**

The motion was *Carried*.

**CONSENT**

**4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – March 4, 2021 (OPEN SESSION)**

Motion:

**that the Board of Governors approve the Open Session minutes of the meeting held on March 4, 2021 as circulated.**

*Approved by Consent*

**5. REPORT FROM SENATE**

**a. TOR -F.L. Johnson Chair in Women's Reproductive Health Research**

Motion:

**that the Board of Governors approve the proposed revisions to the F.L. Johnson Chair in Women's Reproductive Health Research Terms of Reference, as circulated.**

*Approved by Consent*

**b. Associate Dean Research Innovation External Relations**

Motion:

**that the Board of Governors approve the proposed revisions to the Associate Dean Research Innovation External Relations Terms of Reference, as circulated.**

*Approved by Consent*

**c. Establishment of the W.H. Kwok Chair in Orthopedic Spinal Surgery Research**

Motion:

**that the Board of Governors establishment of the W.H. Kwok Chair in Orthopedic Spinal Surgery Research, as circulated.**

*Approved by Consent*

**6. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**a. Executive and Governance Committee**

**i. Actions Taken on Behalf of the Board**

This material was for information.

**REGULAR**

**7. BUSINESS ARISING**

There was no business arising from the Open Session minutes of the meeting held on March 4, 2021.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no communications for the meeting of April 22, 2021.

**9. PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE BOARD**

Dr. Farrar welcomed Faculty Deans to the Board meeting.

Members heard that Dr. Tighe is leading the Return to McMaster Group. The University is not in the position to make a definitive announcement yet about the Fall but the focus has been to find ways to bring students back to campus. Planning is underway for residences to be open and details around eligibility and capacity will be announced as soon as possible. The needs of international students continue to be an area of focus with continued monitoring of visa processing times and Canadian entry requirements.

The Provincial budget was announced on March 25 and there were no changes to post secondary funding or the tuition framework. Members heard that there is support for mental health initiatives.

Dr. Farrar provided an update regarding Laurentian University. There have been no new announcements and no provincial funding has been provided. Some faculty and staff have been released, there have been program closures and cancellation of agreements with colleges.

A member commended McMaster for stepping up and accepting Midwifery students from Laurentian University. Dr. Farrar explained that McMaster is exploring taking in additional students as well.

The Federal budget was announced on Monday and Dr. Farrar highlighted major themes included investment in childcare, students, research and innovation, and a green recovery. Biomanufacturing was a major area of focus with \$2.2 billion being provided over seven years. This support is intended to help build Canada's talent pipeline and research systems and support the growth of Canadian life sciences firms.

Noting that board members are aware that rankings are incredibly important, Dr. Farrar informed members that McMaster ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the world in The Times Higher Education (THE) 2021 Impact Rankings. This is the third year for the impact rankings, which recognize the contributions of universities and are based on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

A question was raised on when there will be a deliberate and dedicated commitment to divest from fossil fuels companies and reinvest into green projects or less harmful investments. Dr. Farrar agreed that this is an important area but explained that it is a complex conversation. Climate change is important, and Dr. Farrar has signalled a desire to divest from fossil fuel producing companies and would like to commit the university to becoming more sustainable.

A guest asked how investment committee decisions are made and noted the importance of including voices of students and administration. Dr. Farrar and Mr. Merkel outlined ways that McMaster community members can provide input and various avenues for engagement.

## **10. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND PLAN**

Dr. Farrar provided an overview of the Strategic Framework and Plan to the Board.

Dr. Farrar explained that consultations for the strategic plan started in February 2020. Through the process, it was evident that McMaster wants to have an impact on climate change and the pandemic, cares deeply about student learning and research and wants to focus on inclusion and the community. Out of this process, five areas of priorities were identified. Within each priority, there are a number of objectives and activities which will measure success. The document is being brought forward for information and the accountability is in the performance plans of the members of administration delivering it.

Mr. Merkel thanked Dr. Farrar for the report and commended the clarification of these priorities along with assessment metrics the community can relate to and track over time.

A question was raised with regard to the timeline for divestment. Dr. Farrar explained that the issues around divestment are covered by the investment committees. Mr. Merkel added that there are a number of Board committees invested in the discussion and progress will continue to be reported to the Board.

A member asked about the output of McMaster Innovation Park and the importance of commercialization to McMaster University. Dr. Farrar explained that MIP has been a slow evolution but is about to see explosive growth. Researchers are interested in how their research can have an impact. MIP is a park based on life sciences and biomanufacturing and is well positioned..

A member commented that the framework is integrative and ties together many dimensions and asked how the board can support the progress. In response, Dr. Farrar acknowledged the work of the VPs and Deans, and accountability will be in terms of their performance plans. Mr. Merkel added that a previous Board survey echoed the need for a balanced scorecard and is pleased to see the assessment metrics that have been included.

A member noted that the framework is clear and asked if there is money available to support these initiatives. Dr. Farrar responded that this is being explored and that \$5 million has been added to the President's budget to help drive initiatives in the strategic plan.

Mr. Merkel thanked Dr. Farrar for the discussion.

## **11. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **a. Executive and Governance Committee**

Mr. Merkel provided an overview of the report from the Executive and Governance Committee.

#### **i. Revisions to Board By-Laws – University Planning Committee**

It was explained that at its March 4, 2021 meeting, the Board of Governors approved in principle, on the recommendation of the Executive and Governance Committee, proposed revisions to the University Planning Committee Terms of Reference and membership. Details of the proposed revisions are contained within Attachment I of the circulated report.

IT WAS DULY MOVED AND SECONDED,

**that the Board of Governors approve the attached revisions to the terms of reference membership of the University Planning Committee within the Board of Governors By-Laws, as amended.**

The Motion was *Carried*.

**ii. Revisions to Board By-Laws**

Members heard that at its April 7, 2021 meeting, the Executive and Governance Committee reviewed and approved, for recommendation to the Board of Governors, revisions to the Board by-laws. Details of the proposed revisions are contained Attachment II of the circulated report.

IT WAS DULY MOVED AND SECONDED,

**that the Board of Governors approve in principle, revisions to the Board of Governors By-Laws, as circulated**

The Motion was *Carried*.

**b. Committee on University Advancement**

Ms Cruickshanks presented the report from the Committee on University Advancement.

**i. University Advancement Year in Review 2020**

Members heard that at its March 30, 2021 meeting, the Committee on University Advancement received for information, the University Advancement Year in Review 2020 report. The report is now being circulated for information.

Ms Williams addressed the circulated report, highlighting the vision, mission and values and the four key success factors. It was an astounding year where we achieved \$97 million in private revenue which far surpassed the goal of \$55 million. Ms Williams commended the Deans and the University Advancement group, all of whom have shown an amazing commitment to advancing goals and supporting the institution.

A question was raised regarding private revenue and whether or not there are challenges when we seek funds from the government. Ms Williams explained that we leverage them together and work with both private donors and government partners.

Members congratulated and thanked Ms Williams.

**12. PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD**

Dr. Gerry Wright, Director of the Michael G. DeGroote Institute for Infectious Disease Research delivered a presentation and answered questions on Canada's Global Nexus for Pandemics and Biological Threats.

**13. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business for the open session portion of the meeting.

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