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**McMaster University**

**Meeting Minutes of the Board of Governors**

9:00 AM, Thursday, April 20, 2023

David Braley Health Sciences Centre, the Auditorium (Room 2032)

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**Attendance:** Ms J. Allen (*Chair*), Dr. L. Bronsard, Mr. R. Clarke, Ms S. Cruickshanks, Ms J. Dhaliwal, Mr. S. Elop, Dr. D. Farrar, Mr. D. Feather, Mr. M. Ferencich, Ms S. Galloway, Mr. D. Horwood, Mr. D. Huctwith, Ms R. Jamieson, Dr. L. Lishchyna, Mr. K. Nye, Ms M. Pool, Ms J. Rowe, Ms F. Samji, Dr. M. Shoukri, Dr. E. Szathmáry, Dr. S. Tighe, Dr. B. Walker, Ms S. Wang, Ms A. Thyret-Kidd (*University Secretary*), Ms M. Zheng (*Associate University Secretary*), Ms K. Snow (*Assistant University Secretary*)

**Observers:** Dr. K. Cuff, Ms L. Dondi, Ms A. Farquhar, Ms S. Fazilat, Ms D. Martin, Ms W. McKenna, Ms L. Scime, Dr. R. Stubbs, Mr. R. Walters

**Invited:** Dr. K. Hassanein, *Dean, Faculty of Business*  
Dr. M. MacDonald, *Dean, Faculty of Science*  
Dr. P. Swett, *Dean, Faculty of Humanities*  
Dr. S. Denburg, *Vice-Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences*  
Dr. G. Wright, *Executive Director of Canada's Global Nexus for Pandemics and Biological Threats*  
Ms S. Emms, *Principal, Architecture, North Region Chair, Building Design Partnership*  
Ms L. Goray, *Director, Design & Construction, Facility Services*  
Mr. S. Moore, *Treasurer*

**Regrets:** Dr. E. Apatu, Mr. J. Boye, Dr. D. Brooks, Ms L. Brown, Ms M.L. Maher, Mr. B. Merkel, Dr. M. Narimani, Dr. S. Sloboda, Dr. B. Vrkljan

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Ms Jane Allen, *Chair of the Board of Governors*, introduced Ms Lilian (Lil) Scime, who is the interim Chief Financial Officer. Ms Allen also introduced Ms Letizia Dondi. Ms Dondi attended the meeting as the designate of the President of the Graduate Students Association (GSA) and is the incoming GSA President for 2023-2024.

**A. OPEN SESSION**

**1. NOTICE OF MEETING**

The Notice of Meeting was circulated on April 6, 2023.

**2. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR**

Ms Allen welcomed members and observers to the meeting and provided attendees with a brief overview of meeting procedures and the agenda items.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA - OPEN SESSION**

There were no requests to have items moved 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 20, 2023, and that items 4 and 5 be approved or received for information by Consent.**

The motion was *Carried*.

**CONSENT**

**4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – MARCH 2, 2023 (OPEN SESSION)**

Motion:

**that the Board of Governors approve the Open Session minutes of the meeting held on March 2, 2023, as circulated.**

Approved by *Consent*.

**5. REPORT FROM SENATE**

**i. Title Change - Associate Dean (Academic)**

Motion:

**that the Board of Governors approve the recommendation as contained in the report from the Senate.**

Approved by *Consent*.

**ii. SPS B13 – Extension of Timeline for Academic Assessments in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

This item was received for information by consent.

## REGULAR

### 6. BUSINESS ARISING

There was no business arising.

### 7. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications received by the Board for the open session of the meeting.

### 8. REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dr. David Farrar, *President and Vice-Chancellor*, presented his Report to the Board. Dr. Farrar began his remarks by acknowledging that McMaster is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations and within the lands protected by the Dish with One Spoon wampum agreement. McMaster recently celebrated the launch of its new Indigenous Studies Department, which supports Truth and Reconciliation efforts across campus and recognizes the work of McMaster's Indigenous scholars, students, and staff.

Members heard that more than 150 McMaster students, researchers and alumni assisted in building the NEUDOSE satellite. The Satellite has now arrived at the International Space Station and will aid the aerospace sector in further understanding space radiation. This event drew significant media coverage.

To mark the global observance of Earth Day, the Daily News has been publishing a host of stories detailing the many initiatives across campus to advance sustainability and meet the goals outlined in the Net Zero Carbon Roadmap. Of note, the University would be installing geothermal technology to heat and cool its new greenhouse, which is currently under construction. Other efforts to reduce carbon emissions include the installation of electric boilers and solar technology, retrofitting facilities, reducing cogeneration, and exploring new technologies. The University will be on track to reduce carbon emissions by 42% by the end of 2024, which Dr. Farrar noted was well ahead of the goals set in the Paris Agreement.

Dr. Farrar spoke to two items that were included in the recent Board report on Teaching and Learning Excellence; a task force to examine the impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on teaching and learning as well as the grants program. Members were also reminded that spring convocation ceremonies would be held in May and June. Mr. Paul Douglas, former Chair of the Board, will receive an honorary degree during the morning convocation on June 16<sup>th</sup>. Members were encouraged to inform the Secretariat if they wish to attend a ceremony.

During the update on government relations, Dr. Farrar explained that the team is continuing to connect with all levels of government. McMaster was the only university to be mentioned in the provincial budget because it would be receiving a \$6.8 million investment in the nuclear reactor. During a recent visit to campus, Dr. Farrar had the opportunity to tell Premier Doug Ford that McMaster currently has 7,500 unfunded students. McMaster is managing the increased demand for STEM programs by admitting more domestic students for which it does

not currently receive block grant funding. This message was also delivered to the Blue-Ribbon Panel, which will provide advice and recommendations to the Minister of Colleges and Universities on the financial health of the post-secondary sector. Its Chair, Dr. Alan Harrison, spent three decades at McMaster including time as our Dean of Social Sciences. McMaster's advocacy in this area will be focused on lifting the tuition freeze and unfreezing of the block grant.

A member noted that he was glad to see the University increase its focus on cyber security and information technology, and noted that the Board will soon have to re-focus its attention on the challenges, opportunities and the risks associated with AI. Dr. Susan Tighe, *Provost and Vice-President*, explained that the new task force is determining how the technology may be used in teaching, and it is co-chaired by Dr. Matheus Grasselli, *Deputy Provost* and Dr. Kim Dej, *Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning*. When the report is complete, there may be changes to policies and the delivery of curriculum. Academic integrity remains a top priority.

A member inquired as to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the performance of students who have experienced two years of virtual high school. Dr. Tighe confirmed that a skills gap has been observed between the cohorts and the Faculties are undergoing a host of activities to help students bridge these gaps. Increased concerns surrounding mental health, including social isolation, have also been observed and she is hopeful that the Blue-Ribbon Panel will result in some additional supports from the province. Ms Melissa Pool, *University Registrar*, noted that McMaster is still enrolling exceptional students and that is different than other universities and colleges. There has been great commitment by academic offices to accommodate and assist students.

Dr. Maureen MacDonald, *Dean of Science*, noted a dramatic increase in accommodation requests among her Faculty's students. Dr. MacDonald referred to instances where many students have submitted absence forms to cover all their term work and have approached the end of their term not having submitted any work at all. The Faculty of Science received 9,000 accommodation forms in one semester, compared to a previous average of 3,000, and instructors are struggling to manage the requests. Dr. Khaled Hassanein, *Dean of Business*, agreed that second- and third-year students are not performing at the level they did before the pandemic.

A member inquired about the emerging issues surrounding Canadian universities conducting research with the Chinese government and its military, and inquired whether there was a policy governing such relationships. Dr. Farrar explained that the University relies on various federal government agencies to provide information and guidance in this area, and have been advised recently by the federal government not to do research with any company affiliated with the Chinese military. This is difficult to navigate, as faculty members will interact with individuals to whom the government has provided visas. Dr. Tighe spoke briefly into interactions with Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) but added that McMaster is not a target due the type of research it conducts. Members discussed this matter further as it relates to international students and impacts more broadly across Canada.

In response to a question, Dr. Tighe spoke briefly to her observations of students being more isolated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been increased hesitancy in dealing with others, and the administration is looking at ways in which to facilitate a culture of increased socialization with their student peers. Members heard that the new student residences will be transformational in helping to bridge these gaps.

## **9. REPORT FROM SENATE**

Dr. Farrar presented the Report from Senate. The two items in the report were presented for approval by the Board.

### **i. Establishment of the Global Nexus School for Pandemic Prevention and Response**

At its meeting on March 8, 2023, the Senate approved the establishment of the Global Nexus School for Pandemic Prevention and Response. Dr. Gerry Wright, *Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences, Canada Research Chair in Antibiotic Biochemistry, and Executive Director of Canada's Global Nexus for Pandemics and Biological Threats* provided an overview of the Global Nexus.

Canada's Global Nexus is well-positioned to become a dynamic innovation hub where scientists work towards pandemic prevention through evidence-based solutions. The hub will relocate to a new 300,000-sq-ft facility at McMaster Innovation Park (MIP), as part of a growing ecosystem of start-up companies and manufacturers. The new building will feature space for drug and vaccine manufacturing, national and global partner spaces, lecture halls, and rooms built for interdisciplinary learning and community engagement. It is widely accepted that society is entering into an era of pandemics due to increased interaction between human and animals.

In response to a question of liabilities and how the Global Nexus is to be funded, Dr. Wright explained that the Global Nexus will develop as funding, space and donations become available. Once the project has been approved, staff will begin fundraising activities and there will be undergraduate and graduate funding opportunities as well. It was clarified that the Board is only currently being asked to approve the structure of the school, which will function as a department.

### **ii. Name Change - Department of Radiology**

At the same meeting, the Senate approved the Name Change of the Department of Radiology to the Department of Medical Imaging, effective July 1, 2023. Dr. Susan Denburg, *Executive Vice-Dean and Associate Vice-President Academic*, provided an overview of the item. Members heard that the name change was largely a result of needing to modernize the language.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that the Board of Governors approve the recommendations in the Report from Senate.**

The motion was *Carried*.

## **10. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **a. EXECUTIVE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

#### **i. Board of Governors By-Law Revisions**

At its meeting on March 30, 2023, the Executive & Governance Committee approved, in principle and for recommendation to the Board of Governors, the proposed revisions to the By-Laws of the Board of Governors. Members were reminded that these revisions would return for final approval at the June meeting.

A member brought up the matter of quorum, noting that meeting quorum requirements is becoming increasingly difficult across many organizations with the return to in-person meetings. Ms Allen advised the member that she would discuss the matter further with the Executive & Governance Committee.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that the Board of Governors approve in principle, the proposed revisions to the Board of Governors By-Laws.**

The motion was *Carried*.

#### **ii. Graduate Funding Task Force Terms of Reference**

At the same meeting, the Executive & Governance Committee received the Terms of Reference for the Graduate Funding Task Force. Dr. Susan Tighe provided a brief overview of the group's activities to date. Members heard that the final report would be delivered by the end of 2023 and were encouraged to visit the website for regular updates. Dr. Tighe emphasized the importance for students to receive the appropriate supports and hoped to see any changes implemented by mid-2024.

In response to a question about the federal government's research funding support, Dr. Tighe expressed her disappointment that the budget did not provide further funding opportunities and noted that Dr. Karen Mossman, *Vice-President, Research* continues to advocate on this. A member inquired about how teaching assistant (TA) funding fits into funding, and cautioned that the University's relationship with TAs as employees and as students should not be muddled. Dr. Tighe added that the task force is looking at the entire funding picture.

## **11. REPORTS RECEIVED FOR INFORMATION**

Ms Wanda McKenna, *Assistant Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer*, presented “McMaster’s Employee Groups and Pension Plans.” Members were provided with a high-level overview of the following topics; the structure of the Human Resources department, the numerous types of employee groups and their respective unions or associations; the composition of equity-deserving groups; as well as the fiduciary duties surrounding management of the University’s retirement pension plans.

Dr. Emőke Szathmáry, *Chair of the Remunerations Committee*, commended Ms McKenna and her team for their work throughout the years, noting that McMaster is well-served by the team’s dedication and commitment to the campus community.

A member cautioned that not having The Management Group (TMG) included in a defined benefit plan has caused significant recruitment, retention, and promotional issues. Ms McKenna explained that this is a known concern and that resolving the issue is complex and her office is working on this.

## **12. PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

Dr. Farrar introduced and welcomed Dr. Pamela Swett, *Dean of the Faculty of Humanities*, who made her presentation to the Board on the Faculty of Humanities.

## **13. OTHER BUSINESS**

As there was no other business, the open session of the meeting adjourned.