

## MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

9:00 AM, Thursday, April 18, 2024

Gilmour Hall, Council Room (Room 111)

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- Attendance:** Jane Allen (*Chair*), Catherine Anderson, Dina Brooks, Lisa Brown, Sandra Cruickshanks, Stephen Elop, David Farrar, David Feather, Michael Ferencich, Susan Galloway, Saara Greene, Barry Hill, Natalia Lishchyna, Ben Menka, Brad Merkel, Kevin Nye, Wayne Purboo, Michael Ramsay, Jennifer Rowe, Fareen Samji, Mamdouh Shoukri, Silvia Stankovic, Susan Tighe, Brenda Vrkljan, Bob Walker, Andrea Thyret-Kidd (*University Secretary*), Michelle Zheng (*Associate University Secretary*), Kelly Snow (*Assistant University Secretary*)
- Observers:** Omer Ahmed, Catherine Anderson, Andrea Farquhar, Saher Fazilat, Emily Heikoop, Ehab Kamarah, Andy Knights, Lili Litwin, Wanda McKenna, Ann Purina, Richard Stubbs, Rob Walters
- Invited:** Khaled Hassanein, *Dean, Faculty of Business*  
Steve Hranilovic, *Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies*  
Maureen MacDonald, *Dean, Faculty of Science*  
Debbie Martin, *Associate Vice-President, Real Estate, Ancillary Operations and Partnerships*  
Lou Mitton, *Controller*  
Steven Moore, *Treasurer*  
Sara Morgan, *Marketing Manager*  
Heather Sheardown, *Dean, Faculty of Engineering*  
Richard Valentine, *Director, Marketing*  
Susan Wright, *Senior Director, Advancement*
- Regrets:** Emma Apatu, Justin Boye, Ryan Clarke, Joseph Mancinelli, Silvia Stankovic
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### OPEN SESSION

#### 1. Remarks from the Chair

##### 1. Update on the Committee to Recommend a President

Jane Allen, *Chair of the Board of Governors*, provided an update on the work of the Committee. Members heard that the consultation phase has ended and the Committee and recruitment partners have a strong sense of the qualities and attributes needed in the next President and Vice-

Chancellor. The Committee will consider the position profile and begin advertising the position.

**2. Notice of Meeting - April 4, 2024**

The Notice of Meeting was circulated on April 4, 2024.

**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 18, 2024, and that items 5 through 7 be approved or received for information by consent.**

The motion was *Carried*.

**4. Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared for open session.

**CONSENT**

**5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting - March 7, 2024 (Open Session)**

Motion:

**that the Board of Governors approve the Open Session minutes of the meeting held on March 7, 2024, as circulated.**

Approved by *Consent*.

**6. Report from the Senate**

**1. Revised Terms of Reference and Name Change - Teresa Cascioli  
Chair in Entrepreneurial Leadership**

Motion:

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

Approved by *Consent*.

**7. Results of Elections to the Board of Governors**

This item was for information.

## **REGULAR**

### **8. Business Arising**

There was no business arising for the open session of the meeting.

### **9. Communications**

No communications were received by the Board of Governors.

### **10. President's Report to the Board**

David Farrar, *President and Vice-Chancellor*, presented his report. D. 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. D. Farrar spoke to the recent establishment of the Indigenous Student Bursary Program, which assists Indigenous students not only with tuition, but also housing, child-care, food, and transportation where needed. This bursary recognizes the additional financial barriers faced by Indigenous students and reflects the University's commitment to supporting their success. D. Farrar thanked all those involved in its development.

D. Farrar reminded members that McMaster hosted an eclipse viewing party at the Ron Joyce Stadium. In the weeks leading up to the eclipse, McMaster experts were quoted in dozens of stories with a combined reach of 70 million people. Coverage on the day of the eclipse included live segments on CBC News Network and interviews with CTV News, with an estimated reach of more than 20 million viewers. Susan Tighe, *Provost and Vice-President*, was instrumental in the event's success.

The University recently hosted an innovation and entrepreneurship showcase featuring startup founders, including an appearance by the founder of Fusion Pharmaceuticals, John Valliant. Fusion, a company focused on revolutionary cancer therapies, was acquired by AstraZeneca for over \$2.4 billion. The University also announced a partnership with Celesta Capital, which will aid McMaster startups and researchers in commercializing their intellectual property.

The Wilson College of Leadership and Civic Engagement held its inaugural public lecture featuring Mark Hill, former elected chief of Six Nations of the Grand River, Steve Paikin, journalist and host of TVO's *The Agenda*, and Medora Uppal, CEO of the YWCA Hamilton, with Sara Wolfe moderating. The panel marked a significant milestone in the college's evolution, following the appointment of Don Abelson as academic director

and the launch of a minor in Leadership and Civic Studies. The College will welcome its first cohort into the Honours BA program in Fall 2025.

Members heard that Gerry Wright, *Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Biomedical Sciences*, received the 2024 Killam Prize for his groundbreaking work on antimicrobial resistance. Additionally, McMaster saw eight researchers appointed as Canada Research Chairs last month, bringing the University's total count to 82. The upcoming visit of Alejandro Adem, *President of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council*, also presents an opportunity for McMaster to enhance its positioning for success in grant competitions.

Members were reminded that under Vice-President, University Advancement, Lili Litwin's, leadership, McMaster is gearing up for a substantial capital campaign. The University is also intensifying its international engagement efforts, notably in Europe, by discussing potential partnerships in nuclear research and education with institutions like the Technical University of Munich and the Universities of Grenoble and Milan. Other plans include hosting delegations from the Liverpool, Birmingham, and Aga Khan universities to explore partnerships in biomedical innovation and entrepreneurship. These efforts are supported by a \$32-million gift received in 2022 from Marnix and Mary Heersink.

Members heard that the federal government recently unveiled its budget. Provisions for universities included \$1.8 billion dollars over five years allocated to major granting agencies, and an additional \$825 million to bolster scholarships and fellowships, which benefit graduate students and post-doctoral fellows directly. The elimination of GST for student residences and access to the Apartment Construction Loan Program should alleviate some financial strain on both universities and students.

There remains concern over the decision to cap international study permits. Provinces have been tasked with allocating spaces and developing processes for attestation letters. S. Tighe explained that there has been success with graduate student applications for these provincial attestation letters, and strategies have been implemented for undergraduate students. There are some government-imposed targets, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) with potential adverse consequences if targets are not met.

D. Farrar concluded his address by speaking to the upcoming spring convocation ceremonies. Members heard that Catherine McKenna, former Minister of Environment and Climate Change, would receive an honorary degree on June 12th. Other Honorary doctorate recipients included Marcy McCall MacBain, Howard Shearer, Marnix Heersink and Tony Dean. Members were informed to notify the Secretariat should they wish to attend one of the ceremonies.

In response to a question, Saher Fazilat, *Vice-President, Operations & Finance*, spoke to McMaster's position within the UniForum Service Excellence survey results. Members heard that McMaster is one of the most climate-focused institutions of those surveyed, but there are areas for improvement. More information on its standings would be provided when the Budget is presented. The member asked that the results be made available as it would be helpful for S. Fazilat to review the results with the Planning & Resources Committee.

There was a brief discussion of the conflict between Israel and Hamas. It was noted that there are some student activities, although exams might quiet that. Sean Van Koughnett, *Associate Vice-President and Dean of Students*, meets with both Palestinian and Jewish student groups regularly. The team is working closely with Campus Safety Services, as well as Health and Safety. D. Farrar advised members that the federal government is reviewing this area, and universities are discussing the interplay between freedom of expression and academic freedom.

In response to a question, D. Farrar spoke briefly to the procedures and processes around the development of the Persona Non Grata policy, noting it is an interim policy to address trespassing and emergency situations. Members heard that a committee of Senators has been working diligently on this, and the Audit and Risk Committee will soon be consulted.

There was a substantial discussion about the acquisition of Fusion Pharmaceuticals by AstraZeneca. Members expressed some concern with McMaster's small payout despite the large purchase price, due to its diluted shares. A member noted that this raises a larger question about how the University benefits from commercializing research, and that senior leadership needs to determine how the University can be best positioned to financially benefit.

Another member reminded the Board that the impact of this purchase is substantial for McMaster regardless. The discussion concluded with a brief retrospective on what occurred. Members agreed that it would be helpful for Board members with capital experience to provide counsel and guidance to the Vice-President, Research office around equity in establishing seed funds. It was noted that this topic should be brought back to a future meeting.

## **11. Report from the Senate**

David Farrar presented the Report from the Senate.

### **1. Terms of Reference - Vice-Provost, Indigenous**

At its meeting on March 20, 2024, the Senate reviewed and approved the Terms of Reference for a new Vice-Provost, Indigenous.

A member was pleased with the new role and emphasized that self-determination for First Nation students necessitates their understanding of the wider world around them. It is important that engineering, business and science be part of the conversation for this role.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that the Board of Governors approve the Terms of Reference for the position of Vice-Provost, Indigenous.**

The motion was *Carried*.

**2. Closure of the Fraunhofer Project Centre for Biomedical Engineering in Advanced Manufacturing (BEAM)**

At its meeting on April 10, 2024, the Senate reviewed and approved the closure of the Fraunhofer Project Centre for Biomedical Engineering in Advanced Manufacturing (BEAM).

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that the Board of Governors approve the closure of the Fraunhofer Project Centre for Biomedical Engineering in Advanced Manufacturing (BEAM).**

The motion was *Carried*.

**3. Establishment of the Firestone Institute for Respiratory Health (FIRH)**

At the same meeting, the Senate reviewed and approved the establishment of the Firestone Institute for Respiratory Health (FIRH).

A member asked whether there will be financial requirements from the University should operating expenses exceed \$700,000. Andy Knights, *Acting Vice-President, Research*, noted that the intent is for the institute to sustain itself financially, but that he would return with that information after speaking with its director.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that the Board of Governors approve the establishment of the Firestone Institute for Respiratory Health (FIRH).**

The motion was *Carried*.

#### **4. Task Force on Graduate Funding Report**

At the same meeting, the Senate received the report from the Task Force on Graduate Funding for information. Steve Hranilovic, *Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies*, provided highlights of the report.

There were several questions about how the report has been received by graduate students, and whether the tone on campus has changed around the issue of graduate funding. S. Hranilovic explained that graduate students have been intensely involved in the creation of the report. Many difficult questions were asked, and there is now a greater understanding of the University's fiscal position. Members heard that prior to the creation of the task force, there had been no body overseeing institutional matters for graduate students and those discussions continue. S. Tighe agreed that the tenor has changed, and the Graduate Student Association recognizes that this continues to be worked on.

A member added that they would like to see impact scores and receive updates as the recommendations are implemented. Members thanked S. Hranilovic for his commitment to this important matter.

### **12. Committee Reports**

#### **1. Executive and Governance Committee**

J. Allen presented the report.

##### **a. Revisions to the Board by-laws**

At its meeting on March 25, 2024, the Executive & Governance Committee reviewed and approved minor revisions to the By-Laws of the Board of Governors. These included:

- The addition of the Associate Vice-President, Real Estate, Ancillary Operations and Partnerships as an official Board Observer
- The change in name of the Committee on University Advancement to the Committee on External Engagement & Advancement
- Revisions to the Terms of Reference for the Human Resources Committee
- Title changes in Appendix B and Appendix F

It was duly moved and seconded,

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

The motion as *Carried*.

**b. President's Update on the Strategic Plan**

At the same meeting, the Executive & Governance Committee received the President's Update on the Strategic Plan. D. Farrar provided an update to the Board and advised members that major progress had been made in four of the five areas. Alex Usher has been engaged to assist with a two-year refresh. Community sentiment on McMaster's progress would be sought and reviewed, including suggestions for new priorities.

**2. Planning and Resources Committee**

Jennifer Rowe, *Chair of the Planning & Resources Committee*, presented the report.

**a. Budget Model Review Presentation**

At its meeting on April 4, 2024, the Planning and Resources Committee received a presentation on the Budget Model Review. S. Tighe and Melissa Pool, *Associate Vice-President, Academic Planning and Finance*, delivered the presentation to the Board.

A member asked whether the centralized model affords sufficient control to make tough decisions. Members were reminded that it operates as an activity-based budget model, with Faculties managing their allocations. Central units report to their respective Vice-Presidents, and the university fund serves to help manage extenuating situations and strategic investments, notably during the COVID-19 pandemic. When asked about adjusting individual envelopes, S. Tighe confirmed it is part of the budget exercise, though the member cautioned it could become more challenging amid financial constraints.

In response to a question, S. Tighe explained that the five pillars outlined in the President's strategic plan inform and direct the University's investments and fund allocations. S. Tighe reminded members that they will see how these items work together when the Budget is brought forward at the next Board meeting.

**13. Presentation to the Board of Governors**

D. Farrar introduced and welcomed Drew Higgins, *Assistant Professor, Chemical Engineering*, who delivered the presentation, "Electrochemical



Technologies for the Sustainable Production of Fuels, Chemicals and Fertilizers” to the Board.

**14. Other Business**

As there was no other business, the open session of the meeting adjourned. Debbie Martin, *Associate Vice-President, Real Estate, Ancillary Services and Partnerships*, Lou Mitton, *Controller*, and Steven Moore, *Treasurer*, remained.