

APRIL 25, 2025
BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY
MCGREER 100 AND BY VIDEOCONFERENCE

MINUTES

Chair: Murielle Lortie

Present: Mark Caduc, Kent Carson, Nanci Chagnon, Alexandre Demers, Christopher Gokiart, Drew Henkel, Sébastien Lebel-Grenier, Pascale O'Bomsawin, Alena Perout, Junior Sirivar, Calin Valsan

Regrets: Pierre Cossette, Alexandra Lebel, Heather McKeen-Edwards, Jessica Riddell, Daniel Fournier

Senior Administration: Nick Andrews, Danai Bélanger, Julie Desjardins, Kerry Hull, Annick Lambert, Jean Manore, Matthew Perros, Jacqueline Scott, Margaret BK Shepherd, Andrew Webster

Secretary: Geneviève Gagné

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chair Murielle Lortie called the meeting to order at 3:06 p.m., welcomed the incoming Dean of Williams School of Business Dr. Margaret BK Shepherd.

2 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved without modification.

- Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

Board members were invited to declare any conflicts of interest regarding the items on the agenda. No conflicts of interest were declared by any member.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the agenda was approved as presented.

3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Board of Governors' meetings held on February 21, 2025, February 25, 2025, and March 11, 2025, were presented for approval.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the minutes were approved as presented.

Secretary General Geneviève Gagné gave an update on the initiative discussed at the December 19, 2024, meeting to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of information sharing from governing body meetings to the University community, noting that the template is being finalized. Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier invited Governors to send their feedback to the Secretary General.

Government Relations

Principal Lebel-Grenier began his remarks by highlighting the partial legal victory of *McGill and Concordia* universities against the Quebec government's proposed tuition increases and French language proficiency requirements. He noted that the *Quebec Superior Court* had ruled these measures unreasonable and invalidated the provision mandating French fluency. The government now has nine months to review and revise the tuition policy for students from the rest of Canada. He noted that the recent court ruling is expected to have a minimal impact on Bishop's University, as the institution has been granted exemptions from both the proposed tuition increases and the financial penalties associated with non-compliance with the French language proficiency requirement. The situation will be closely monitored to assess any potential impact on eligibility for French language funding.

A formal communication outlining these developments has been circulated to the University community and forwarded to the Board members.

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier provided an update on the ongoing implications of the Quebec government's international student policy. He noted that government-imposed quotas on study permit applications remain in effect, and institutions are continuing to adapt to the new regulatory framework. The University is prioritizing support for both current and prospective students, with particular attention to those whose *Certificat d'acceptation du Québec* (CAQ) may require renewal. He emphasized that expired or invalidated CAQs necessitate a new application, which could jeopardize students' ability to complete their academic programs.

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier observed that the Ministry of Higher Education has reported a significant decline in international student enrolment and applications. He noted that these trends appear to contradict the government's stated objective of diversifying Quebec's international economic partners, particularly in the context of ongoing geopolitical tensions and trade war with the United States.

Strategic Planning Progress and Workshop

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier reported that the Strategic planning remains on schedule, with positive engagement continuing across campus. Community workshops on Goal 2 strategies — *Bishop's distinctive community experience* — took place April 2, 2025, with leaders and working groups refining action items.

Strategy 2A, which aims to leverage Bishop's distinctive learning model for ongoing curriculum improvement is being assessed through the curriculum and academic review process led by Vice-Principal Academic and Research Andrew Webster. Weekly discussions are ongoing and will inform the action plan.

Further community workshops are scheduled for May 20 to review and validate the draft action plan. The final version of the plan will be presented for approval at the Board of Governors meeting scheduled for June 13, 2025.

Drew Henkel delivered his final report as the Student Representative Council President. He announced the results of the SRC elections. Six (6) of the nine (9) directors' positions were filled, enabling continued operations under the new bylaws. Anthony Dumas-Stephenson was elected as President. A by-election is expected in the fall to fill the remaining positions. On the Senate front, three (3) of the six (6) student Senators positions were filled and the appointments are underway. The final composition is expected to be presented at the May Senate meeting.

Drew Henkel reported on his participation at the Quebec Student Union annual general meeting, where student advocacy priorities for the coming year were identified. Amongst the top priorities is the university funding model, the provincial policies on international students, food insecurity, unpaid internships and student financial precarity.

Finally, he highlighted the success of the Safe Drive program, which provided 477 rides and 972 total uses during the academic year. Plans are underway to secure future funding through donors or sponsorships to ensure continuity.

Vice-Principal Academic and Research Andrew Webster provided an update on the progress of the Curriculum and Academic Structures Review. He noted that Senate had approved five (5) key motions supporting the University's academic financial recovery plan, targeting \$3.1M in savings by 2029, primarily through structural changes and reductions to the part-time teaching budget.

Faculty units are developing three (3)-year teaching delivery plans to align course offerings with available resources, with the Senate Planning Committee coordinating adjustments where necessary. A longer-term staffing plan is also underway to better forecast evolving faculty needs over a five (5) to ten (10) year horizon, accounting for factors such as upcoming Canada Research Chair transitions and projected retirements. Dr. Webster reported strong faculty engagement, transparency, and bottom-up initiatives contributing to a collaborative and realistic process.

In parallel, efforts to formalize academic governance are advancing, including the creation of a new Senate Academic Curriculum Committee. While the curriculum reform process is moving more slowly than the financial planning components, foundational discussions are progressing. The focus is on articulating core academic principles—particularly around breadth and the distinctive undergraduate experience at Bishop's—essential for future recruitment and positioning under the strategic framework. Dr. Webster emphasized the need for genuine community buy-in, ensuring that curriculum changes are meaningful, widely supported, and serve as a flagship element of the institution's identity.

The Board welcomed the broader approach to budget reductions beyond part-time teaching cuts, noting that failure to explore alternative measures could risk undermining strong programs. Dr. Webster concurred, acknowledging that while initial savings have been achieved through budget recalculations; further progress will depend on careful structural decisions.

Clarification was sought regarding the timeline for decisions on potential program suspensions to ensure alignment with recruitment and communication efforts. Dr. Webster confirmed that any changes affecting Fall 2026 admissions would need to be finalized by December 2025. He emphasized the intention to avoid abrupt announcements and instead adopt a phased, deliberate approach. It was emphasized that the full impact of the revised academic model is expected for the 2027-28 recruitment session following the final revisions of the academic structure.

8 RESEARCH REPORT

Dr. Kerry Hull provided an updated on recent research and graduate studies initiatives highlighting the success of Research Week, which received strong media attention and featured high-profile external speakers and outstanding internal faculty presentations. Students who competed in the event were recognized.

Dr. Hull continued by noting that Bishop's University will be hosting the Perimeter Program this summer. This will provide an important opportunity to showcase the campus and the work of the faculty members, while enriching the student experience.

Dr. Hull concluded with an update on the individualized master's program, which is gaining momentum across departments and yielding strong graduate outcomes, including students progressing to fully funded doctoral programs. Efforts are underway to enhance the graduate experience by developing shared seminars and spaces to reduce isolation. Early discussions have started around the potential development of a doctoral program, which could contribute to the University's academic identity and overall research profile.

9 FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Kent Carson introduced the Finance and Audit Committee Report noting that the report included presentation and supporting documents requiring motions. Key items are the provisional operating budget, compulsory student fees, provisional cash flow budget and an update on the Paterson Extension Project. He invited Interim Vice-Principal Finance and Administration Geneviève Gagné to present the budget.

Provisional Operating Budget 2025–26

Geneviève Gagné presented the 2025–26 provisional operating budget, projecting a \$1.58M deficit due to ongoing uncertainties tied to the provincial budget, recently issued draft funding guidelines, and the preliminary indexation rate. A recovery plan will be required by July 2026 to qualify for the conditional grant.

The budget forecasts \$78.5M in revenue and \$80.1M in expenses, with primary funding from tuition and government grants, and the majority of spending allocated to salaries. Assumptions underlying the projections include modest tuition increases, gradually increasing enrolment, and continued Foundation support.

The government's funding documentation is under review. An updated budget will be submitted to the Finance and Audit Committee in May, with a final version to be presented to the Board of Governors in June.

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier emphasized the financial impact of the lower-than-expected indexation rate (0.3% vs. 1.5%) and the reduced tuition indexation cap (2% vs. 3%), both of which will limit revenue and challenge the University's recovery strategy. While the 2028–29 recovery targets may no longer be achievable, the recommendation is to maintain the plan's objectives, as most Quebec universities are also projecting deficits. He added that universities are actively lobbying the government to ease the conditions imposed on deficit-running institutions.

**RESOLUTION 2024-07-01
FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE
PROVISIONAL OPERATING BUDGET**

WHEREAS the Board of Governors is required by the *Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (MES) to approve the annual Operating Budget;

WHEREAS the University's *Statutes* require approval by the Board of Governors of the annual Operating Budget;

AND WHEREAS the Finance and Audit Committee has reviewed and discussed the 2025-26 Provisional Operating Budget and recommends Board approval;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors approves the 2025-26 Provisional Operating Budget as presented by the interim Vice-Principal Finance and Administration (for Financial Services and Information Technology Services) and set out in the 2025-26 Provisional Budget presentation (Document 2024-07-09i);

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors approves the French version of this resolution which will be submitted to the MES (Document 2024-07-09ii).

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the Board of Governors approved the resolution as presented.

Compulsory Student Fees "*Frais institutionnels obligatoires*" (FIOs)

Compulsory student fees for 2025-26 will increase by 2 %, as permitted by the *Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (MES). One new fee for Experiential Learning in Environment, Agriculture, and Geography Department was approved by the Student Representative Council (SRC) as per regulations.

RESOLUTION 2024-07-02
FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE
2025-26 COMPULSORY STUDENT FEE (FIOs) LISTS

WHEREAS the Board of Governors is required by the *Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (MES) to approve the Compulsory Student Fee (FIO) list;

WHEREAS the SRC has approved a new Student Experiential Learning Opportunity Fee for the Environment, Agriculture and Geography Department, beginning in Fall 2025, and that the University's remaining 2025-26 proposed fee increases do not exceed the 2% ceiling set by the MES;

AND WHEREAS the Finance and Audit Committee has reviewed and discussed the 2025-26 FIO lists;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors approves the increases and the resulting listing of FIOs for 2025-26;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors approves the French version of this resolution which will be submitted to the MES (Document 2024-07-09ii).

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the Board of Governors approved the resolution as presented.

2025-26 Provisional Cash Flow Budget

The 2024-25 cash flow forecast shows a positive variance of \$19M, with projected year-end cash of \$24.3M – mainly due to delayed capital spending, unexpected indexation funding, and lower-than-budgeted expenses. For 2025-26, a deficit of \$1.6M is projected, with an estimated year-end bank balance of \$10.4M. The cash flow budget includes a \$6M foundation transfer and capital reserves, with further details provided in supporting documents.

Geneviève Gagné explained that the cash flow budget is provisional due to newly received governmental guidelines. The reference period has been shifted from June-May to July-June, requiring the addition of a 13th month for the transition year. A revised budget reflecting this change will be presented at the June Board of Governors meeting.

RESOLUTION 2024-07-03
FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE
2025-26 PROVISIONAL CASH FLOW BUDGET

WHEREAS the University expects to present a balanced Operating Budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year and a deficit Operating Budget in the 2025-26 fiscal year which have been incorporated in the cash flow projections;

AND WHEREAS the Finance and Audit Committee has reviewed and discussed the 2025-26 Provisional Cash Flow Budget;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors approves the 2025-26 Provisional Cash Flow Budget as presented by the interim Vice-Principal Finance and Administration (for Financial Services and Information Technology Services) and set out in the 2025-26 Provisional Cash Flow presentation (Document 2024-07-09iii);

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the Board of Governors approved the resolution as presented.

Geneviève Gagné concluded by expressing her thanks to Kylie Côté and Andrea Roberts for their support throughout the process.

Paterson Extension Project

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier explained that due to recent updates and limited time to follow the usual committee process, the Paterson Extension Project was brought directly to the Board of Governors for consideration. Although the Sustainable Development and Built Environment Committee was not formally consulted in advance, Chair Alexandre Demers agreed that, given the circumstances, direct Board consideration was appropriate. The item is further developed at Item 10.

10 PATERSON EXTENSION CONTRACT

The University had been informed by the government of Quebec in August 2024 that it had been awarded a special \$6.3M grant to support construction of a new 63 bed extension to the Patterson residence. It had since been informed that the grant could not be released in light of insufficient *Plan québécois d'infrastructure* (PQI) funding. Following representations and numerous discussions with government officials, the University received confirmation of release of the funds on April 17, 2025, thereby enabling the commencement of the project. A summer 2026 project launch is key to meeting the goal of having beds available for 2026-2027 academic year and to be able to proceed in turn with essential renovations at Mackinnon. The Mackinnon project will return to the Board of Governors' agenda once the Paterson extension is underway.

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier reported that six (6) bids were received for the project, and they came approximately \$1M over budget, due primarily to the newly negotiated salary increase in the institutional construction sector and contingencies for potential trade tariffs. Despite the increased costs, he advised proceeding without delay, as postponement could lead to further cost escalation and jeopardize the University's student housing capacity.

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier reported that the total project cost is now at \$18.9M, including \$500,000 for relocating the main 25 K voltage power line. Funding sources include \$5M from the reserve for future residences, \$400,000 from the Paterson project reserve, \$6.3M from the *Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur* (MES) grants, and a \$600,000 grant for energy efficiency measures. The remaining \$6.6M will most likely be covered by long-term debt. The construction project is scheduled to begin in early May.

RESOLUTION 2024-07-04
FOR THE APPROVAL OF A REVISED BUDGET AND THE
CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT FOR THE PATERSON HALL EXPANSION PROJECT
AND DELEGATION OF SIGNING AUTHORITY

WHEREAS the Board approves a revised budget of \$18.9M for the construction of a new wing on Paterson Hall (the Paterson Expansion Project);

AND WHEREAS the University's Signing Authority Policy requires approval by the Board of Governors for any contract obligating the University where the total amount involved exceeds \$500,000;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT that the Board of Governors approves the contract for the construction of a new wing on Paterson Hall with Les Constructions Yves Lessard Inc., the contractor who submitted the lowest acceptable bid;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT that the Board of Governors authorizes two of the signing officers (the Principal and Vice Chancellor, any Vice-Principal and the Secretary General), to co-sign the Paterson Hall Expansion project construction contract;

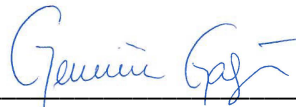
On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the Board of Governors approved the resolution as presented.

The open session adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

The meeting ended at 5:50 p.m.



Murielle Lortie, Chair



Geneviève Gagné, Secretary General