

DECEMBER 19, 2024  
BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY  
BY VIDEOCONFERENCE

MINUTES

**Chair:** Murielle Lortie

**Present:** Mark Caduc, Kent Carson, Nanci Chagnon, Pierre Cossette, Alexandre Demers, Daniel Fournier, Drew Henkel, Sébastien Lebel-Grenier, Alena Perout, Jessica Riddell, Junior Sirivar, Calin Valsan

**Regrets:** Christopher Gokiart, Heather McKeen-Edwards, Alexandra Lebel

**Senior Administration:** Nick Andrews, Danai Bélanger, Julie Desjardins, Kerry Hull, Mark Gandey, Annick Lambert, Jean Manore, Matthew Perros, Jacqueline Scott, Andrew Webster

**Invitee:** Suzie O'Bomsawin

**Secretary:** Geneviève Gagné

\* Pierre Cossette arrived at 3: 11 p.m., followed by Alexandre Demers at 3: 35 p.m.

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chair Murielle Lortie called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

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 adopted as presented.**

Secretary General Geneviève Gagné informed the Governors about an upcoming project aimed at improving the speed of information sharing from governing body meetings to the University community. Further information will be communicated to the Board members once the project is finalized.

### 3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Board of Governors' meetings held on September 27, 2024, and November 8, 2024, were presented for approval.

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

### 4 BUSINESS ARISING

The Chair indicated that there are currently no updates to provide.

### 5 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

#### **Government Relations Update**

Principal Lebel-Grenier informed the Board of *Bill 74's* adoption and his early departure from the December 8, 2024, Senate meeting to attend a discussion with Minister Déry on the new legislation. He noted that *Bill 74* grants the government discretionary authority to impose international student quotas and includes an amendment adding language of instruction as a criterion, potentially impacting Bishop's international student enrolment.

Minister Déry stated that international student quotas to be implemented will be based on 2024 *Certificat d'acceptation du Québec (CAQ)* data and communicated to universities in January. This means a 15% overall reduction for Québec universities and a 20% cut for Bishop's over 2023 numbers. Minister Déry indicated she would be trying to minimize the Bill's impact on university autonomy and confirmed that this will be the only measure imposed for now.

Significant uncertainty remains, with several process components still unpredictable and international student enrolment lower than expected, reflecting trends across Québec universities. The measure is widely viewed as unnecessary, given the government's existing control over CAQ issuance, and concerns were raised about its potential negative impact on student and faculty recruitment, as well as Québec's ability to foster innovation.

Efforts to mitigate the *Bill's* impact are ongoing, with the Premier assuring that Bishop's will not face adverse effects. To ensure continued support for the University, Principal Lebel-Grenier will meet with the Estrie CAQ caucus on January 17, 2025.

#### **Infrastructure Spendings**

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier mentioned some development occurred on the infrastructure funding front. Updates will be discussed in closed session.

#### **Recovery Plan and Strategic Planning Updates**

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier informed the Board that discussions are proceeding on schedule for the academic sector of the recovery plan, and that it is fully drawn out and being implemented for the non-academic sector, with ongoing monitoring for compliance with institutional objectives. Further details will be provided in the Finance and Audit Committee Report and the Academic Report.

The initial phase of strategic planning is complete, with consultants analysing the data that has been gathered. Their report on the first phase, expected in January, will guide discussions in the second phase, which will focus on defining strategic objectives and refining the strategic institutional framework—mission, vision, and values—through working committees and groups.

Workshops on strategic objectives and the framework will be held in January and early February, with all employees invited to participate in open discussions. Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier emphasized that student representation will be provided by members of the Board of the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the SRC executive committee.

The strategic objectives will be presented to the Board of Governors for discussion at its February 21, 2025, meeting. A special meeting to adopt these objectives is scheduled for March 11, 2025. This will be followed by the third phase, starting in March, during which an action plan will be designed. The full strategic plan is set for adoption at the Board's June meeting.

## 6 REPORT OF THE STUDENT'S REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL PRESIDENT (SRC)

Student Representative Council (SRC) President Drew Henkel informed the Board that the SRC co-signed an open letter on *Bill 74*, initiated by the *Québec Student Union (QSU)* and published in *Le Devoir*. He also attended the *Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA)* annual advocacy week, where key priorities—including indexing research grants to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), maintaining Canada Student Grants and Loans, increasing funding for Work-Integrated Learning and Indigenous students, and enhancing immigration points for studying in Canada—were lobbied. Meetings with government officials were well received, and sharing Bishop's students' experiences provided valuable context for proposed solutions.

Drew Henkel reported that the referendum on governance review to ratify the proposed bylaws changes was a success. 497 (17.8%) of the membership voted with 78.9% of voters voting in favour of the changes. The changes will modify the structure of the Student Representative Council to include 9 General Directors, with senators still serving their role indirectly on Senate, and the increase of the referendum quorum to 20% of membership. He noted that the election policies are under review to reflect the new structure. The changes are to come into effect on May 1, 2025.

## 7 ACADEMIC REPORT

Vice-Principal Academic and Research Dr. Andrew Webster reported that short-term savings of approximately \$1.5M for the academic sphere in 2025-2026 were planned through reductions to the budget for part-time courses, freezes on indexation to non-salary expenses, unfilled positions, and other cost-saving measures. Of this amount, approximately \$500K represents recurring savings. He further informed the Board that under the projected savings in the University's recovery plan for the academic sphere, total savings of approximately \$3.15M are required by 2028-2029.

### **Discussion Paper on Curriculum and Academic Structures**

Dr. Andrew Webster linked the savings to the discussion paper on the curriculum and academic structure review, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive review of the University's teaching delivery model and a reduction in the total number of courses offered per year. He highlighted the importance of a strategic, collaborative approach with the academic community to develop the needed changes, focusing on streamlining programs while maintaining academic rigour to ensure long-term sustainability, operational efficiency, and alignment with institutional priorities.

Achieving the required savings will reduce part-time course offerings, necessitating program adjustments. The consultation process will take place from January to April, with the planned timeline to conclude with new degree regulations to be presented at the May Senate meeting.

A question was raised about the curriculum restructuring and the budgetary goals. Dr. Andrew Webster mentioned that while specific target numbers have not been yet formalized, the goal is to reduce the overall teaching cost. The process involved careful consideration on full-time faculty capacity, limited-term appointments, and part-time course budgets. He stated that limited-term appointments will be prioritized in areas with dedicated funding, while part-time course offering will be adjusted accordingly. Data analysis is ongoing to ensure accuracy before final figures are communicated.

### **French Language and Culture in Québec at Bishop's**

Dr. Andrew Webster invited Dr. Julie Desjardins to present the *French Language and Culture in Québec at Bishop's* initiative, which aims to promote French language learning through formal and informal activities to enhance students' proficiency. She provided a detailed overview of its structure, objectives, and budget.

Dr. Desjardins highlighted that the provincial government requires that, starting in 2025, 80% of newly enrolled non-Québec resident undergraduate students at Bishop's achieve level 5 oral proficiency on the *Échelle québécoise des niveaux de compétence en français* by graduation. This 12-level scale designates level 5 as the first of four intermediate proficiency levels. She clarified that this requirement applies to the University as an institution, not to individual students. She highlighted the University's approach to this initiative is to use it as a mean enhance Bishop's appeal to prospective students.

Dr. Desjardins highlighted the importance of partnerships with other institutions, effective communication, and strong project branding. She also acknowledged the contributions of key stakeholders, including Dr. Sarah Théberge, who plays a pivotal role in project implementation, as well as the Student's Representative Council and the Registrar's Office, which support various French language initiatives already in place at the University.

A question was raised regarding the financial investment for 2025-26. Dr. Julie Desjardins explained that the \$420,000 budget for that period will primarily support language experts and teaching costs, infrastructure development, communication, and student scholarships related to the project.

Dr. Andrew Webster emphasized that collaboration with Concordia and McGill will be essential to the project's success.

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier concluded by affirming the project's significance to the University and expressed his gratitude to Dr. Julie Desjardins and Dr. Sarah Théberge for their leadership in driving the initiative forward.

Dr. Kerry Hull discussed the importance of maintaining research momentum as part of the institution's long-term strategic plan, as it plays an important role in reputation, recruitment, and success in securing governmental funding.

On the graduate programs side, government measures are impacting international student recruitment, particularly in the Computer Science Master's Program. To address the issue Dr. Kerry Hull mentioned that the Graduate Student Coordinator's role is shifting towards international recruitment, with expected results in the coming years. Faculty participation remains strong, with a focus on leveraging institutional strengths rather than replicating larger university models.

### **Recovery Plan**

Interim Vice-Principal Finance Geneviève Gagné provided updates on the Recovery Plan, covering long-term projections, enrolment forecasts, and changes in indexation rates.

The Executive Committee identified targets for additional revenue and cost savings, focusing on expense reductions in both academic and non-academic sectors. The projected operating revenues presented in October were revised, indicating that the University's growth will primarily come from domestic students rather than the international market. Additionally, a 30% decline in Spring and Summer enrolment is anticipated due to a reduction from 35 to 15 in course offerings.

Geneviève Gagné noted that while expense reductions, revenue generation initiatives, and adjustments to MES grant indexation are beneficial, the University still projects deficits through 2028-29. However, she emphasized that some data points remain fluid and are subject to change.

### **2025-26 Faculty Hiring**

Kent Carson presented recommendations on new tenure-stream appointments, emphasizing that the Finance and Audit Committee felt that they could not support them at this time due to financial constraints and ongoing discussions on the curriculum and academic restructuring. The Committee endorsed the second motion adopted by the Senate on December 6, 2024, which calls for reconsidering all tenure-stream appointments in June 2025, provided the financial recovery plan has made sufficient progress.

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier noted that he had informed the Senate that, although tenure-stream appointments are essential in the current structure, the recommendations were unlikely to be approved given the current financial situation. He supported reconsidering tenure-stream appointments in June, when greater financial clarity would be available to assess the feasibility of new hires.

Concerns were expressed regarding the financial outlook and the process for allocating tenure-stream positions with alternative approaches proposed for future consideration. Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier clarified the process and the Senate Planning Committee's recommendation mandate, emphasizing that it is the Board of Governors that is responsible for managing the University budget.

**RESOLUTION 2024-03-01**  
**FOR TENURE-STREAM POSITIONS FOR THE 2025-2026 BUDGET**

WHEREAS the senior administration has produced a financial projection for 2025-26 that includes funding for the three limited-term appointments;

WHEREAS the Finance and Audit Committee has discussed the University's current financial projections and has supported the following Senate recommendations:

a) To recommend that the following limited-term appointments, all of equal priority, be included in the 2025-26 budget that will be approved by the Board.

- Computer Science
- Drama
- Sociology

b) To recommend that the following positions be reconsidered by the Board in June 2025 for approval as tenure-stream appointments, should the Board determine at that time that financial recovery planning is sufficiently advanced and robust.

- Computer Science
- Drama
- Sociology
- Sports Studies

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors accepts to reconsider the following requests in June 2025 for approval as tenure-stream appointments, should it determine at that time that financial recovery planning is sufficiently advanced and robust:

- Computer Science
- Drama
- Sociology
- Sports Studies

**On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the Board of Governors approved the resolution as presented, with 1 abstention.**

**2023-24 Declaration of Conformity – University Legal Obligations**

Geneviève Gagné concluded by outlining the University's legal obligations, stating that the validation letter for 2023-24 had been provided to the Board. She confirmed one instance of non-compliance for 2023-24, specifically partial compliance with the *Environment Quality Act*. Corrective actions will be taken to address the issue.

10      SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Alexandre Demers summarized the *Sustainable Development and Built Environment* report, noting that the Housing Plan Project and the five (5)-year *Plan québécois des infrastructures* (PQI) require further review. He highlighted the University's increase in subsidized student bus passes from 50 per semester in 2023-24 to 100 in 2024-25 and announced the construction of a permanent covered bike shelter in spring 2025. He also reported that a campus-wide tree inventory has been completed and is now catalogued.

Compost bins were installed in all residences, accompanied by guidelines on proper waste sorting. In November 2024, a University-wide waste categorization process identified issues with incorrect sorting in the cafeteria. He noted the completion of the community garden, which consists of 70 garden boxes, with future additions planned, including a gazebo, birdhouses, and a tree nursery.

He concluded by highlighting the renovation of the Coulter Field entrance and classroom upgrades, which include new multimedia infrastructure, window replacements, and updated flooring.

11 AD HOC OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE FOR KWIGW8MNA

Suzie O'Bomsawin presented the report, noting that unforeseen events caused delays but the project remains on budget. The opening is scheduled for March 2025.

12 INFORMATION RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Mark Caduc reported that the final Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) documentation (“dossier d’opportunité”) was submitted to the *Ministère de l’Enseignement supérieur* (MES) in late October. The confirmation of government funding is yet to be finalized. Meanwhile, the team has been mapping 48 processes and identifying opportunities for automation and operational efficiency.

Discussions on project prioritization’s criteria highlighted the need to revise the current model, with increased emphasis on financial considerations and differentiated criteria for strategic and operational projects. A revised proposal will be presented in early 2025.

Changes to the Email for Life Program will be implemented in January, including the disabling of inactive accounts, deletion of graduating student accounts after 18 to 24 months and closure of inactive accounts for inactive applicants. Additionally, a review of IT policies is underway, with an Information Security Policy in development to support compliance with Information Technology governance. The Policy will be reviewed and presented to the Board of Governors in early 2025.

A question was raised concerning the consultation process with the Human Resources Department and the Association of Professors of Bishop’s University (APBU) for the Email for Life Program as this is a retirement benefit mentioned in the Collective Agreement. Mark Caduc clarified that no accounts would be deleted until further discussion on the Collective Agreement occurs.

13 APPOINTMENT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL AS REPRESENTATIVE FOR CLICSÉQUR

*Revenu Québec* requires a resolution that authorizes a person to represent the University, over the phone, in person or in writing via online services, to act on behalf of the University with respect to financial information.

The current University representative with *Revenu Québec* is Trygve Ugland, former Secretary General of Bishop’s University. With the recent appointment of Geneviève Gagné as Bishop’s University Secretary General, this designation must be updated with *Revenu Québec*.

## RESOLUTION 2024-03-02

### FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL AS BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY'S REPRESENTATIVE FOR *CLICSÉQUR*

WHEREAS Bishop's University has a business account with *Revenu Québec*;

AND WHEREAS *Revenu Québec* requires a resolution to appoint a representative to act on behalf of the University;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Geneviève Gagné, Secretary General (hereinafter the "representative"), be authorized to:

- View the Bishop's University's file and act on behalf of the University for all periods and taxation years (past, present and future), including participating in any negotiations with *Revenu Québec* involving any information *Revenu Québec* holds about the University for the administration and enforcement of tax legislation, the *Excise Tax Act* and the *Act Facilitating the Payment of Support* by communicating with *Revenu Québec* over the phone, in person or in writing via online services;
- Register the University with *Revenu Québec*;
- Sign, renounce or revoke authorizations and powers of attorney on behalf of the University, as applicable;
- Register the University for *clicSÉQUR* – Entreprises and My Account for businesses;
- View the University's file and act on behalf of the University, in accordance with the conditions for use for My Account for businesses, which are available on the *Revenu Québec* website and to which we must consent.

The Board of Governors consents to having the Minister of *Revenu Québec* discuss, with the representative, the information it holds about the University that is relevant to the business's registration for My Account for businesses and registration with *Revenu Québec*, be it over the phone, in person or in writing via online services.

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

## 14 AMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY ON PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT

On March 27, 2024, the Québec government passed *Bill 42 — An Act to Prevent and Fight Psychological Harassment and Sexual Violence in the Workplace*.

Section 18(2) of *Bill 42* amends Section 81.19 of the *Act Respecting Labour Standards* by specifying mandatory content for employers' harassment prevention policies. Employers had until September 27, 2024, to update their policies accordingly. Bishop's University's Policy already largely met the requirements of *Bill 42*. Only a few updates were necessary as below:

(2) the specific information and **training programs** on psychological harassment prevention that are offered to employees;

(5) the **measures to protect** the persons concerned by a situation of psychological harassment and **the persons who have cooperated in the processing of a complaint or report** regarding such a situation;



(7) the measures to ensure the confidentiality of complaints, reports, information or documents received and to ensure a **preservation period of at least two years for the documents** made or obtained in the course of managing a situation of psychological harassment.”

Secretary General Geneviève Gagné stated that an in-depth review of the policy is in progress.

**RESOLUTION 2024-03-03**  
**FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE**  
**POLICY ON PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT**

THAT the Board of Governors approve the amendments to the *Policy on the Prevention of Harassment* as required by *Bill 42 — An Act to Prevent and Fight Psychological Harassment and Sexual Violence in the Workplace*.

**On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the Board of Governors approved the resolution as presented, with 1 abstention.**

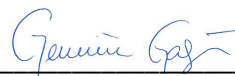
The open session adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

The meeting ended at 5:56 p.m.



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Murielle Lortie, Chair



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Geneviève Gagné, Secretary General