

FEBRUARY 21, 2025
BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY
BY VIDEOCONFERENCE

MINUTES

Chair: Murielle Lortie

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

Regrets: Pierre Cossette

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

Invitee: Jean-Daniel Brisson and Julie Martineau

Secretary: Geneviève Gagné

* Alexandre Demers arrived at 3: 27 p.m., followed by
Heather McKeen-Edwards at 4: 40 p.m.

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chair Murielle Lortie called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m., welcomed Pascale O'Bomsawin as a new Board member, and invited her to introduce herself.

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.

Principal Lebel-Grenier introduced the consultant who are providing support for the University Strategic Planning exercise, Julie Martineau and Jean-Daniel Brisson.

The Principal provided a brief overview of the steps completed so far and highlighted key issues identified in the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, stressing that the focus of today's discussions is the proposed framework, with potential modifications based on Governor's input.

The new Mission, Vision, Values, Goals, and Strategies statements will be presented for adoption at a special meeting on March 11, 2025. Next steps will focus on defining an action plan to implement the Goals and Strategies. The final Strategic Plan approval is set for the Board meeting scheduled in June 2025.

Phase 1

Jean-Daniel Brisson outlined the information-gathering process and key insights from consultations, surveys, and workshops, noting that about 2,000 surveys were completed. Board members can access detailed reports on the portal. He emphasized the need to focus on long-term sustainability, clarifying the liberal education model, increasing the brand awareness and visibility, and highlighted the student experience as a key advantage to leverage.

Phase 2

Mission and Vision

Jean-Daniel Brisson then introduced the second phase, focused on defining the Mission, Vision, Values, and long-term priorities to achieve the vision and address the identified challenges. The proposed Mission and Vision statements were presented.

Concerns were raised about using appropriate language and clearly defining the uniqueness of the education model in the Mission statement to ensure clarity, alignment with the University's identity, and effective communication of its core values.

Comments were made suggesting that the statements be shortened to enhance impact or using a manifesto approach to better capture the diverse perspectives.

Principal Lebel-Grenier invited members to submit suggestions for improvement. However, the priority remains the content, ensuring that the Mission statement accurately reflects the University's strategic direction. The action plan will further develop the ideas outlined in the Mission and Vision statements.

Values

Four core values were put forward in the strategic planning. Jean-Daniel Brisson noted that aspects of the previous framework, including community and sustainability, remain relevant. However, harmony—emphasizing the importance of having a positive impact—has been introduced as a key element.

Goals and Strategies

Jean-Daniel Brisson stated that the goals and strategies define the long-term priorities for addressing the key challenges identified in the first phase of the strategic planning and achieving the institution's vision. The focus remained on three primary goals:

1. *Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the University*
2. *Strengthening Bishop's unique education model*
3. *Enhancing Bishop's impact, reputation and recognition*

Principal Lebel-Grenier clarified the scope of these goals in response to a question about whether the financial sustainability should refer specifically to academic structures, stating that the intent is broader and includes all operational structures.

Concerns were raised regarding the clarity and intent of the language. Principal Lebel-Grenier explained that broader wording was chosen to allow for greater precision in the action plan. Principal Lebel-Grenier and Julie Martineau further clarified that the selected wording aims to address complex issues while deliberately avoiding the terms “*liberal education*” and “*resilience*” to focus on specific elements and minimize subjective interpretation.

A question was asked on the role of athletics and extracurricular activities within the framework, recognizing their importance to the Bishop’s experience. Principal Lebel-Grenier acknowledged their significant contribution to leadership development and student enrichment, noting that this aspect will also be addressed into the action plan.

Principal Lebel-Grenier concluded by mentioning that comments will be brought to the Planning Committee to address the issues raised by the members of the Board and draft a final revision. He thanked Jean-Daniel and Julie for their work.

The final document will be presented at a special meeting of the Board of Governors scheduled for March 11, 2025.

4 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the Board of Governors’ meeting held on December 19, 2024, were presented for approval.

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

5 BUSINESS ARISING

Secretary General Geneviève Gagné reported on an 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. The Secretary General’s office is working on improving the format to ensure the dissemination of timely, accurate and relevant information. The final draft will be presented at the Board of Governors meeting scheduled for April 25, 2025.

6 PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Government Relations Update

Principal Lebel-Grenier updated the Board of Governors on *Bill 74*, which grants the government discretionary power to impose international student quotas on universities. He highlighted an amendment that introduced language of instruction as a potential criterion for setting quotas, though the government has not indicated plans to enforce it. Significant efforts have been made to prevent its potential application as a control mechanism. He noted that recent federal and provincial policy discussions changes have significantly impacted international student enrolment, leading to a sharp decline across all Quebec universities. Beyond universities, this decline poses economic risks, affecting local businesses, housing, and regional economies, with potential broader consequences amid the threat of a recession and a possible trade war with the United States.

To ensure continued support for the University, Principal Lebel-Grenier, joined by Geneviève Gagné, has met with the *Estrie Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ)* caucus on January 17, 2025, and have continued discussions with ministers and government officials.

Recovery Plan

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier informed the Board that the recovery plan is proceeding on schedule and as planned. Further details will be provided on the academic sector in the Academic Report and in the Finance and Audit Report.

Kwigw8mna Opening

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier informed Board members of the upcoming opening of *Kwigw8mna* on March 21, 2025. A full day of events is planned, with invitations extended to a diverse group, including the Chiefs of all Indigenous communities in Québec, community members, and elected representatives. Board members will receive an invitation along with further details on the day's activities, and all are encouraged to attend.

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

SRC President Drew Henkel provided an update on recent activities. He highlighted the success of the Winterfest event, which drew approximately 1,200 attendees for the Rail Jam and evening concert, receiving highly positive feedback from the community.

He also announced the resignation of Roser Riser as Vice-President of Academic Affairs in early February. Following a selection process, Chelsea Sheridan was appointed as her successor. With prior experience on Senate, she brings valuable insight to the role.

Drew Henkel concluded by discussing the ongoing election period, noting that the transition to the new governance structure is bringing some challenges. Currently, six (6) candidates are running for nine (9) positions, a lower turnout than expected. However, greater participation and competition are anticipated in future elections.

8 ACADEMIC REPORT

Vice-Principal Academic and Research Dr. Andrew Webster provided an update on key academic and administrative matters.

He noted ongoing discussions with Chelsea Sheridan, the newly appointed Vice-President of Academic Affairs, and expressed appreciation for Roser Riser's contributions during her tenure.

Dr. Webster also reported that Mark Gandey completed his term as Interim Dean of the Williams School of Business at the end of January. Margaret Shepherd will assume the deanship on March 17, 2025. In the meantime, Professor Robert Palmer is overseeing operational responsibilities.

On the academic front, the "*Bishop's en français*" project, led by Dean Julie Desjardins is progressing. This project is intended to address the requirement that out-of-province students achieve intermediate French proficiency by graduation. Additionally, Jean Manore has taken the lead on an initiative examining the impact of generative AI on education, ensuring Bishop's remains responsive to evolving technologies.

Discussion Paper on Financial Modeling

Vice-Principal Academic and Research, Dr. Andrew Webster, provided an update on the academic sector's recovery plan, highlighting the distribution of the Financial Modeling paper. Developed to stimulate discussion, this paper serves as a foundation for strategic decision-making in response to the financial recovery plan.

This paper underscores the significant impact of budget reductions on academic programming. He outlined the structural challenge faced by the University, where course offerings exceeding faculty

teaching capacity, and other factors such as administrative duties and course release for research, leads to a heavy reliance on part-time instructors. Given budget constraints, a strategic adaptation of curriculum structures and course offering is needed in order to maintain academic quality with fewer courses.

Faculty discussions were highly engaged, focusing on curriculum adjustments rather than department mergers. The emphasis remained on sustaining Bishop's liberal education while balancing financial imperatives, ensuring that restructuring efforts are framed as strategic enhancements rather than cost-cutting measures.

The curriculum revision process is on track. A first proposal is set to be presented at the March 14, 2025 Senate meeting, with subsequent versions presented at the April meeting and the final document for approval in May. The final approach will likely involve revised degree regulations and program-level discussions to ensure that disciplines with limited full-time faculty can sustainably deliver their curricula.

9 RESEARCH REPORT

Dr. Kerry Hull provided an update on major grant applications submitted by Bishop's University researchers, highlighting two large-scale infrastructure proposals to the *Canadian Foundation for Innovation* (CFI). The first, the *POET* project on exoplanet exploration, is led by Jason Rowe in collaboration with Université de Montréal, Western University, McMaster University, Mount Allison University, and the University of British Columbia. The second, the *Canadian Gravitational Wave Astrophysics Infrastructure Network*, focuses on gravitational wave detection and involves John Ruan in partnership with Université de Montréal. Additionally, Mirella Aoun is leading a funding proposal to expand the year-round raspberry growing project from the *Weston Family Foundation*, in collaboration with Université de Sherbrooke and private-sector partners.

She concluded by highlighting Research Week, which will take place from March 17 to March 20, 2025, featuring a series of events, including a keynote address by Nobel Laureate Dr. McDonald. She encouraged everyone to attend.

10 FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Kent Carson presented the report of the Finance and Audit Committee, highlighting three key items.

Audit Plan Review

The University's auditors *Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton* (RCGT) presented their audit plan for the 2024-25 fiscal year. 2024-25 will be the fourth year that RCGT performs the audit for Bishop's University. Only minor adjustments were observed.

Recovery Plan Update

The progress remains on track with the 2025-2026 operating budget under development. Key factors include enrolment and indexation outcomes. The main assumptions and projections are being reviewed, and more information will be shared with the Board in the coming months. The final approval is scheduled for the April Board of Governors meeting.

Financial Outlook

The 2024-2025 preliminary results indicate a near-balanced budget, potentially eliminating the need to submit a formal recovery plan to the government. However, this positive financial position is temporary with continued expectations that future expenses will be higher than the funding granted by the government. While this is a favorable development, long-term challenges remain.

Alexandre Demers presented the expansion budget updates for the *Paterson Hall* project, highlighting changes since the last budget approval. The adjustments reflect infrastructure modifications and improvements in energy efficiency equipment. He also noted the impact of inflation and rising costs on the budget increase. The revised budget, with a \$1.4M increase, is submitted for approval.

A question was raised concerning the *Plan québécois des infrastructures* (PQI) and the approval of the budget increase.

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier clarified that the project is mainly self-funded and is not part of the regular PQI budget.

It was emphasized that the extension of *Paterson Hall* is considered critical for student housing, particularly given the aging facilities.

Alexandre Demers gave more information on the budget adjustment and inflation impact.

**RESOLUTION 2024-04-01
FOR THE INCREASE OF THE
PATERSON HALL EXTENSION PROJECT BUDGET**

WHEREAS the Board approved a budget of \$14M for the construction of the additional wing of Paterson Hall at its December 15, 2023 meeting and included provision for an additional \$2.5M contingent on securing government grants for residences in the 2024-29 Capital Plan that was approved by the Board at its June 13, 2024 meeting, for a total project budget of \$16.5M;

WHEREAS the University needs an additional budget of \$1.4M to complete the project;

WHEREAS this \$1.4M extra budget will be funded by government grants and capital reserves set aside for residences as explained in the Sustainable Development and Built Environment Committee Report of November 2024;

AND WHEREAS the Sustainable Development and Built Environment Committee reviewed the Paterson Hall Extension project and recommends that the Board approve the revised budget;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors approves the revised budget of \$17.9M for the Paterson Hall extension project.

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

Secretary General Geneviève Gagné provided an update on legislative changes affecting wrongdoing disclosures in public bodies. Quebec's 2017 law required institutions to establish an internal process, leading Bishop's to adopt a policy in 2019. Recent legislative changes now mandate disclosures directly to the Quebec Ombudsman, requiring Bishop's to abolish its policy. Since the Board initially approved the policy, its abolition is now submitted for approval.

RESOLUTION 2024-04-02
FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE
THE POLICY ON SAFE DISCLOSURE OF WRONGDOING (“WHISTLEBLOWING”)

Whereas the Board of Governors approved the *Policy on Safe Disclosure of Wrongdoings* (“*Whistleblowing*”) on November 8, 2019 (2019-2-02);

Whereas the Act to enact the Act respecting protection against reprisals related to the disclosure of wrongdoings and to amend other legislative provisions (*Loi édictant la Loi sur la protection contre les représailles liées à la divulgation d’actes répréhensibles et modifiant d’autres dispositions législatives*) came into force on November 30, 2024;

Whereas the amendments introduced by this Act render the provisions of the *Policy on Safe Disclosure of Wrongdoings* (“*Whistleblowing*”) obsolete, and necessitate the abolition of the said Policy;

Be it resolved that the *Policy on Safe Disclosure of Wrongdoings* (“*Whistleblowing*”) is abolished.

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

13 2025-2026 BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING DATES PROPOSAL

Secretary General Geneviève Gagné presented the 2025-2026 meeting calendar, noting that Senate dates were included for reference. She invited Governors to notify her office of any scheduling conflicts or concerns.

14 AD HOC REVIEW COMMITTEE FOR THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier introduced the process for the renewal of Dr. Kerry Hull as Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, as her mandate concludes on August 31, 2025. Due to a structural change during her tenure, she initially served a three-year term, followed by a Board-approved two-year extension, resulting in a typical five-year initial term. The renewal now follows a shorter-than-usual two-year term. The Board is required to confirm the nomination of Alena Perout as the external member to the Review Committee. Once the process of the Ad Hoc Committee is launched, the Committee will conduct its review and present a recommendation on Dr. Hull’s reappointment.

RESOLUTION 2024-04-03
FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AD HOC COMMITTEE
FOR THE REAPPOINTMENT OF THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS

WHEREAS the Principal and Vice-Chancellor recommends the establishment of an Ad Hoc Review Committee for the reappointment of the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics in accordance with Part V of the Statutes of Bishop's University;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT an Ad Hoc Committee is established with the mandate and composition set out in Appendix I to this document;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the External member of the Board of Governors on the Ad Hoc Review Committee for the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics be Alena Perout.

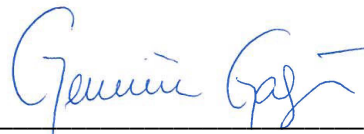
On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the Board of Governors approved the resolution as presented.

The open session adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

The meeting ended at 5:29 p.m.



Murielle Lortie, Chair



Geneviève Gagné, Secretary General