

NOVEMBER 8, 2024
BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY
MCGREER 100 AND BY VIDEOCONFERENCE

MINUTES

Chair: Murielle Lortie

Present: Mark Caduc, Kent Carson, Nanci Chagnon, Pierre Cossette, Alexandre Demers, Christopher Gokiart, Drew Henkel, Alexandra Lebel, Sébastien Lebel-Grenier, Heather McKeen-Edwards, Alena Perout, Jessica Riddell, Junior Sivirar, Calin Valsan

Regrets: Daniel Fournier, Abel Bosum, Suzie O'Bomsawin

Senior Administration: Nick Andrews, Danai Bélanger, Julie Desjardins, Mark Gandey, Isabelle Goyette, Annick Lambert, Denise Lauzière, Jean Manore, Matthew Perros, Jacqueline Scott, Andrew Webster

Secretary: Geneviève Gagné

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chair Murielle Lortie called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m.

2 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved without modification.

- Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

The Chair introduced the "Disclosure of Conflict of interest" as a new standing agenda item, emphasizing its inclusion as a good governance practice. 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.

The agenda was adopted as presented.

3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Murielle Lortie noted that the minutes of the September 27, 2024, meeting will be differed to the December meeting.

4 BUSINESS ARISING

The Chair indicated that there were no particular updates at this time aside from an item to be addressed during the Principal's report.

5 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Principal Lebel-Grenier announced the departures of Vice-Principal Finance and Administration Isabelle Goyette and Chief of Staff Denise Lauzière, expressing gratitude for their significant contributions to the University.

Isabelle Goyette was commended for achieving seven consecutive years of balanced budgets and her pivotal role in government relations alongside Principal Goldbloom, which led to impactful agreements with the provincial government. Principal Lebel-Grenier highlighted her dedication to financial management, particularly in overseeing the University's capital and infrastructure, leaving a lasting structural impact on its sustainability and operations.

Principal Lebel-Grenier acknowledged Denise Lauzière's pivotal role in organizing the Office of the Principal, her significant contributions during Principal Goldbloom's tenure, and her leadership as Interim Secretary General. He commended her dedication, which ensured efficient operations, effective outreach, and a seamless transition within the principal's office. He expressed gratitude for her efforts and extended his best wishes for her future endeavours.

The Principal confirmed that the recruitment process to find a successor to Isabelle Goyette will begin shortly and will be discussed under agenda item 10. In the interim, her responsibilities have been redistributed amongst senior administration members: Secretary General Geneviève Gagné will oversee finance and information resources, while Nick Andrews will manage buildings, grounds, and ancillary services. The Principal expressed gratitude to Geneviève and Nick for taking on these additional responsibilities despite their existing workloads.

Principal Lebel-Grenier also announced the transfer of oversight for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives from the Principal's Office to the Vice-Principal's Student Affairs Office, noting that Danai Bélanger's extensive expertise in the field will greatly benefit the University. The Principal thanked Danai for accepting this additional responsibility and acknowledge the dedication of the team, emphasizing their commitment to advancing the University mission.

Principal Lebel-Grenier invited Isabelle Goyette and Denise Lauzière to say a few words.

Isabelle Goyette expressed heartfelt gratitude and affection for the institution and its community, emphasizing her commitment to supporting the University throughout the transition. She thanked the Board for its patience and trust in her leadership. She also acknowledged her colleagues and the strong executive team under Principal Lebel-Grenier's leadership, voicing optimism about the University's financial future. She concluded by reaffirming her dedication to the University.

Denise Lauzière expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to be part of the Bishop's community and reiterated her profound dedication to the University.

Pierre Cossette, Rector of Université de Sherbrooke, shared a few words on Isabelle Goyette's transition to the University, highlighting this move as a commitment to maintaining and strengthening the positive relationship and collaboration between the two institutions.

Principal Lebel-Grenier highlighted the record-breaking Open House, which welcomed 348 prospective students and a total of 857 visitors. The campus hosted a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere, supported by community members and various teams who work diligently to ensure its success. He expressed his gratitude to Annick Lambert and her team and to all contributors, emphasizing the importance of such initiatives.

He also drew attention to the recent vernissage of the exhibition “*Faux plis par hypothèses*,” curated by Louise Déry, Director of the Galerie de l'UQAM, and Marie-Hélène Leblanc, Director of the Galerie UQO, in partnership with Les Jardins de Métis, and hosted at the Foreman Gallery. He stressed the value of promoting the gallery's work, noting that the exhibition, which explores the intersection of art and science, exemplifies effective inter-institutional collaboration and underscores the University's dedication to fostering unity and cooperation.

Principal Lebel-Grenier mentioned the events of September 27, 2024, which included the unveiling of former Principal Michael Goldbloom's portrait and a tree-planting ceremony honouring former Chair of the Board Robert Hall. These ceremonies celebrated their significant contributions to the University.

Principal Lebel-Grenier informed members of continuing government relations challenges. He first related that the Minister of Higher Education refused to provide a letter of support for a funding request to Canadian Heritage for an important project led by the Consortium of English-Language Cegeps, Colleges and Universities of Quebec. This funding was meant to support holding estates general on English-language higher education in Quebec. This decision gave clear indications on the provincial government stance and highlighted challenges for future collaboration.

Principal Lebel-Grenier briefed the Board on his November 5 appearance with Concordia representatives before National Assembly Parliamentary Committee to provide comments on *Bill 74*, which would grant government the power to impose international student quotas on universities. He emphasized significant concerns about the bill's foreseeable impacts. Despite widespread disapproval from universities and Cegep's across Quebec, the government is expected to move forward with its core provisions. Pierre Cossette emphasized that the Université de Sherbrooke Board is also concerned by the potential impact of the bill as it breaches the fundamental governance principles of universities.

The Principal reported on the challenges within the *Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire* (BCI), including divisive remarks by the Recteur de l'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), advocating for redirecting charter universities' funding exclusively to the Université du Québec (UQ) network. He also informed the Board of his recent appointment as First Vice-President of the BCI Executive Committee, a role that will enable him to support the organization in addressing these issues. Pierre Cossette added to the Principal statements mentioning that the Université de Sherbrooke, amongst other universities, has decided not to react to the comments made by the Recteur de l'Université du Québec à Montréal.

Despite these challenges, the Principal highlighted significant collaboration within the BCI, particularly in addressing the ongoing capital funding crisis. He noted that a recent government directive to halt payments for completed contracts was resolved through BCI-led efforts and direct consultations with the Ministry. While this temporary solution ensures funding until the end of March, the underlying issues remain unresolved.

The Principal reported that the recovery plan is on schedule, with non-academic announcements expected for mid-November, supported by communications plan and a Town Hall to ensure transparency. The academic plan will be presented under item 7. The strategic planning is also progressing as planned and will be addressed under item 11.

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

Student Representative Council (SRC) President Drew Henkel provided an update on the ongoing SRC governance review, based on the consultant's report received on October 16, 2024. The report highlighted key issues, including student leader burnout due to excessive workloads, a lack of competitive elections, confusion amongst students and SRC members about governance processes, and unclear accountability between operational and governance roles. Strengths identified included a strong relationship with the university, a shared purpose amongst students, and effective advocacy efforts.

The consultant has proposed restructuring the SRC Board, reducing its size from the current 20-member model to a streamlined 9-member structure. As required by the bylaws, this proposal will be put to a student referendum on November 20–21, 2024.

Drew Henkel concluded by highlighting the OMSÉES Survey, which runs until November 22, 2024. Conducted across Quebec every four years by the Mental Health Observatory of Higher Education, the survey provides critical insights into students' mental health needs. Efforts are being made to encourage strong participation to ensure robust data for enhancing student support. He noted that Bishop's achieved one of the highest response rates in the previous survey.

7 ACADEMIC REPORT

Vice-Principal Academic and Research Andrew Webster provided an update on the financial recovery plan for the academic sector, detailing short-term and long-term strategies to meet targeted budget reductions for a balanced budget. He outlined that short-term savings for 2025-2026, amounting to \$1.5M (4.3%), will be achieved through targeted budget cuts. For 2026-2029, the need for long-term savings of \$3M (10%) will necessitate more significant changes.

Dr. Webster highlighted the key cost drivers of academic expenditures:

- Tenure-stream and limited-term appointments
- Part-time courses
- Academic and library positions
- Academic activity budgets
- Academic and curriculum structures

The short-term savings for 2025-2026 focuses on the first four (4) cost drivers of the academic expenditures.

Dr. Webster reported that the Senate Planning Committee had received four requests for new tenure-stream positions. Normally the Board would have been presented at this meeting with the Senate's recommendation on these requests, based on the SPC's analysis. However, the SPC had decided not to proceed with making a recommendation to Senate at this time, due to (i) its awareness of the significant long-term financial implications and the absence of a comprehensive financial recovery plan,

and (ii) the need to have a clear picture of the financial position for 2025-26, including the extent of savings that might be needed from the part-time teaching budget. As Chair of the SPC, he had advised the committee to wait until the December meeting of Senate to make its report, at which point it would be able to make aligned recommendations on both new tenure-stream positions and the part-time teaching budget.

The Vice-Principal Academic and Research discussed various aspects of the part-time courses budget, which is the largest flexible element in the teaching budget, including specific considerations for spring and summer part-time course offerings. Dr. Webster informed the Board of Governors that, at the most recent Senate meeting, funding for 15 part-time courses for the spring-summer semester were approved within the current budget, rather than the normal budgeted number of 35, resulting in a saving of \$230,000. He clarified that, despite only 15 courses being approved for funding via the part-time budget, a broader selection will still be available to students, as various other courses were offered via alternative funding arrangements or as part of the normal teaching load of certain full time faculty.

Looking ahead, the Senate Planning Committee was currently estimating it would reduce the number of part-time courses budgeted for the Fall-Winter semesters in 2025-26 by approximately 45, decreasing the annual total from 229.5 to 184.5. This adjustment is projected to contribute approximately another \$550,000 in savings towards the total \$1.5 million savings target. Dr. Webster also noted that certain part-time courses covered specifically under the terms of the Collective Agreements would be unaffected by these reductions. As noted earlier, a comprehensive document addressing both part-time courses and tenure-stream recommendations will be presented at the December Senate meeting and subsequently brought to the Board. The additional savings needed in 2025-26 from the academic sector will be found through steps including recalculating budget estimates for some standard activities, leaving some positions unfilled, and redirecting certain special mandate funding attached to identified programs. This approach balances reductions across various areas to meet financial goals.

The long-term savings plan from 2026 onward focuses on addressing the last of the five drivers of academic expenditures. Dr. Webster highlighted key changes to academic and curriculum structures that must be considered to achieve the targeted long-term savings of approximately \$3 million and ensure the sustainable delivery of the University's mission of a liberal education. He underscored the importance of conducting this process collaboratively and transparently. The Vice-Principal Academic and Research noted that additional considerations, such as compliance with new government regulations on the French language, will need to be addressed in order to achieve the financial targets while also complying with governmental requirements.

Dr. Webster emphasized that Bishop's University had faced similar financial challenges in the past, which had most recently led to the creation of a Task Force which reported in 2016. In its final report, the Task Force identified a systemic issue: offering more classes than the student population can sustain. This imbalance, once mitigated by government funding, persists today, underscoring the need for a comprehensive long-term plan, a reassessment of the academic structure and curriculum offerings, and the development of an approach aligned with the University's vision of liberal education. The Vice-Principal Academic and Research warned that delaying action on these issues would lead to a greater financial burden in the future, potentially necessitating more significant cutbacks.

Dr. Webster concluded by outlining the process for the coming months. The Senate Planning Committee, working with the Deans and Vice-Principal, will develop a proposal through division-level discussions and open meetings to gather feedback. Draft proposals will be circulated in the spring, with final submissions

to the Senate in May. He also announced that a discussion paper on curriculum and academic structures will be shared shortly.

Chair Murielle Lortie thanked the Vice-Principal Academic and Research for his comprehensive presentation.

A question period followed, focusing on the alignment of proposed changes with the University's vision and the financial plan to support it, and on potential partnership to strengthen financial sustainability and academic offerings. Principal Lebel-Grenier emphasized that defining the vision and bringing new ideas are key aspects of the strategic planning process. The Vice-Principal Academic and Research underscored the importance of ensuring that the vision of a liberal education is clearly defined and actionable within the academic framework, with a cost structure that aligns with sustainable financial practices while maintaining the integrity and quality of the University's offerings.

Clarification was requested regarding the financial implications of reducing part-time spring-summer courses, with reference to the collective agreement stipulating that such courses must either break even or generate a profit. The Vice-Principal Academic and Research noted that the financial implications of part-time spring-summer courses, which involve both additional costs and revenue, are calculated differently from the standard approach. The Vice-Principal Finance and Administration Isabelle Goyette provided further details on the cost-revenue structure mechanism. Principal Lebel-Grenier emphasized that the primary discrepancy stems from an imbalance between the funding model, student enrollment, and course offerings.

8 RESEARCH REPORT

Vice-Principal Academic and Research, Dr. Andrew Webster, presented the report on behalf of Dr. Kerry Hull, who sent her regrets. Dr. Webster reported progress on the Individualized Master evaluation process and noted that the Research Office is advancing national compliance initiatives, including Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), research data management planning, and a collaboration initiative with the Université de Sherbrooke. Representatives from the Université de Sherbrooke will be visiting Bishop's to discuss potential summer projects on November 19, 2024.

9 FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Kent Carson introduced the Finance and Audit Report and expressed gratitude to Vice-Principal Finance and Administration Isabelle Goyette for her work and professionalism.

Vice-Principal Finance and Administration Isabelle Goyette provided an update to the Board of Governors on the 2024-2025 financial forecast. She noted that the previously approved deficit of \$2.6 million, as of June, has been revised downward to \$1.6 million, primarily due to savings from delayed hiring for vacant positions and an increase in fall 2024 enrollment. However, the University will incur a \$70,000 loss in grant revenue resulting from lower numbers in specific programs. The Vice-Principal Finance and Administration noted that uncertainties surrounding international student funding transitions, grant indexation, and lower enrollment in specific programs remain significant factors affecting the financial situation. She emphasized that despite the improved projections for 2024-2025, deficits are anticipated for future years. The updated recovery plan, incorporating projections and savings, will be presented at the Board of Governors scheduled for December.

Principal Lebel-Grenier briefed the Board on the replacement process for the Vice-Principal Finance and Administration position. In accordance with Part V of Bishop's University Statutes, an ad hoc review committee for the Vice-Principal Academic and Research will be established, with its composition outlined in Part V, Section 7. The committee requires two members from the Board of Governors - Chair Murielle Lortie and Kent Carson have been selected as the Board representatives, and Dr. Andrew Webster as the executive representative.

A request for clarification on the timeline was made. Principal Lebel-Grenier confirmed that the process will commence during the week of November 11, 2024, with community consultations already scheduled.

RESOLUTION 2024-02-01
FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AD HOC SEARCH COMMITTEE
FOR A VICE-PRINCIPAL FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

WHEREAS the Principal and Vice-Chancellor recommends the establishment of an Ad Hoc Search Committee for a Vice-Principal Finance and Administration in accordance with Division 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 members of the Board of Governors on the Ad Hoc Search Committee for a Vice-Principal Finance and Administration be Murielle Lortie and Kent Carson.

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

Principal Lebel-Grenier provided an update on the strategic planning process. The first phase, consisting of general surveys targeting faculty, staff, and students, are scheduled to launch on November 25, 2024, followed by alumni surveys and consultations with external stakeholders. A preliminary report is expected in January.

The second phase will focus on refining the strategic objectives and university mission, vision and values. A special Board of Governors meeting will be held in early spring to present and adopt the strategic priorities, followed by the development of an implementation plan. The final strategic plan will be presented at the Board of Governors June 2025 meeting.

Principal Lebel-Grenier emphasized that the recovery plan will focus on the significance and definition of liberal education at Bishop's, along with enhancing the student experience. The overarching goal is to clearly define Bishop's unique differentiators to strengthen its positioning.

He clarified the responsibilities for the process structure, noting that Secretary General Geneviève Gagné and he will oversee the operational process and ensure adherence to the timeline. The planning committee, comprising the executive committee and deans, is tasked with general oversight of the process.

Secretary General Geneviève Gagné informed the Board that Jean-Daniel Brisson of StratExec and Julie Martineau of CapCompas have been selected to assist with the University's strategic planning process.

Principal Lebel-Grenier encouraged all Board members to complete the survey they will soon receive. Information will be shared with the Board as the process evolves.

12 APPOINTMENT OF 'DIRIGEANT' FOR LCOP

Principal Lebel-Grenier presented a recommendation to mandate the Secretary General to represent Bishop's as 'Dirigeante' for "*Loi sur les contrats des organismes publics*" (LCOP) compliance purposes. This act aims to improve transparency and accountability in the awarding of contracts by public-sector organizations, as well as to ensure the fair treatment of bidders, the implementation of quality assurance, and the effective and appropriate use of public funds.

RESOLUTION 2024-02-02
APPOINTMENT OF A DIRIGEANTE AT BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY

WHEREAS the "*Loi sur les contrats des organismes publics*" (LCOP) makes the Board of a University ultimately responsible for the proper awarding and administration of contracts and allows the Board to delegate certain responsibilities to a 'dirigeant' or 'dirigeante' in order to allow contracts to be administered in an expeditious manner;

WHEREAS on April 28, 2017, the Board of Governors delegated to Isabelle Goyette, Vice-Principal Finance and Administration, the authority to make decisions on matters that may be delegated under the Law, subject to the limits of her signing authority, and she has exercised that authority since;

WHEREAS Isabelle Goyette will be departing from Bishop's University on December 13, 2024;

AND WHEREAS the Principal and Vice-Chancellor has recommended that this authority be delegated to Secretary General Geneviève Gagné, who will also act as Interim Vice-Principal Finance and Administration (for the portfolios of Financial and Information Technology Services) as of December 16, 2024;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT all authority that can be delegated to a dirigeante (or Chief Executive Officer) under the *Loi sur les contrats des organismes publics* is delegated to Geneviève Gagné, Secretary General and Interim Vice-Principal Finance and Administration (for the portfolios of Financial and Information Technology Services), as of December 16, 2024.

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

Chair Murielle Lortie concluded the open session by thanking Isabelle Goyette and Denise Lauzière, on behalf of the Board of Governors, for their contributions to the University.

The open session adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

The meeting ended at 6:14 p.m.



Murielle Lortie, Chair



Geneviève Gagné, Secretary General