

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2025**

**BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY**

**IN PERSON**

**MINUTES**

**Chair:** Murielle Lortie

**Present:** Darren Bardati, Nanci Chagnon, Anthony Dumas-Stephenson,  
Christopher Gokiert, Sébastien Lebel-Grenier, Alena Perout,  
Jean-Pierre Perrault, Pascale O'Bomsawin, Jessica Riddell, Nicole Riley,  
Junior Sirivar, Arshad Taseen

**Regrets:** Kent Carson, Alexandre Demers, Daniel Fournier, Alexandra Lebel

**Senior Administration:** Nick Andrews, Danai Bélanger, Kylie Côté, Julie Desjardins, Valerio Faraoni,  
Kerry Hull, Annick Lambert, Jean Manore, Matthew Peros, Jacqueline Scott,  
Margaret Shepherd

**Secretary:** Geneviève Gagné

1 CHAIR'S WELCOME

Chair Murielle Lortie called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. and invited the new Board of Governors members Darren Bardati, Jean-Pierre Perreault, Nicole Riley and Arshad Taseen to introduce themselves.

2 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved without modification.

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

### 3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the Board of Governors' meetings held on June 13, July 29 (electronic vote), and August 18, 2025 (electronic vote), were presented for approval. A correction to the June 13, 2025, minutes was noted to record the Board of Governors Vice-Chair Junior Sirivar's return to the meeting following his temporary absence during his mandate renewal discussion and vote.

**On a motion duly moved and seconded, the Minutes of the June 13 (as amended), July 29, and August 18, 2025, meetings were adopted as presented, with two (2) abstentions recorded for the June 13, 2025, Minutes.**

### 4 BUSINESS ARISING

#### **Paterson Extension (Item 5 – June 13, 2025, Meeting)**

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier provided an update on the Paterson Extension project noting that the construction is now underway.

#### **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Project (Item 11 – June 13, 2025, Meeting)**

Secretary General Geneviève Gagné informed the Board members that the University received the formal approval for the Enterprise Resource Planning project from the government over the summer. The administration is currently negotiating funding arrangements. Updates will be provided to the Information Resources Committee in the fall, followed by a report to the Board of Governors later during the year.

#### **Sale of 2848-50 and 2856-58 College Street Properties (August 18, 2025, Electronic vote)**

Vice-Principal Finance and Administration Kylie Côté reported that the University successfully sold the two (2) student houses located on College Street. Multiple offers were received, enabling the University to select a favourable buyer, with the final sale price exceeding the asking price.

### 5 PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

#### **"Oui Experience" Launch**

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier reported on the successful launch of the *Oui Experience*, reaffirming Bishop's commitment to promoting the French language and Québec culture. He emphasized the project's importance both culturally and politically.

#### **Psychology Clinic**

The Psychology Clinic officially opened, drawing strong media attention and community interest. Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier highlighted the initiative as an important achievement for the University, enhancing student training opportunities while providing access to psychological care for the broader community.

#### **Supreme Court of Canada Visit**

The Supreme Court of Canada will visit Sherbrooke the week of October 20, 2025, with public events scheduled at Université de Sherbrooke and Bishop's University. On October 22, 2025, three (3) Supreme Court Justices and the Chief Justice of Quebec will participate in a public event at Centennial Theatre.

## **Government Relations**

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier reported opportunities following the appointment of the new Minister of Higher Education Martine Biron. He highlighted Ministers Biron's openness and pragmatic approach to dialogue and her commitment to representing universities – marking a change in tone and direction. He cautioned, however, that the government is nearing the end of its mandate, and as elections approach, significant policy movement is unlikely.

The Principal reported attending the swearing-in of the new Cabinet and expressed concern that the Premier's address continued to emphasize identity and immigration, framing international students within immigration policy. He noted that this politicization remains a key challenge for universities, as it risks overshadowing the positive contributions of international students to Quebec society and the higher education sector. The Principal added that constructive discussions were held with several Cabinet members during and after the ceremony, and that Bishop's University continues to be viewed favourably by government officials—remaining outside identity-based policy debates. He highlighted that this reflects the strength of the University's government relations efforts and provides reassurance amid a challenging funding environment.

## **Superior Court Invalidation of the Provincial French Fluency Mandate**

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier noted progress in discussions with the Ministry following the court decision that invalidated the French language mandate previously imposed on anglophone universities, which had resulted in the withdrawal of funding for initiatives supporting French fluency. He indicated that, while discussions remain informal, progress is being made toward re-establishing the fluency target in a more pragmatic form. The Ministry has indicated stepping back from enforcing a centralized evaluation process, acknowledging university autonomy in this area. As no finalized budget rule has yet been established, funding associated with the fluency initiative remains on hold until a general agreement is reached.

## **Multi-year immigration planning**

Bishop's University, together with the Université de Sherbrooke, the City of Sherbrooke, and other regional and provincial stakeholders, submitted coordinated briefs as part of the government's multi-year immigration planning consultations, emphasizing the importance of international students and underscoring their vital contributions to Quebec's and the region's social and economic development.

Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier reported that, following the prorogation of the National Assembly, the government has relaunched consultations and has invited Bishop's University to testify before the Parliamentary Commission at the end of October. While the opportunity to present the University's position is welcomed, the Principal cautioned that the issue has become increasingly politicized.

He noted that international student applications remain below quotas imposed by government, reflecting a growing perception that Quebec and Canada are no longer destinations of choice for international students. Even if policy adjustments are implemented, he emphasized that coordinated efforts between the federal and provincial governments will be essential to rebuild confidence in the sector and restore Quebec's reputation as an attractive destination for international education. The decline in international enrolments, he added, has implications beyond financial considerations, affecting Bishop's academic and pedagogical model, which is built on diversity and global engagement.

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

Anthony Dumas-Stephenson presented the report highlighting several updates and initiatives of the Students' Representative Council (SRC). He noted that a by-election was held on September 18, 2025, to fill three (3) vacant seats, bringing the Council to full capacity with nine (9) members.

This year, the SRC is focusing on strengthening student engagement across diverse groups, improving communication, and developing collaborative measures with campus departments to enhance safety compliance during events. Operational priorities include reviewing student fees and exploring new revenue opportunities through sponsorships.

The SRC also aims to enhance mental health supports for students and to secure stable funding for the Safe Drive program, which resumed operations on September 4, 2025. The program reported 65 drives serving 120 students so far, reflecting strong early participation compared to previous years. Additional initiatives are underway to introduce a Friday night grocery drop-off service for students.

## 7 VICE-PRINCIPAL ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH REPORT

Interim Vice-Principal Academic and Research Kerry Hull presented a report on academic and financial planning initiatives supporting the University's long-term financial sustainability and institutional decision-making. She outlined the alignment between curriculum planning—led by the Interim Associate Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching—and resource allocation under the Senate Planning Committee.

Work is underway to update degree regulations in line with the Strategic Plan, including depth, breadth, and competency requirements. Deans and Chairs are developing three (3) year teaching delivery plans and five (5) to ten (10) year staffing plans to ensure program sustainability within existing faculty resources and financial parameters.

She noted that reductions to the part-time teaching budget remain the primary academic lever in achieving a balanced budget by 2028–2029, and that academic resource allocations, including tenure-stream position and part-time planning, are guided by both quantitative and qualitative indicators such as enrolment, financial, and program viability data. These coordinated efforts aim to support a more sustainable and integrated approach to academic planning, potentially leading to program restructuring where necessary.

Interim Vice-Principal Academic and Research Kerry Hull concluded her report by acknowledging the significant efforts required from Chairs, faculty, and staff to advance these initiatives, emphasizing the importance of balancing Bishop's traditions with the need to adapt to current and future challenges.

A question was raised about the correlation between the number of courses offered and the faculty complement outlined in the staffing plan. Interim Vice-Principal Academic and Research Kerry Hull and the Manager of Institutional Data and Planning Nicole Riley agreed to revisit the calculations and provide further clarification at a later date.

Another question concerned the recently introduced title of *Executive in Residence*. It was explained that such appointments, common in business schools, are designed to strengthen connections between the University and external professional communities while recognizing academic and community engagement. Guidelines governing these appointments are currently under development.

The Chair of the Governance and Ethics Committee Junior Sirivar reported that the Committee met twice to address four (4) subjects: the Senate recommendation to add a librarian seat on Senate, the Board of Governors Competency Matrix, appointment processes for Internal Governors and review of the Code of Ethics and the Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure form.

**Senate recommendation to add a librarian seat on Senate**

The Committee reviewed all supporting documentation and discussed the statutory implications of adding a new Senate seat. It also considered amending the current University *Statutes* to allow librarian eligibility for Faculty Council seats. The Committee agreed that this matter should be examined as part of the forthcoming comprehensive review of the University *Statutes*, emphasizing the importance of balancing diversity of perspectives with efficiency in governance bodies – highlighting that any such amendments should be reviewed and implemented within a broader, integrated framework rather than through isolated changes.

Clarifications were sought regarding the current composition of the Senate. It was noted that the Senate comprises 30 voting members and one non-voting member. It was reiterated that any changes to Senate composition should be approached comprehensively within the broader statutory review.

**RESOLUTION 2025-03-01**  
**RECOMMENDATION OF THE GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
**REGARDING THE ADDITION OF A SEAT FOR A LIBRARIAN ON SENATE**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors approves the following recommendation from the Governance and Ethics Committee: that the Board does not proceed at this time with the Senate recommendation to add a seat for a librarian on Senate, but rather consider this recommendation in the next comprehensive review of the *Statutes*. The committee also recommends that, in the course of this review, the option of opening Faculty Council-appointed seats to librarians be considered.

**On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the resolution was adopted as presented.**

**Board of Governors Competency Matrix**

The Chair of the Governance and Ethics Committee Junior Sirivar explained that the matrix seeks to ensure that the Board of Governors maintains a balanced mix of expertise and backgrounds to support effective governance and informed decision-making. He noted that the updated competency matrix gathers information in three (3) main areas: members’ fields of expertise, personal and demographic profiles and language skills. The matrix will be circulated in the coming weeks.

In response to a question, the Chair of the Governance and Ethics Committee Junior Sirivar clarified that the matrix focuses on identifying advanced and expert-level competencies to ensure an accurate assessment of the Board of Governors’ collective strengths.

## **Appointment Processes for Internal Governors**

The Committee reviewed the processes for appointing Internal Governors to ensure compliance with *Statutes* requirements on Board composition and gender balance. It was noted that internal members are appointed by their respective constituency groups rather than through the Nominating Committee. To support compliance while maintaining each group's autonomy, the Secretary General will provide constituency groups with information on the Board's current gender balance and related guidance prior to each appointment process.

A question was raised regarding the Internal Governors appointment processes and the potential for interference with constituency autonomy. The Chair of the Governance and Ethics Committee Junior Sirivar informed members that the Secretary General's role is not to direct or influence constituency choices but rather to provide information on the Board of Governors' current composition to support statutory requirements such as gender balance.

A follow-up question was brought forward about potential government overreach in university governance. Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier mentioned that the Quebec government has not indicated any intention to impose such controls on chartered universities. He emphasized that existing distinctions between chartered institutions and the *Université du Québec* network help safeguard governance autonomy within the province.

## **Code of Ethics and Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure Form**

The Committee reviewed and discussed updates to the Board of Governors Code of Ethics and Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure Form to strengthen provisions on actual and perceived conflicts. Revisions include adding disclosure of family relationships and creating a tailored form for Board Committees. The updated documents will be presented to the Board at a future meeting.

### 9 FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

In the absence of the Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, Principal Sébastien Lebel-Grenier presented the item, noting that the main purpose was the adoption of the 2024-2025 audited financial statements and related obligations to the Ministry of Higher Education. He clarified that no updates to financial projections or the recovery plan were presented at this time; these will be presented at the virtual Town Hall in early November, following completion of enrolment analyses and data verification.

Vice-Principal Finance and Administration Kylie Côté presented the audited financial result for the 2024-2025, reporting a surplus of \$35 000 compared to a budgeted deficit of \$2.6 million. This result made Bishop's University eligible to receive a \$3.5 million conditional grant, which was received in July. She explained that the positive variance was largely due to additional government indexation funding and slightly higher enrollment. Savings were also realized through faculty salary adjustments and reduced part-time course offerings. The University maintained allocations to deferred maintenance and fund reserves to support long-term financial stability. As the 2024-2025 budget was based on the 2023-2024 projections, most variances remained consistent with expectations.

She informed Board that the University's audited financial statements must be submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education through the *Système d'information financière des universités* (SIFU), with minor adjustments to meet government reporting requirements. She also confirmed compliance with budgetary rule 4.1.11 (formerly 5.11) on senior managers' remuneration, noting that all required declarations have been signed, and that all procurement exceptions, including budget overrun, were properly reported in the Annual Procurement Accountability Report.

A concern was raised regarding the reallocation of a fraction of salaries from administration to academic sector. It was explained that the change reflects allocation of direct support to academic operations and affects only expenses classification, not the audited financial results.

Clarification was requested on the extent to which a specific project exceeded the 10% budget threshold for procurement purposes and whether inflation contributed to the overrun. Further details on the variance will be confirmed and communicated to Board members.

The Vice-Principal Finance and Administration invited Annie Rainville of *Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton* (RCGT) to present the Auditor's Report, noting that no discrepancies were identified during the audit and that the University's financial position was confirmed as accurate and in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles.

**RESOLUTION 2025-03-02**  
**FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE 2024-2025 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**AND INTERFUND TRANSFERS**

WHEREAS the Finance and Audit Committee of Bishop's University recommends approval of the audited financial statements for the year ended April 30, 2025, and further recommends approval of the list and amount of the interfund transfers of \$10,679,037 as per the requirements of the *Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (MES);

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors approves the audited financial statements for the year ended April 30, 2025;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the list and the amount of the interfund transfers of \$10,679,037 is authorized, as per the requirements of the MES.

**On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the resolution was adopted as presented.**

**RESOLUTION 2025-03-03**  
**FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE 2024-2025 SIFU**  
**« SYSTÈME D'INFORMATION FINANCIÈRE DES UNIVERSITÉS » (SIFU)**

WHEREAS the *Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (MES) requires that the Board of Governors approve the *Système d'information financière des universités* (SIFU) report;

WHEREAS the Finance and Audit Committee of Bishop's University recommends approval of the SIFU for the year ended April 30, 2025;

AND WHEREAS the auditor (RCGT) performed the specified procedures as requested by the MES, with no deviation noted;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors approves the 2024-25 SIFU report.

**On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the resolution was adopted as presented.**

**RESOLUTION 2025-03-04**  
**FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE BUDGETARY RULE 4.1.11**

WHEREAS the *Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur* requires that the Board of Governors submit a report confirming that the University complied with *Budgetary Rule 4.1.11* governing the remuneration conditions for senior managers in 2024-25;

AND WHEREAS the Finance and Audit Committee recommends that the Board of Governors authorizes Chair Murielle Lortie to sign on its behalf a letter attesting that the University has complied with *Budgetary Rule 4.1.11* for 2024-25;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors authorizes Chair Murielle Lortie to sign on its behalf a letter attesting that the University has complied with *Budgetary Rule 4.1.11* for 2024-25.

**On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the resolution was adopted as presented.**

**RESOLUTION 2025-03-05**  
**FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE AUDITORS FOR 2025-2026**

WHEREAS the Finance & Audit Committee of Bishop's University recommends the reappointment of RCGT as auditors of the University for the year ending April 30, 2026, in accordance with the mandate outlined in the 2021 call for tender;

WHEREAS the fee for the 2025-26 audit is set at \$86,250 and any additional mandates will be billed separately;

AND WHEREAS the Finance & Audit Committee recommends that Kylie Côté, Vice-Principal Finance and Administration, be authorized to sign any and all documents relating to this contract;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors approves the reappointment of RCGT as auditors of the University for the year ending April 30, 2026;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Kylie Côté, Vice-Principal Finance and Administration, is authorized to sign any and all documents relating to this contract.

**On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the resolution was adopted as presented.**

10 CODE OF ETHICS – ANNUAL DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Secretary General Geneviève Gagné reminded Governors that the annual Disclosure of Conflict-of-Interest form and the Board of Governors Code of Ethics had been distributed and invited them to complete and return the signed forms to the Secretary General's office before October 3, 2025.

The open session adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

The closed session with internal members adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

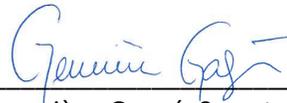
The closed session with external members and the Principal ended at 6:16 p.m.

The meeting ended 6:30 p.m.



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Murielle Lortie, Chair



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Geneviève Gagné, Secretary General