



## BOARD OF GOVERNORS' 133<sup>rd</sup> REGULAR MEETING

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**Minutes of the Public Session of the Meeting of June 27, 2024  
9:03 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. Hybrid**

### **GOVERNORS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Laura Elliott, Board Chair  
Lynne Zucker, Vice-Chair and Chair of Strategy & Planning Committee  
Steven Murphy, President  
Eric Agius  
Ahmad Barari  
Carla Carmichael, Chair of Audit & Finance Committee  
Frank Carnevale  
Mitch Frazer, Chancellor  
Matthew Mackenzie  
Dale MacMillan  
Mike Rencheck  
Maria Saros, Vice-Chair and Chair of Governance, Nominations & Human Resources  
Gaurav Singh  
Dwight Thompson  
Tega Ubor  
Michael Watterworth  
Emily Whetung

### **REGRETS:**

Lisa McBride  
Hannah Scott  
Kim Slade

### **BOARD SECRETARY:**

Krista Hester, Interim University Secretary

### **STAFF:**

Kirstie Ayotte, *Assistant University Secretary*  
Jamie Bruno, *Vice-President, People and Transformation*  
Jacquelyn Dupuis, *Director, Risk Management*  
Barb Hamilton, *Legal Executive Assistant*  
Lori Livingston, *Provost and Vice-President, Academic*

Brad Maclsaac, *Vice-President, Administration*  
Ruth Nyaamine, *Assistant Vice-President, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging*  
Pamela Onsiong, *Director, Planning and Reporting, Finance*  
Peter Stoett, *Dean, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities*  
Joe Stokes, *University Registrar and AVP International*  
Sarah Thrush, *Associate Vice-President, Planning and Strategic Analysis*

**GUESTS:**

Chelsea Bauer  
Mikeal Eklund  
Christine McLaughlin

**1. Call to Order**

The Chair called the public session to order at 9:03 a.m. and read aloud the Land Acknowledgement.

**2. Agenda**

*Upon a motion duly made by M. Mackenzie and seconded by F. Carnevale, the Agenda was approved as presented.*

**3. Conflict of Interest Declaration**

None

**4. Chair's Remarks**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the final Board meeting of the year and highlighted the recent successful convocation ceremonies. She recognized and thanked departing governors Maria Saros, Lynne Zucker, Dale McMillan, and student governor, Michael Watterworth, for their service, expressing her appreciation for all governors' dedication and her anticipation of working with existing and new members in the upcoming year. She highlighted the upcoming Chancellor's Challenge on September 21st, inviting Board of Governors members, both current and departing, to join the team and emphasized the event's growing popularity and anticipated a large turnout this year.

**5. President's Report**

The President thanked board members for their service, acknowledging the challenging year and their efforts both in and outside of meetings. He expressed gratitude to the senior leadership team for their commitment and resilience; turning challenges into opportunities, noting that the institution has emerged stronger. He shared the good news of a 44% increase in applications to Ontario Tech since 2020. and highlighted the celebrations and importance of Pride Month and National Indigenous Peoples Day, emphasizing inclusivity and community celebration.

## **6. Academic Council**

T. Ubor presented the Academic Council report, highlighting the launch of the "Tech with a Conscience" campaign. She mentioned the approval of new members for the 2024-2025 academic year and the review of the quality assurance process for 2023-2024 and noted that Academic Council consulted on revisions to the Student Sexual Violence policy and the Professional Unsuitability policy.

## **Committee Reports**

### **7. Audit and Finance (A&F) Report**

#### **7.1. Draft Audited Financial Statements 2023-2024**

D. MacMillan noted that despite ongoing revenue and expense challenges, the University's financial position remains stable, with a \$3.7 million (8%) increase in net expendable assets from last year. This stability is supported by growing enrollment, stable operations, healthy cash reserves, and reduced debt. Management has recommended to internally restrict \$5.7 million of the current year surplus, of which that \$3.6 million is designated for Revenue Generating Units as a result of a change in accounting whereby revenues earned are recognized as income instead of being deferred to future years, reserve and \$2.1 million reserved for academic priorities, student assistance, and deferred maintenance. Financial health ratios indicate mostly stable liquidity and performance although the primary reserve ratio, at 70 days, remains a medium risk due to the utilization of reserves in the last 5 years to invest in academic and student-related infrastructure. Debt ratios are classified as high risk, driven by \$129 million in outstanding debentures, partially mitigated by provincial grants covering 80% of annual debt repayments. Full debenture repayment by 2034 is expected to align the university's debt ratios with sector averages in Ontario.

*Upon a Motion duly made by F. Carnevale and seconded by E. Agius, pursuant to the recommendation of the Audit & Finance Committee, the Board of Governors hereby approves the 2023/24 audited financial statements and the 2023/24 internally restricted reserves, as presented.*

#### **7.2. Fourth Quarter Financial Reports**

D. MacMillan reported that alongside the Q3 forecast budget reported in February, this report now includes year-end actual results. She highlighted the approved balanced budget for the 2023/2024 year, which resulted in a surplus of \$5.7 million, surpassing the Q3 forecast by \$2.5 million (1.1% of the budget). This surplus reflects a \$4.7 million increase in other revenue, primarily from unspent funds recognized as income due to accounting changes for Revenue Generating Units. This is offset by a \$1.1 million unfavourable variance in expenses, driven largely by higher-than-expected benefits for faculty and staff.

#### **7.3. Risk – Annual Report**

D. MacMillan discussed how the university plans to evolve its risk management approach to align with growth and global risks. She advised new risk thematic buckets will be implemented next fall and steps to include integrating risk consistently, establishing key indicators with owners, and training on the updated framework. She noted that the university now uses data analytics in its risk portfolio through Power BI, focusing on key areas like mental health and cybersecurity with new annual risk controls.

After extensive discussion focusing on what to report publicly versus in non-public, there was consensus on the importance of managing the issue cautiously, considering potential challenges in public versus private reporting. The Board recognized the need to balance transparency with privacy concerns, intending to deliver a more targeted cybersecurity report twice a year.

#### **7.4. Campus Master Plan / New Residence**

D. MacMillan noted that the Campus Master Plan includes plans for a new residence, and highlighted a presentation that outlined the University's growth plan within the broader campus framework. She advised the Board approved directing spending towards core academic needs and endorsed outsourcing the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the new residence. The Request for Proposal (RFP) process has progressed to selecting a preferred contractor, with negotiations underway. Formal agreements are expected before the next board meeting, and a summary of terms will be reviewed by the Executive Committee over the summer.

#### **8. Governance Nominations & Human Resources Committee (GNHR) Report**

M. Saros noted that a presentation regarding minor updates to the Sexual Violence Policy emphasized on centralizing dispute handling and improved access to support services, as well as minor edits to the Respectful Campus policy for its annual review.

#### **9. Strategy and Planning Committee (S&P) Report**

L. Zucker discussed a potential partnership offering low-cost, long-term debt financing for a \$28 million decarbonization project. She noted that recommendations were to pursue a staged action plan using an energy-as-a-service model, pending further discussions. She noted the 2023-2024 Quality Assurance and Continuous Learning reports, highlighting challenges with international student processing times due to regulatory changes. She emphasized that the nuclear subcritical assembly project is advancing slowly due to delays of up to 18 months for public hearings but despite the hurdles, the university is continuing Indigenous consultations and collaboration with Brookfield Sustainability Institute.

L. Zucker also underscored the importance of precise legal agreements in partnerships and highlighted the dual focus on securing funding promptly while carefully selecting energy sources and ensuring thorough legal documentation. She

discussed future considerations for managing climate risks in higher education, in light of recent regulations emphasizing climate disclosure and transparency.

### **9.1 Integrated Academic Research Plan and SMA 2023-2024 Metrics Annual Report**

L. Livingston highlighted that the Integrated Academic-Research Plan undergoes annual evaluation, integrating both qualitative and quantitative reports reflecting feedback from all campus units. As of May, 81% of planned milestones were completed or on track, with only 1% terminated, demonstrating a successful effort to translate our milestones into measurable outcomes.

S. Thrush highlighted the Board's role in enhancing the clarity of the qualitative report by identifying achievements and areas for improvement from the previous year. She emphasized the integrated planning framework's requirement for comprehensive data collection across all units and underscored its role in facilitating robust reporting. She pointed out that the institutional metrics and SMA3 dashboards now emphasize enhanced accountability and strategic evaluation, transitioning from identifying foundational metrics to analyzing results, addressing challenges, and refining strategies based on trend analysis. She acknowledged challenges such as staffing issues related to contract turnover affecting employee permanence metric and emphasized the ongoing importance of continuous improvement to ensure metrics accurately reflect activities and adapt to evolving provincial regulations where applicable.

S. Thrush also noted the University's strong performance in meeting provincial metrics, surpassing sector benchmarks. She highlighted ongoing efforts to analyze the current metrics to understand their success relative to other institutions and to address any disparities. Looking ahead, plans include negotiating new SMA4 terms contingent on forthcoming Ministry guidelines.

In response to a question regarding any surprises encountered with the results, S. Thrush noted unexpected insights into how strategies impacted staffing, and the missed targets in the Master's programs. Data on the Master's performance was used to inform enrollment management strategies and collaborations with the Registrar's Office transform processes mid cycle to mitigate impacts and strengthen a culture of performance and accountability.

L. Livingston responded to concerns about potential misinterpretations and differing priorities in cross-institutional comparisons by noting the importance of internal accountability and the challenges of external comparisons, and expressed a focus on tracking progress towards goals and celebrating achievements through qualitative insights for future reporting.

S. Thrush addressed concerns about faculty capacity and student support, stressing the need to interpret trends accurately to determine whether improvements are

sustainable or temporary recoveries. She highlighted how COVID-19 has influenced these trends, emphasizing ongoing evaluation and adaptation in higher education in response to these challenges.

Responding to inquiries about metrics for international students at the Master's and PhD levels, S. Thrush acknowledged challenges meeting targets due to external delays in student visa processing and noted internal efforts to streamline application procedures. She reiterated that despite these challenges, success in meeting PhD enrollment targets was noted.

Following a discussion about faculty preference for PhD over master's students, it was emphasized that strategic enrolment management and alignment with provincial enrolment commitments and caps are essential in addressing these aspects.

## **10. Consent Agenda**

*Upon a motion duly made M. by Mackenzie and seconded by E. Agius, the Consent Agenda was approved as presented.*

- 10.1. Minutes of Public Session of Board Meeting of April 18, 2024**
- 10.2. Minutes of Public Session of A&F Meeting April 11, 2024**
- 10.3. Minutes of Public Session of GNHR Meeting of March 21, 2024**
- 10.4. Minutes of Public Session of S&P Meeting of April 3, 2024**
- 10.5. GNHR Annual Report**
- 10.6. Annual Pension Plan**
- 10.7. Board and Committee Practices Assessment**
- 10.8. 2024-2025 REVISED Board and Committee Schedule**
- 10.9. Student Sexual Violence Policy Instrument**
- 10.10. A&F Annual Report**
- 10.11. Annual Policy Report**
- 10.12. Annual Privacy Report**
- 10.13. S&P Annual Report**
- 10.14. Sustainability and Energy Management**
- 10.15. Annual Program Update**
  - a) 2023-2024 Quality Assurance Process and Program Annual Report**
  - b) 2023-2024 Continuous Learning (CL) Annual Report**
- 10.16. Subcritical Nuclear Assembly**
- 10.17. International Strategy Update (IRCC)**
- 10.18. Annual Board Chair Report**

## **11. Adjournment**

*Upon a motion duly made by M. Frazer, the public session adjourned at 10:15 a.m.*

Krista Hester, Interim University Secretary