

Item: Board of Governors Minutes, April 2007
Call Number: UA-1

Additional Notes:

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BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, April 24, 2007 (Open Session) University Hall, Macdonald Building

MEMBERS PRESENT: James S. Cowan (Chair), Jay Abbass, Bill Black, Dan Clark, Lorne Clarke, David Craig, Ezra Edelstein, Richard Goldbloom (Chancellor), Richard Evans, Lyn Irving, Natalie MacLean, Cathy MacNutt, Sunny Marche, Don Mills, Alasdair Sinclair, Chris Smith, Jim Spatz, Bruce Towler, Tom Traves, Jim Wilson and Susan Brousseau (Acting University Secretary)

REGRETS: Jamie Baillie, Elizabeth Beale, Robert Chisholm, Mo El-Hawary, Nancy MacCready-Williams, Robert Radchuck

NON-MEMBERS: Ken Burt, Carl Breckenridge, Floyd Dykeman, Asa Kachan, Larry Maloney, Patrick Moriarty, Ian Nason, Bonnie Neuman, David Russell, Alan Shaver, Jim Vibert, Shannon Zimmerman, Susan Zinck

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved by B. Black, seconded by E. Edelstein:

THAT the agenda be approved as distributed.

The motion was CARRIED.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on February 20, 2007

Moved by L. Clarke, seconded by J. Abbass:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on February 20, 2007 meeting be approved as distributed.

The motion was CARRIED.

3. Chair's Report

3.1 2007 Governors' Awards Presentation

J. Cowan and T. Traves presented the 2007 Governors' Awards to four students for their exceptional contributions or leadership in the extracurricular life of the university or in the area of community service:

Melissa Capp Larsen, a Bachelor of Community Design student from Toronto, Ontario, was honoured for her outstanding ability and commitment to social justice within and outside the Dalhousie University community.

Ian Joyce, a Faculty of Law student from Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, was honoured for leadership and community service through his dedicated work with the Golden Key International Honour Society.

Michael Sornberger, a Faculty of Science student from Nepean, Ontario, was honoured for his many contributions to campus life.

Barbara Walls, a Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences student from Brewer, Maine, was honoured for her extensive contributions to community service, minority access and internationalization of the campus.

4. President's Report

A written President's Report was included in the agenda package. T. Traves commented on several items in his report, including the recent tragic events at Virginia Tech. He noted that Dalhousie is currently reviewing its protocols regarding emergency events and a preliminary assessment suggests that we may need to focus particularly on decision-making processes and communications procedures to strengthen our capacity to respond to such events. The President will report to the University community and the Board when this review is complete.

T. Traves commented briefly on current enrolment numbers, noting that application and offer rates are being monitored regularly and the news is very encouraging; application rates are up 17% over the same period last year, offers to undergraduate students are up by 6%, and offers to graduate students are up by 2%. Dalhousie is holding its own in terms of Nova Scotia students but virtually all of the increases are being generated by students from other parts of Canada; there is also a moderate increase in international student enrolment. Applications for residence space are also up and that is a good indicator for the University as well.

T. Traves reported on the recent federal and provincial budgets. Highlights of the federal budget from the University's perspective include:

- Transfer of \$800 million to provinces for post-secondary education in 2008-09, with a commitment of 3% per year increases in subsequent years. Nova Scotia normally receives about 3% of this amount which translates to about \$24-\$25 million for provincial coffers. Dr. Traves noted that the federal government had earmarked some of this funding for issues of accessibility and quality in post-secondary education, but the province is not legally bound to spend the funds in this way. Discussions on these transfers are continuing between the federal and provincial governments; this is a very big issue with long-term implications for universities and we will be watching it closely;
- Increased funding for research: funding allocations for granting councils and for the indirect costs of research each went up by about 5%;
- The creation of a new program to support Centres of Research Excellence and Commercialization. This is a \$300 million envelope with \$105 million allocated to seven specific centres, including Dalhousie's Life Sciences Research Institute. Under this program, Dalhousie will receive about \$15 million which, with other funding received, should allow us to proceed with the construction of the Institute facility.

Highlights of the provincial budget include:

- An increase in the universities' operating grant of 4.5% (\$10.5 million), as per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the province;
- An allocation of \$12.4 million to be used to off-set the planned 3.9% increase in tuition rates under the MOU;
- An allocation of \$11.4 million to fund a \$500 fee reduction in the form of a bursary for all Nova Scotia students.

Dr. Traves commented on the implications of these announcements, including the issue of base budget versus non-base budget funding and the pattern of one-time, fiscal year-end allocations that the government has employed in recent years. He also noted that the government has been slow to

provide Dalhousie with the details of its specific allocation meaning that the University's budget-setting process has been delayed.

Several members expressed concern regarding the provincial government's introduction of the \$500 bursary for Nova Scotia students and the tiered structure this creates for Canadian students. T. Traves noted that these sorts of concerns will have to be part of the discussion with the province in coming months.

At the conclusion of Dr. Traves' report, it was moved by J. Abbass, seconded by D. Clark:

THAT the President be asked to convey the Board's condolences to Virginia Tech on the recent tragedy that occurred there.

The motion CARRIED.

5. Dalhousie Student Union President's Report

A written DSU President's Report was included in the agenda package. E. Edelstein noted that there are three new student members elected or appointed to serve on the Board – Mike Tipping (incoming President of the Dalhousie Student Union), Shannon Zimmerman and David Russell. He also reported on the election results for the 2007-08 DSU Executive positions and the current transition process that is underway.

In addition to the highlights of the federal and provincial budgets reported in the President's Report, Mr. Edelstein noted the announcement regarding the planned federal review of the Canada Student Loan and financial assistance programs. This is something that student groups have been calling for for some time. He also noted student concerns regarding the introduction of the \$500 bursary for Nova Scotia students and what this means with respect to the province's commitment to lower Nova Scotia tuition fees to the national average.

In closing, Ezra Edelstein commented on his four years on the Board and his appreciation for the experience that his tenure has afforded. J. Cowan, on behalf of the Board, thanked the three student Board members for their contributions to the Board and presented each with a gift of appreciation.

6. Items for Discussion/Decision

6.1 Budget Matters Update

A. Shaver, Vice-President (Academic and Provost), reported that as a result of irregularities in the provincial budget process, the work of the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) has been delayed, although its report is expected shortly. He noted that the proposed plan is largely settled and BAC has made decisions that will be presented in its report. K. Burt, Vice-President (Finance and Administration) then commented on the actual percentage amounts expected from the government and what these translate to in terms of amounts coming to Dalhousie. The University's total portion of the operating grant is \$128.9 million (47.7%).

The model proposed in BAC XXXV mirrors the information from the government, specifically that tuition fee revenue will be lower than expected under the MOU, but the operating grant will be larger. Based on this information BAC is recommending:

- No increase to the differential fees for the three professional programs (Dentistry, Medicine, Law);
- A differential fee increase of \$810 for international undergraduate students and international non-thesis Masters students;
- Increase in the funding for strategic initiatives to \$3.85 million. This includes an increase in facilities renewal funding from about \$8 million to \$9.2 million, and an additional \$1 million increase for student assistance. New initiatives to receive support are enrolment management and the fund-raising plan.
- A budget cut of 2% for academic units, a 1% cut for administrative units and a 0.5% cut to the administrative units that receive strategic initiative funding. These are essentially efficiency cuts required by the MOU.
- Contingency increased from \$1 million to \$1.3 million.

Lengthy discussion followed on the potential negative impact of differential fee increases on international and graduate student enrolment and the need for increased student assistance and support in these areas. It was noted that current figures for 2007-08 indicate that applications for international under-graduate students are up by 15%, while applications for international graduate students are down by about 20%. A. Shaver noted that Dalhousie is looking at the need for greater support for graduate students and factors that will help it to be competitive, including performance-based fee waivers for Ph.D. thesis students (many of whom are international students). He also noted that Dalhousie is taking a much more sophisticated approach to international student recruitment through the use of agents and other strategies. T. Traves added that international student enrolment is an important part of the University's enrolment management strategy and that we are investing more heavily in programs and services in this area; it makes sense that some of the funding for these initiatives comes from the international student tuition revenues. It was also noted that overall improvements to the University (classrooms, labs, faculty, etc), benefit all students, including international students.

Other points of discussion included note of the fact that Dalhousie expends about 75% of its budget on salaries and concern about whether there are adequate performance review mechanisms to ensure that the University is getting full value for its expenditures in this area.

Following this discussion, K. Burt highlighted the other new student fees that will be coming forward as part of the budget approval process:

- \$50 per medical student per year for a bursary fund program in the Faculty of Medicine;
- \$3 per student per year to fund programs for WUSC, DalOUT and a new Sustainability Office;
- Small inflationary increases in residence and student services fees;
- \$3 increase per full-time student to the general student services fee

Discussion followed on the process to be followed to approve these budget items once they have been considered by the Operations Committee. At the conclusion of this discussion the following motion was approved:

Moved by T. Traves, seconded by L. Clarke:

THAT the Board approve in principle the fee recommendations in the context of the Budget Advisory Committee interim report and that the Operations Committee review the final Budget Advisory Committee document and that it make a recommendation to the Board as to future action.

The motion CARRIED.

A motion to approve interim operating spending for 2007-08 was presented.

Moved by T. Traves, seconded by B. Black:

THAT in order to allow the continued operation of the University until such time as the 2007-08 operating budget is given final approval, it is recommended that the Board of Governors authorize expenditures of up to 25% of the 2007-08 operating budget plan amounts as presented in the Preliminary Budget model. The President or his designate is authorized to approve expenditures in excess of 25% in special cases to permit the orderly management of the University.

The motion CARRIED.

7. Items for Information

7.1 Board Standing Committee Reports

J. Cowan drew Board members' attention to the report of the Executive Committee and the resolution approved on behalf of the Board in the interval since the last meeting. The resolution is as follows:

THAT the Board of Governors, on the recommendation of the Operations Committee, approve the proposal to increase the construction budget for the Chemical Storage Facility by \$1.1 million from \$5.0 million for a new total of \$6.1 million.

In response to a question, K. Burt outlined the circumstances leading to the increased budget for this project.

The remainder of the meeting was held *in camera*.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.