

Item: Board of Governors Minutes, October 2011

Call Number: Board of Governors fonds, UA-1

Additional Notes:

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## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

**Approved Minutes of the Meeting (Open Session)  
held on Tuesday, October 18, 2011 at 3:00 p.m.  
Coburg Board Room, Mona Campbell Building**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** William (Bill) Black (Acting Chair), Jay Abbass, Michelle Awad, John Baxter, Barrie Black, Wahid Fares, Fred Fountain, Lloyd Fraser, Dustin Griffin, Lynn Irving, Max Ma, Nancy MacCready-Williams, George McLellan, Chris Saulnier, Chris Smith, Stan Spavold, Larry Stordy, Candace Thomas, Gail Tomblin-Murphy, Tom Traves, Jim Wilson, Susan Brousseau (University Secretary)

**NON-MEMBERS PRESENT:** Ken Burt (VP Finance and Administration), Martha Cargo (VP Research), Floyd Dykeman (VP External), Bonnie Neuman (VP Student Services), Katherine Sheehan (Assistant VP Human Resources), Susan Spence Wach (Associate VP Academic ), Laura Yetman (Minute Taker)

**REGRETS:** Jim Spatz (Chair), Joyce Carter, Aubrey Palmeter, Carolyn Watters (VP Academic and Provost)

### 1. Approval of Agenda

Moved by J. Abbass, seconded by J. Wilson:

**THAT the agenda be approved as presented.**

**The motion CARRIED.**

### 2. Consent Agenda

Item 2.1 on the consent agenda was approved by consent.

#### 2.1 Approval of Minutes of the Meeting of June 21, 2011

Motion: **THAT the minutes of the meeting held on June 21, 2011 be approved as presented.**

**Approved by Consent.**

### 3. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

### 4. Chair's Report

W. Black welcomed the new members to the Board. On behalf of the Board Chair, he reported on the resolution approved by the Board Executive Committee in the interval since the last meeting of the Board in June. The resolution is as follows:

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors ratify the Memorandum of Understanding between the Dalhousie University Board of Governors and the Nova Scotia Government & General Employees Union (NSGEU) (Local 77) for the period July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011.**

Mr. Black noted that further details of the agreement are presented in the Executive Committee report included in the meeting materials.

**5. President's Report**

T. Traves referred members to his written report. In his verbal remarks he spoke particularly to the encouraging results indicated in preliminary enrolment data for 2011-12, and to the successful Open House held on October 14th which saw more than 1000 high school students and parents visit Dalhousie. Dr. Traves also referred members to the recent report entitled *Canada Innovation: A Call to Action - Review of Federal Support to Research and Development – Expert Panel Report*, noting that it is quite a good report from a university perspective, although its focus is primarily from a business perspective.

Dr. Traves spoke briefly to the Dalhousie University Scorecard 2010-13, reviewing what it attempts to illustrate and noting that the next step is to develop an equivalent document for all Faculties and major administrative units. Planning is underway to use a consultant to work with the senior management team on an enhanced business planning exercise and to tighten up measures and execution on targets. It is his goal to build this kind of strategic management planning process more deeply into the institutional culture before the end of his term.

During discussion, some suggestions were made with respect to simplifying the scorecard and perhaps having the consultant review it for his feedback. Dr. Traves noted that universities are somewhat different than businesses because of the range of activities that are often involved; as a result it can be difficult to reflect this in just a few measures.

**6. Dalhousie Student Union President's Report**

C. Saulnier briefly reviewed the highlights from his President's Report as well as noting that the DSU is actively involved in advocacy and lobbying at the provincial and federal levels. He also noted the DSU's involvement with the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) and his current role as chair of that organization.

Board members congratulated Mr. Saulnier on the success of the Leadership Program projects outlined in his report and queried whether there are ways to share these stories more broadly than with just the Dalhousie community. Mr. Saulnier noted the challenges surrounding the effective communication of these projects to the broader community. T. Traves suggested that Dalhousie has a strong Marketing and Communications group and he is confident that individuals there would be happy to work with the DSU in getting the word out about DSU events, initiatives and successes. He noted that this kind of communications initiative is consistent with strategies in this area geared to recruitment and retention initiatives and reputation management.

**7. Items for Presentation/Discussion**

**7.1 Report on 2011 Workplace Survey Results**

K. Sheehan gave a presentation on the survey results. She noted that, overall, the results look very much like those achieved on the 2009 survey; this is positive in that the University was pleased with

the results in 2009, but negative in the sense that there does not appear to be a lot of upward-movement this time in terms of initiatives undertaken to respond to the earlier results.

Ms. Sheehan highlighted specific areas and response rates to various questions as well as providing a comparison to the 2009 survey results. Responses were quite positive overall on personal development measures (opportunities to grow, career development, etc.) and generally employee morale is quite good. Areas identified for continuing work include feedback from supervisors (despite the introduction of a pilot performance tool for staff since the last survey), recognition for achievements, workplace health and safety (where responses appear to reflect the diversity of building within which employees work), and communication of survey results. Ms. Sheehan noted that one of the highlights of the survey was the increased awareness of the University's strategic plan.

Ms. Sheehan reported that the University will now move forward with a two-tiered approach to working with and communicating the results: an institutional approach (which includes community-wide messages from the President and Ms. Sheehan and a working group which will help to identify institutional goals to work on immediately), and a unit approach that will see teams working with leaders in units to identify a specific area that they can begin to work on. Leaders will also be asked to integrate identified initiatives into their unit's scorecard.

Ms. Sheehan responded to a variety of questions from Board members. There was discussion of the need for more emphasis on performance management and evaluation with a mandatory process and standard tools across the institution. K. Sheehan and T. Traves acknowledged that there is a gap in this area, but that the University is moving in this direction and making progress on building a foundation within the institutional culture. There is a culture shift necessary, however, especially on the academic side of universities where the work culture is largely self-generated. The University is evolving towards more standardized measures and processes, but this takes time.

## **7.2 Nova Scotia Agricultural College Merger – Overview and Status Report**

S. Spence Wach provided the Board with a detailed update on the Dalhousie/NSAC merger, including an overview of NSAC as an institution; the approach to the merger; and current activities, issues and timelines.

Discussion and questions following the presentation focused on the financial status of NSAC (and the challenges of disentangling the institution from the financial and other resources received through various arms of government), human resources and facilities issues, the planned Faculty of Agriculture and the proposed dual title of Campus Principal/Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture. There was discussion regarding the NSACs link with government, community, and industry as well as the creation of an advisory body and potential future membership on the Board. Members suggested that it will be important to ensure that the Advisory Board has a meaningful role if the merger is to be viewed positively by the external community. It was also suggested that the University, in its communications, may need to be clearer about the potential opportunities this merger will bring and the value to Dalhousie and to the employees and students at NSAC.

Ms. Spence Wach noted that exploring the financial status of NSAC is key in the current due diligence phase. T. Traves noted that there is no accumulated debt to be transferred to Dalhousie from NSAC and that this merger has never been positioned by government as a cost-cutting exercise. He agreed that the University needs to be clearer on the objectives of the merger and its value to Dalhousie; these objectives are really four-fold: program opportunities that reflect the growing interest in global food issues; acquiring a campus in central Nova Scotia with the opportunity to offer additional programs there in the future; research collaboration opportunities (NSAC is the second

largest research enterprise in Nova Scotia after Dalhousie); and the creation of a new kind of capacity that will put Dalhousie more in touch with rural Nova Scotia.

## **8. Items for Information**

### **8.1 Board Standing Committee Reports**

W. Black referred Board members to the written reports for the following committees: Academic Affairs and Research and Executive. There were no questions on the reports.

## ***IN CAMERA SESSION***

The Board moved to an *in camera* session. During this session, the following motion was approved.

**THAT, the Dalhousie Board of Governors, approve in principle a merger of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College with Dalhousie University, mindful of the agreed upon Principles and Objectives for merger discussions dated September 8, 2011, and subject to a final agreement on terms with the Province of Nova Scotia, such terms to include acceptable financial support, transfer of physical assets and appropriate arrangements concerning major human resource issues.**

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.