



**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**  
**Approved Minutes of the Meeting (Open Session) held on**  
**Tuesday, February 11, 2020, 3:00p.m.**  
**University Hall, Macdonald Building**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Candace Thomas (Chair), Aisha Abawajy, Paul Beesley, Fatima Beydoun, Level Chan, Cassandra Dorrington, Elaine Gibson, Kevin Hewitt, Kristan Hines, Joyce Hoeven, Brenda Hogan, Chris Huskilson, Brian Johnston, Jay MacIsaac, Carolan McLarney, Sherry Porter, Robert Richardson, Deep Saini (President), Seyed Alireza Siadat, Devarsh Sood

**NON-MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Teri Balsler (Provost and Vice-President Academic), Peter Fardy (Vice-President Advancement), Ian Nason (Vice-President Finance & Administration), Susan Brousseau (University Secretary); Cheryl MacDonald (Board Governance Assistant)

**REGRETS:**

Robert (Bob) Hanf, Laurie Jennings, Anne McLellan, Michele Williams

**GUESTS:**

Frank Harvey (Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences), Josh Leon (Assistant Vice-President, Information Technology Services), Colin Spinney (Treasurer), Jasmine Walsh (Assistant Vice-President, Human Resources), Julia Wright (DFA Observer)

**1. Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Strategic Plan**

Prior to the meeting, Dean Frank Harvey presented to the Board on the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences strategic plan 2020-2025.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted as presented. C. Thomas took the opportunity to remind Board members of their fiduciary duties, and asked members to declare any conflicts for the open portion of the meeting; there were none noted.

**3. Consent Agenda**

The following item was adopted by consent.

**3.1 Minutes of Meeting of November 26, 2019**

**THAT the minutes of the meeting held on November 26, 2019 be approved as circulated.**

**Approved by CONSENT.**

**4. Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business noted.

## **5. Chair's Report**

C. Thomas introduced and welcomed Matt Proctor, the new Assistant Vice-President, Communications and Marketing for Dalhousie University. She also acknowledged the tragedy of the Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 crash and the impact this had on the Dalhousie community.

C. Thomas reported briefly on several recent events she attended, including as a guest lecturer in Dr. Afua Cooper's class on African Nova Scotian History, the Dalhousie Tigers Women in Leadership dinner, and the Halifax Chamber of Commerce Business Awards, noting that the Faculty of Management sponsored one of the awards.

C. Thomas noted that February is African Heritage Month and highlighted several events she attended, including the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations for Dalhousie's Black Student Advising Centre which included an address by Dr. Renee Horton, a space launch system quality engineer at NASA. C. Thomas encouraged Board members to attend events occurring around campus in celebration of African Heritage Month, as Dalhousie is situated in Nova Scotia, the birthplace of African heritage in Canada.

C. Thomas extended her thanks to Board members Bob Hanf, Laurie Jennings, Sherry Porter and Robert Richardson for hosting several of the welcome events held for Dr. Saini, and reminded the Board that Dr. Saini's installation ceremony will take place on March 30, 2020 at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium. She concluded her report by offering her thanks to Teri Balser, Chris Moore, Ian Hill and members of the senior administration team for their service during the presidential transition.

## **6. President's Report**

D. Saini began his report by highlighting the numerous people he has met in the four weeks since his arrival, including students, faculty, staff, donors, community members, alumni, and Dalhousie's neighbors. Inspired by these conversations, he shared his feeling that Dalhousie is on the cusp of great growth with an exciting future. D. Saini also acknowledge the contributions of T. Balser and the senior administration team, thanking everyone who made his transition as smooth as possible.

D. Saini acknowledged the tragedy of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752, which included the loss of two of Dalhousie's own: Engineering student Masoumeh Ghavi and Dentistry instructor Dr. Sharieh Faghihi. He reported that the Dalhousie Iranian Student Society has worked with the University to establish a memorial bursary fund, which launched on January 22 to support future Iranian students at Dalhousie. D. Saini also noted a meeting with Dr. Faghihi's family and efforts underway to provide assistance.

D. Saini thanked the Human Rights and Equity Services office for their efforts in organizing the African Heritage Month launch ceremony and flag raising held on February 3, noting the exceptional attendance from various groups across campus.

D. Saini shared some thoughts on Dalhousie following his first month in office, not as a prescription, but as ideas that align with the strategic planning work that is underway under the Provost's leadership, and that are anchored in his values. These include striving for excellence across the board, but determining selected foci for pre-eminence (oceans cluster, vaccinology as examples). He noted that this requires an integrative approach, recognizing that big ideas don't emerge from silos, but at the convergence. Other areas include an increased focus on experiential learning in multiple forms (including entrepreneurship) and building aspirations to be a leading university for Canada and a global powerhouse. He also spoke to delivering on promises to the community, and a focus on "our people", increasing engagement with students, faculty, and staff in order to better unite the Dalhousie community.

D. Saini concluded his report by noting that he will continue to bring written reports to the Board, but would like to use his time on the agenda to provide Board members with more of an environmental scan of the post-secondary sector and how that environment, trends, etc. are affecting, or will impact Dalhousie.

## **6.1 Provost's Final Report on Interim Presidency**

T. Balsler referred members of the Board to her report included in meeting package, highlighting the accomplishments and progress made with regards to the various objectives set during her time as interim president. T. Balsler noted that Dalhousie has taken great steps to increase focus on EDI issues and initiatives and highlighted the continuous work being done with regards to strategic planning and the budget planning process to ensure the long-term success of the University. She thanked the Board for their confidence in her and noted that serving as interim president was a tremendous experience.

## **7. Dalhousie Student Union President's Report**

A. Abwajy dedicated her time to call for urgent action on the climate crisis. She noted the response by the Dalhousie Student Union to the call to action in support of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation and read excerpts from the DSU Council's statement. She spoke to additional action taken by Dalhousie students, including a sit-in held at Member of Parliament Andy Fillmore's office on February 7th. A. Abwajy noted that Dalhousie plays a key role in shaping the future and invited members of the Board to continue the conversation started by former student Board member K. Olds and Divest Dal. F. Beydoun seconded this invitation and also requested D. Saini's assistance in providing support to Indigenous students on campus whose communities are affected by the current situation.

D. Saini responded by saying that he would welcome a meeting with Indigenous students, and asked student Board members to reach out to the Vice-Provost Equity and Inclusion to develop a plan for taking this initiative forward. He concurred that climate change is the most serious issue facing Canada and the world and reported that he is presently in discussion with other Canadian university presidents to develop a unified approach to addressing climate change. He noted that this approach is not solely about divestment from fossil fuels. C. Huskison noted that the Dalhousie Board has dealt with the fossil fuel divestment issue in a very comprehensive manner within the past 12 months.

## **8. Items for Information**

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

C. Thomas referred members to the reports of the standing committees in the meeting materials. In the interest of time, C. Thomas requested that Board members submit any questions regarding the reports directly to the appropriate committee chair.

## **9. In Camera Session**

The Board moved to the *in-camera* session.

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.