

BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

APPROVED minutes of the open session of the 270th regular meeting of the Board of Governors of Athabasca University held virtually on Friday, December 13, 2024.

Present: Byron Nelson (Chair), Alex Clark, Larry Spagnolo, Dan Leckelt, Don Gnatiuk, Lori Van Rooijen, Leo de Bever, Elena Gould, Jacqueline Hobal, Roger Morrill, Martha Cleveland-Innes, Richard Hantrods, Brenda Kuzio, Monical Arcilla, Jan Lehmann, Diana Ramirez and Sunny Bhasin

Governance Staff: Tyler Tollefson (Chief Governance Officer and General Counsel) and Barbara Kowalchuk (Recording Secretary)

Others Present: Matthew Prineas, Kathleen Roberts, Jennifer Pascoe, Ray Welshman, Catherine Swindlehurst, Pauline Smeltz, Matthew McCreary, Priscilla Campeau, Shawn Fraser, Megan Hall, Manijeh Mannani, Alain May, Andrew Perrin, Bailey Sousa, Shauna Zenteno and Candy Khan

Absent with Regrets: Terry Lovelace and Wilfred Willier

The Chair provided the AU land acknowledgement.

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m. having achieved quorum.

1.0 Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda

270-01 MOVED That the Board of Governors approves the open session agenda for meeting 270, and thereby approves the consent agenda including the open session minutes of meeting 269, held September 20, 2024, as presented.

Morrill

Carried

2.0 Conflict of Interest Declaration

Subject to the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Guidelines for the Board of Governors, members were asked to declare any conflict they may have with respect to particular agenda items contained within the meeting agenda.

No conflicts were declared.

3.0 President's Report to the Board

The President presented his report and reviewed it with the members.

4.0 Action, Information / Discussion Items

4.1 Review Second Quarter Variance and Year End Forecast

The President, the Provost and Vice President Academic and the Acting Vice President Finance and Operations & Chief Financial Officer presented this item providing an overview of the key drivers behind the second quarter variance, and the year-end projections.

The members further discussed financial aid processes, and current government funding.

4.2 Motion: Approve 2025-26 Tuition and Fees

270-02 MOVED That the Board of Governors approves the 2025-26 tuition and fees, as outlined in the 2025-26 Tuition and Fees Matrix, with the course materials fee change to take effect May 1, 2025 and all other fee changes to take effect September 1, 2025, subject to non-substantive edits.

Spagnolo/Cleveland-Innes

The Chair, Finance & Property Committee reported that a robust discussion regarding tuition and fees took place at the Finance & Property Committee meeting on December 3rd, and further that the proposal had been recommended for approval.

The President and the Provost and Vice President Academic presented the proposed 2025-26 tuition and fees to the members, noting that the strategy for 2025-26 is rooted in commitment to balancing affordability for students and financial stability for the university. The President announced the commencement of the President's Task Force on Financial Supports for Students.

A summary of the proposal was provided noting that the proposed 2% increase in tuition is below inflation rates and additional fee increases are minimized. It was further noted that permanent funding for student awards and bursaries will increase by \$100K, the 10% tuition reduction for Indigenous students will continue, and the \$16 course materials increase is key to ensuring high-quality course content while transitioning to a sustainable cost-recovery model.

Member Ramirez spoke on behalf of the Athabasca University Student's Union in opposition to the proposed increases.

Carried
Huntrods, Lehmann & Ramirez Opposed
Cleveland-Innes Abstained

4.3 Motion: Approve Board Goals & Objectives – January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026

270-03 MOVED That the Board of Governors approves the Board of Governors Goals and Objectives January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026, as presented.

Gould/Van Rooijen

The Board Chair presented this item noting that the goals and objectives had been discussed at the Board Retreat.

Carried

4.4 Motion: Approve Updated Athabasca University Annual Report to Ministry of Advanced Education for the year ended March 31, 2024

270-04 MOVED That the Board of Governors approves the updated Athabasca University Annual Report to the Ministry of Advanced Education for the year ended March 31, 2024, subject to non-substantive editorial revisions.

Gnatiuk/Cleveland-Innes

The Board Chair noted that the Board had approved the Annual Report in September, however subsequent to the approval further modifications were requested by the Ministry.

The President and the Chief Growth Officer presented this item noting that in October the Ministry informed all post-secondary institutions of two additional requirements:

- An explanation of financial variances in the university's operating and capital and infrastructure budgets, and
- Information on for-profit venture education provided for the Board.

It was noted that the financial information had been incorporated into the document and further that Athabasca University does not provide for-profit venture education to Board members as Athabasca University does not run any arms-length for-profit ventures. It was further noted that the updated report had been reviewed by the Office of the Auditor General and their non-substantive edits were included in the report.

Carried

5.0 Business Arising from the Consent Agenda - None

6.0 Board Chair Report and Closing Comments

The Board Chair noted that Member Huntrods' term as the academic staff member nominated by General Faculties Council will expire in January 2025 and further that Member Huntrods had elected not to serve a second term. He thanked Member Huntrods for his work on the Board.

The Board Chair noted that he had represented Athabasca University at the Grey Cup noting that Athabasca University has a partnership with the CFL Players Association.

7.0 Adjournment

The open session of Meeting 269 was adjourned at 9:48 AM.