

BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

APPROVED minutes of the open session of the 258th regular meeting of the Board of Governors of Athabasca University held virtually on Friday, September 23, 2022.

Present: Byron Nelson (Chair), Peter Scott, Lynn Hamilton, McDonald Madamombe, Andrew Ko, Sir John Daniel, Elena Gould, Jacqueline Hobal, Roger Morrill, Martha Cleveland-Innes, Richard Huntrods, Liam Connelly, Karen Fletcher, Chris Edwards and Dur-E-Najaf Syed

Governance Staff: Sara Kunto (Chief Governance Officer and General Counsel) and Barbara Kowalchuk (Recording Secretary)

Others Present: Matthew Prineas, Deborah Meyers, Jennifer Shaeffer, Kristine Williamson, Charlene Polege, Gilbert Perras and David Head

Absent with Regrets: Sharon Anderson, Bryan Berg and Larry Spagnolo

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. having achieved quorum followed by the delivery of the AU land acknowledgement.

1.0 Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda

258-01 MOVED That the Board of Governors approves the open session agenda for meeting 258, and thereby approves the consent agenda including the open session minutes of meeting 256, held May 20, 2022, and meeting 257, held August 26, 2022, as presented.

Fletcher/Ko

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.

The Chair noted that the Board would be holding a Closed Session following the Open Session at which time the Minister of Advanced Education's directives to AU would be discussed. The Chair noted that some of the voting Members of the Board could be seen to be in a perceived conflict of interest as a result of the directives about forced relocation of staff to the Town of Athabasca, and this despite the Minister having seemingly backed away from this directive at the Open Session of the Board in August 2022 and in media reports. The Chair noted that he was confident that voting members of the Board remained in a position to discharge their fiduciary duties, nonetheless.

3.0 President's Discussion and Analysis

3.1 Discussion and Analysis

The President presented this item and provided highlights from the report. He further noted that the Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in Calgary from September 14 – 16th and co-hosted by Athabasca University was a very successful event.

3.2 Review 1st Quarter Variance & Year-End Forecast Report

The President and the Vice President Finance & Performance Services and Chief Financial Officer presented this item providing an overview of the key drivers behind the first quarter results and year-end projections.

The members discussed enrolment projections in terms of marketing initiatives, barriers, current trends, research, as well as partnerships and opportunities for building relationships.

4.0 Action, Information/Discussion Items

4.1 Approve Annual Report to Alberta Advanced Education for the Year Ended March 31, 2022

258-02 MOVED That the Board of Governors approves the Athabasca University Annual Report to Alberta Advanced Education for the year ended March 31, 2022, subject to non-substantive editorial revisions.

Madamombe/Ko

It was noted that this item had been recommended for approval by the Board Audit Committee. The President presented this item highlighting that the report reflects the fiscal year April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022.

It was noted that an edit was required to Page 14 of the draft report in terms of the IDEA lab, noting that the report reflects that "Graduate learners had the opportunity this year to be involved in research with AU faculty through the new IDEA lab,....." and the report should reflect that both Undergraduate and Graduate learners were involved.

The mover and seconder of the motion accepted this as a friendly amendment and Motion 258-02 was restated as follows:

That the Board of Governors approves the Athabasca University Annual Report to Alberta Advanced Education for the year ended March 31, 2022, as presented and amended.

Carried

4.2 Approve Appointment of Board Vice-Chair

258-03 MOVED That the Board of Governors appoints Larry Spagnolo as Vice-Chair, Board of Governors.

Scott/Ko

It was noted that this item had been recommended for approval by the Board Governance Committee. The Chief Governance Officer and General Counsel presented the item noting that Member Spagnolo has agreed to serve in this capacity.

Carried

4.3 Approve Bachelor of Environmental Studies Program

258-04 MOVED That the Board of Governors approves the Bachelor of Environmental Studies effective July 1, 2023, or thereafter at the discretion of the Provost and Vice President Academic, pending approval by Alberta Advanced Education.

Fletcher/Ko

It was noted that this item had been recommended for approval by the Board Finance & Property Committee. The Provost and Vice President, Academic presented the item to the members.

Carried

4.4 Approve Suspension of Master of Business Administration Hockey Management Specialization

258-05 MOVED That the Board of Governors approves the suspension of the Master of Business Administration Hockey Management specialization effective July 1, 2022, and that the specialization be re-opened or terminated no later than June 30, 2024, at the discretion of the Provost and Vice President Academic, pending approval by Alberta Advanced Education.

Daniel/Morrill

It was noted that this item had been recommended for approval by the Board Finance & Property Committee. The Provost and Vice President, Academic presented the item to the members highlighting the rationale for the proposed suspension.

Carried

5.0 Business Arising from the Consent Agenda - None

6.0 Board Chair Report and Closing Comments

The Board Chair thanked the members for their participation in the fulsome discussion.

7.0 Adjourn

The open session of Meeting 258 was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.