

Public Minutes of a meeting of the USask Board of Governors

December 14, 2021
PMB 238
Emmett Hall Boardroom
And Via Zoom

Present: Shelley Brown (Chair), Joy Crawford, Grant Devine, Tasnim Jaisee, Jay Kalra (via Zoom), Ritu Malhotra, Grit McCreath, Darrel Monette (via Zoom), Louise Simard, Peter Stoicheff

Resource Officers: Greg Fowler, Airini, Debra Pozega Osburn, Baljit Singh (via Zoom), David Stack (via Zoom), Chelsea Willness (university secretary), Sheena Tait-Rowan (recording secretary)

Guests: Minister Gene Makowsky, Amanda Plummer (Chief of Staff) and Deputy Minister Mark McLoughlin, Advanced Education; Vice-Chief Aly Bear, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations

Others in attendance: Danielle Dunbar (item 11), Patti McDougall, Angela Jaime (item 3 and 10), Candace Wasacase-Lafferty (item 10), Sara Daniels (item 4), Dara Hrytzak

1. Call to order and Chair's remarks

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:22 am and welcomed members to the meeting, declaring the meeting properly constituted for the transaction of business, with herself as Chair and the university secretary and chief governance officer as secretary and noted the Indigenous land acknowledgement.

Two Board members joined the meeting remotely via Zoom. The Chair acknowledged the excellent work of the university and the notable example it is setting with its vaccination requirements to keep the campus community safe. The Chair confirmed that special guests would visit with the Board via Zoom on Tuesday morning - the Minister of Advanced Education and his staff, and Vice-Chief Aly Bear on behalf of the Federation. The Chair commented that Jake Moore, director, university art galleries and collections, will guide a tour of the galleries following lunch on Tuesday.

2. In-camera session – Board only

Management joined the meeting at 8:20 am.

3. President's Statement

The President extended a special welcome to Board members Tasnim Jaisee and Louise Simard, and to Provost Airini, who were joining the Board in person for the first time. He also extended congratulations to Chancellor McCreath, recently re-appointed for a second term as chancellor.

The President reported that the vaccine protocol announced in the fall allowed for the option of testing twice per week to those who had not received their vaccinations or preferred not to disclose. The testing option has been removed for the winter term. There will be more in-person learning in January, and at least 80% of courses will be offered in person. With this additional activity, it is important to keep the community as safe as possible.

The President commented on the tremendous progress of two vaccine candidates at the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO). A celebration of completion of the manufacturing facility is planned for January 13, 2022, including guests from the Federal Government.

President Stoicheff reported that over 130 USask scientists including faculty members in the humanities and social sciences as well as in the sciences are on the Stanford list of the top 2% of scientists in the world in terms of productivity and publications.

He noted that enrolment on campus is stable and up 1.8% from December 2020. Graduate student enrolment is up 3.3%. First year and direct entry enrolment, both domestic and international, look positive for January.

The President provided an update to the Board on the Innovation Corridor commenting that there are positive developments taking place in this area.

A small taskforce consisting of internal and external members has been created and will consider how the stone barn can be viable in the future.

President Stoicheff provided background on the events leading up to the Indigenous identity verification matters that have recently been in the media. The Provost reported on the formation of a taskforce through the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement (OVPIE) that will focus on processes for recruitment and retention of Indigenous peoples and confirmation of Indigenous identity.

USask is grateful to work with the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN), Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN-S), and the Saskatoon Tribal Council as it moves through this process. The university recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding between USask and MN-S, the first of its kind in Canada. The memorandum ensures the university will work closely with the MN–S on matters of identity and recognizing the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The vice-provost Indigenous engagement (VPIE) spoke to the structure of the taskforce that includes Indigenous faculty, staff and students, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers, and the OVPIE. An advisory group will also be created to provide information and advice, including perspectives on the impact of data collection, student experience, legal implications, communications to the community, government relationships, etc. Their work will commence in January 2022.

President Stoicheff and senior members met this past weekend with Vice-Chief Aly Bear and Vice-Chief David Pratt to discuss moving forward with the welcomed renewal and signing of the MOU with FSIN, representing seventy-four nations. The chair thanked Provost and vice-provost for their leadership.

4. Briefing for visits with special guests – for information

The Board reconvened at 12:55 following a short lunch break.

5. Identification of Conflicts of Interest related to the business of the meeting

There were none.

6. Standing Committees – see consent agenda

Board meeting reconvenes Tuesday, December 14

7. Welcome and approval of agenda

The following resolution was moved and seconded:

That the Board of Governors approves the agenda as distributed.

8. Consent Agenda

As all members were present for the committee meetings and discussions, the decision items were presented via consent agenda. There was no additional business identified as arising from the minutes.

7.1 Approval of the October 4, 2021, Board of Governors meeting minutes.

Standing Committees 6.1 - 6.4

6.1 Human Resources Committee

6.1.3 That the Board of Governors approves the proposed changes to Exempt Total Rewards effective March 1, 2022.

6.1.4 That the Board of Governors approves the tentative agreement with the University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association (USFA), effective December 6, 2021, contingent on a positive ratification vote by USFA membership in January 2022.

6.2 Land and Facilities Committee

6.2.4 That the Board of Governors provides final approval for the execution of the Adaptive Renewal (AR) Phase.

6.2.5 That the Board of Governors provides preliminary approval to proceed with continued development of the Surgical Skills Laboratory project.

6.2.6 That the Board of Governors approves the Crop Development Centre (CDC) Master Plan and Design Guidelines dated November 2021.

6.3 Governance and Executive Committee

6.3.3 That the Board of Governors approves the appointment of Shelley Brown, to the vice-president university relations search committee, effective immediately.

6.3.4 That the Board of Governors approves the Duty to Accommodate policy effective December 14th, 2021.

6.3.11 That the Board of Governors approves the proposed amendments to the Board annual work plan for 2021/2022 and to the committee terms of reference attached to the

Board Bylaws as outlined in the written meeting materials, effective immediately.

6.4 Audit and Finance Committee – no decision items

The following resolution was moved and seconded:

That the Board of Governors approves the consent agenda items as presented.

9. Minister Makowsky

The Chair welcomed Minister Makowsky and members of his staff, Deputy Minister Mark McLoughlin, and Amanda Plummer to the meeting (via Zoom). The Minister thanked the university for its continued leadership and invited questions on any initiatives. Deputy Minister (DM) McLoughlin thanked USask leadership for the role they have played and their guidance through the pandemic, and for their contributions to expanding collaboration and connectivity throughout the sector.

The Chair noted that DM McLoughlin is moving to a new portfolio and thanked him for both his service to the Ministry of Advanced Education and his well-respected partnership with USask.

Topics of discussion included growth of the innovation agenda, micro-credentials, and the positive increase in student enrolment. The minister noted that USask continues to be a leader in the province and has an impact on all levels of government including Innovation SK, health, energy, resource, environment, justice, and highways.

The deputy minister thanked the university for its depth of engagement in the province’s growth plan initiatives. In closing, the President thanked the minister and his office not only for their financial support but also for their support in response to the pandemic and the collaboration of information between USask, University of Regina and Sask Polytech.

10. Vice-Chief Aly Bear, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations

The Board chair welcomed Vice-Chief Aly Bear to the meeting along with the Vice-provost Indigenous Engagement, Angela Jaime, and the Director of Indigenous Initiatives, Candace Wasacase-Lafferty. She congratulated Vice-Chief Aly Bear on her recent graduation from USask’s College of Law and noted that members had been reflecting on the importance of the first MOU signed by the university and FSIN several years ago.

Amongst several other Indigenous initiatives underway at USask, the university is in the process of finalizing a certificate program in Treaty Studies. The provost spoke further to the university’s initiatives, commenting on the work around programming in Treaty Studies, curriculum development, widening access for students, and plans for Indigenous identity verification.

Vice-Chief Aly Bear raised the importance of removing barriers to the success of Indigenous students such as travel to school, residency, childcare, and transfer credit. She spoke to the need for students and professors alike to understand Treaty and land rights and noted the need to observe the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and ensure that the wider community understands these issues.

Candace Wasacase-Lafferty invited Board members and guests to visit the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre which will soon celebrate its sixth anniversary. The centre consists of several components including ceremonial work, elder-led sessions, advocacy, academics, tutoring and provides a space of safety, support, and cultural growth for Indigenous students.

The President noted that anti-racism and anti-oppression training is being provided to all senior leaders, with the intent of it being offered to all new hires.

He thanked Vice-Chief Aly Bear for meeting with the Board and helping the university to identify these issues.

There was no further discussion.

11. ICT Presentation

The associate vice-president information and communications technology provided a presentation for information and spoke to the importance of technology in higher education providing students with the necessary tools for success.

12. BoardEffect introduction to portal - for information

13. Art Gallery Tour

Board members joined Jake Moore, director, university art galleries and collections on a tour of some of the university's art galleries.

14. University Relations report

Debra Pozega Osburn, vice-president university relations, reported that the university continues to make progress on the comprehensive campaign, and provided highlights of the work for information.

15. Items from Council

That the Board of Governors approves the WCVM Research Chair in Pollinator Health effective January 1, 2022.

16. Meewasin Valley Authority

That the Board of Governors approves the appointment of Dr. Angela Bedard-Haughn to the Meewasin Valley Authority Board of Directors for a three-year term, effective December 15, 2021.

And

That the Board of Governors approves the appointment of Julian Demkiw to the Meewasin Valley Authority Board of Directors for a three-year term, effective December 15, 2021.

17. Electronic approvals

For information

18. Correspondence received

For information

Board adjourned at 2:40 pm and moved in camera

19. In-camera – Board and president

20. In-camera – Board only