



Board of Governors meeting highlights

Issued December 22, 2015

The University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors held its regularly scheduled board meeting on December 15, 2015. The following is an update on the highlights of the meeting.

Board governance

By virtue of the position, the president and vice-chancellor of the university is a member of the university's Board of Governors. As the December meeting was Peter Stoicheff's first as a board member, he was appointed to the governance and executive committee and the human resources committee.

Senior administrative appointment

The board approved the recommendation to appoint Dr. Marek Radomski as vice-dean, research in the College of Medicine for a five year renewable term beginning March 14, 2016.

Exempt staff annual total rewards review

The board carried out its annual review of exempt staff total rewards, which includes analysis of compensation, pension, benefits, perquisites and recognition programs versus the market strategy for these employees. Approved changes considered the university's total rewards principles and market strategy, along with the ability to pay based on budget situations that exist in any given review year. Approximately 225 positions are part of this review, including directors, managers, professional staff and administrative support to senior administrators. Exempt positions are out of scope of any bargaining unit by virtue of the managerial or confidential employment status.

Sexual assault prevention policy

In November 2014, sexual assault on university campuses became a high profile national issue leading the University of Saskatchewan to assess policy and protocol pertaining to safety and security in the area of sexual assault. It was determined that while the response protocols in cases of reported sexual assault were co-ordinated and solid, a stand-alone policy would be the best course of action as a next step to ensure the university community understood the position of the institution and was aware of the university's commitments with regard to response and prevention. Therefore, a policy was developed after researching similar policies at other Canadian universities, as well as consultations with students, faculty and staff.



The board approved this sexual assault prevention policy and received the corresponding procedures for information. This policy provides a framework and firm commitment to prevention, education and awareness, and to fostering engagement from the university community to enable its members to recognize and to help prevent sexual assault and sexual misconduct on campus. In addition to the policy, work is also underway to build on the awareness, education and training currently available for prevention and intervention, and to evaluate the supports in place for survivors of sexual assault and misconduct. The policy document clearly articulates the university's commitment to providing and maintaining a safe and positive environment in which any form of sexual assault or sexual misconduct is not tolerated.

Presidential transition

Peter Stoicheff was installed as the university's 11th president and vice-chancellor on October 24, 2015 as part of Fall Convocation. The board received an update on Peter's continued transition into the role from the presidential transition advisory committee. Activities in late 2015 focused on preparations for Peter's installation on October 24, 2015, briefings on key topics, key stakeholder introductions and holiday activities. Activities in early 2016 will concentrate primarily on internal engagement with faculty, staff and students.

RenewUS program – capital renewal – foundational space planning directions

The University of Saskatchewan recognizes the need to address urgent and growing space pressures, as well as the growing need to address deferred maintenance requirements in order to maintain the physical assets of the campus. RenewUS is a program developed to achieve essential and comprehensive facilities renewal (building, information technology and academic requirements) within the core campus. The program will ensure facilities are creatively adapted to support and revitalize key academic programs and requirements for teaching and learning, research and enhancement of the student experience. The board reviewed strategies for moving the core campus renewal forward.

Renaming of Arts Court to Elders Court

Approval was provided to rename Arts Court to Elders Court. Arts Court is located behind the Arts and Science and Law buildings and has become a common drop-off location for Elders at the Saskatoon campus. With the completion of the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre, use of this court by Elders is anticipated to increase.



College Quarter

The university is developing approximately 145 acres south of College Drive in an area known as College Quarter. The mixed-use village and multi-family residential sectors remain undeveloped and will be key to the vitality of this new university neighbourhood. The university plans to release a request for qualifications and a subsequent request for proposals in 2016 to seek a development partner for the mixed-use village (approximately eight acres).

Finance and investment

The board received a mid-year financial update that demonstrates continued financial stability in dealing with investment market fluctuations and provincial funding holdbacks.

Consolidated revenues for the first two quarters, across all funds, are down over the same period last year, and consolidated expenses have increased. This is primarily due to anticipated volatility in investment returns, decreases in government funding, and normal increases in salaries and benefits. Despite these variances, the university is tracking to meet the approved operating budget.

The board discussed recent one-time adjustments to our 2015-16 Government of Saskatchewan grant. Adjustments include:

- a deferral of funding for the Canadian Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Water Security (\$1.35 million) to no later than March 2018;
- a decrease to the 2015-16 Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarships (\$0.561 million); and
- a \$7.9 million decrease to the overall 2015-16 grant.

The board approved a recommendation from the university's leadership team to use the central operating reserve to offset the government's \$7.9 million grant reduction and the \$0.561 decrease to 2015-16 scholarship funding. This reserve is intended to address the effect of unexpected risks that arise, such as mid-year funding changes. The board and university leadership are committed to ensuring operations—including services to students, teaching and research programs, staff complement and capital projects—remain unaffected as a result of this funding reduction.

The board is mindful that continual financial pressure coming from three directions at once—a reduced operating grant, a reduction of our reserves and restrictions on our capacity to raise other revenue—is not sustainable. The university requires stable funding and continues to work with the government towards this end.





The board approved two new policies related to finances. A new procurement policy was approved and implementation will include campus awareness and education. The second is an asset management policy to combine three policies into one policy, update procedures and simplify language. The new policy provides an explicit, comprehensive policy promoting stewardship of university assets, and provides guidance for effective asset management.

Work on the 2016-17 tuition rates and fees is being concluded and an official announcement is expected early in 2016.

Additional items

In addition to those outlined above, the board received reports on related entities, including a presentation from Canadian Light Source (CLS); received status reports on enterprise risk management and the insurance program; approved the terms of reference for portraits of presidents and chancellors; and received an overview from President Stoicheff on plans to renew the university's mission, vision and values. The board also approved proceeding with a Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) funded project that involves the purchase and installation of an X-ray Photoelectron Spectrometer in the Saskatchewan Structural Sciences Centre.

Where relevant, more information will be shared on the outlined approvals and initiatives in future university communications. The next scheduled Board of Governors meeting will be held on March 29, 2016.

