



Board of Governors meeting highlights

Issued December 16, 2016

The University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors held its regularly scheduled board meeting and its annual strategy session on December 12-14, 2016. The following is an update on the highlights of the meeting and strategy session.

Board membership and nominations to committees

By virtue of his position as chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan, Roy Romanow attended his first meeting as a member of the Board of Governors. Chancellor Romanow was appointed to the human resources and land and facilities committees of the board.

Colin Tennent, strategic advisor in the Office of the Vice-President Finance and Resources, had his appointment as one of the University of Saskatchewan representatives on the Meewasin Valley Authority Board continued.

Senior administrative and academic appointments

The board approved the recommendation to appoint Dr. Keith Ogle as vice-dean, faculty engagement in the College of Medicine for a period of December 1, 2016 to May 31, 2018.

The board approved the recommendation to appoint Wade Epp as associate vice-president, services effective December 15, 2016.

In addition, updates were provided to the board on senior academic and administrative extensions and appointments.

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 reflect the university's total rewards principles and market strategy, and adjustments are made considering benchmarking compensation for positions.

Approximately 250 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. Further communications regarding the outcomes of this annual review process will be sent to exempt employees in March 2017.



Update on Preston Crossing retail development

The board received an update on construction underway at Preston Crossing retail development. Leasing is in progress and expected opening dates for new retail locations are in 2017. Lease revenue from Preston Crossing, totaling \$1.8 million annually, is used to support student scholarships and priorities. The university has received a total of \$16 million to date in lease revenue from Preston Crossing.

Health Sciences project – final components (including A and C Wing renovations)

The board approved the final components of the Health Sciences project, including A and C Wing renovations. The overall Health Sciences project was approved in December 2005 as a multi-phased project. Key components completed to date include preparatory infrastructure work, construction of D Wing, E Wing, Physical Therapy space and B Wing renovation. Approximately 82,344 square feet in the A Wing and student lounge area (C Wing) will be renovated. Completing the project's final components will allow optimization of the D and E Wings for research—D Wing as a wet bench collaborative research centre for health sciences research and E Wing as the centre for social and population health research including the new Saskatchewan Centre for Patient-Oriented Research (SCPOR).

College Quarter ice facility

The board approved the expansion of the seating plan for the proposed facility to allow for future expansion to 3,437 seats.

Agriculture Building - replacement of transformers

The board approved the replacement of two existing Agriculture Building transformers. The project includes the disconnection and removal of the existing transformers, and the supply and installation of the new transformers and all components. The intent is to be able to do this work with minimum power outages.

Edwards School of Business – experiential learning classroom renovations (classrooms 45 and 46)

The board approved the renovation of classrooms 45 and 46 in the Edwards School of Business. The renovation of this classroom space will achieve collaborative approaches and contributes to the school's capacity to engage with groups who might normally be outside the school's reach as experiential learning opportunities. This renovation will enable meetings and interactions with partners outside the Saskatoon urban area and also be leveraged by instructors of other types of courses, including



synchronous distance or technology-based delivery, which opens access to previously under-served rural areas and northern communities.

Finance and investment

The board received a financial report covering the first six months of the fiscal year. Consolidated revenues, across all funds, are up over the same period last year due to positive investment returns, support from the federal government's postsecondary institutes' strategic infrastructure fund and a delay in the timing of the 2016 provincial budget. Consolidated expenses experienced a modest increase over the same time period last year.

The board discussed the recent mid-year adjustments to our 2016-17 Government of Saskatchewan grant. Adjustments include:

- a claw back of Worker's Compensation Board rebate of \$1.2 million;
- a one per cent reduction in the operating grant (\$3.1 million); and
- a \$0.7 million decrease to the preventative maintenance and renewal grant.

Planned spending activity, in addition to the above revenue adjustments, will result in the university reporting approximately a \$30 million reduction in general fund balances for the current fiscal year.

The board received a report on the capital funding strategy that outlines the use of internal loans and external debt to finance future development, maintenance and renewal of university facilities.

The board approved funding for the final components of the Health Sciences capital project.

The board also approved a change to the endowment spending policy to reduce the spending rate to 4.0 per cent from 4.25 per cent for the 2017-18 fiscal year, in order to provide stable funding over the long term and to preserve capital.

Work on the 2017-18 tuition rates and fees is being concluded and an official announcement is expected in early 2017.

Information Technology Security Policy

The board approved the Information Technology (IT) Security Policy effective December 15, 2016, replacing the Network Security Policy.



While the Network Security Policy was effective for the protection of the university's network infrastructure, it did not address the security of other information technology services or network-enabled devices. Recent cyber-attacks against other higher education institutions have shown the substantial financial, operational and reputational impact a security incident can have. The Information Technology Security Policy provides the necessary authority to reduce and manage the university's IT-based risk, while providing enough flexibility to support the broad range of our academic and research activities.

The board also discussed the implementation timeline for the IT Security Policy.

Annual strategy session

The board held its annual strategy session in conjunction with the December board meeting. Topics discussed included a presentation on the integrated planning process, a conversation on risk and a review of reserve fund balances. In addition, president of Universities Canada, Paul Davidson, attended to facilitate a conversation on what makes the U of S unique and what the university's role is in the Canadian context.

Additional items

Additional items discussed and/or approved by the board that may be of interest are outlined below.

The board approved:

- its annual work plan and terms of reference; and
- the appointment of McKercher LLP as primary legal counsel for the university.

The board received a report/update on:

- related entities;
- sustainability; and
- the university's insurance program.

The board also received an education session about the university's labour relations environment, including an overview of the unionized and non-unionized workforce.

Where relevant, more information will be shared on the foregoing approvals and initiatives in future university communications.

The next scheduled Board of Governors meeting will be held March 21, 2017.