

2020 – MINUTES AND SUMMARY OF MOTIONS

(2020:14) OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

(2020:15) COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE BY THE PRESIDENT/PANDEMIC COMMITTEE

(2020:16) ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

UNIVERSITY OF KING'S COLLEGE
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Executive Committee of the University of King's College Board of Governors met by web conference on Thursday, April 23, 2020, at 3:03 p.m.

ATTENDING: Ms. Katrina BEACH (Treasurer), Ms. Isabella MacKAY (replacing Mx. Levi CLARKSON as Student Representative for this meeting), Ms. Rosalie COURAGE (Board of Governors Representative), Dr. Gwendolyn DAVIES (Vice Chair), Dr. Susan DODD (Faculty Representative), Mx. Jennifer GRAY (Secretary), Professor William LAHEY (President and Vice-Chancellor), Dr. Peter O'BRIEN (Vice-President), Mr. Douglas RUCK (Chair), and Mr. Hugh WRIGHT (Diocesan Representative)

BY INVITATION: Ms. Adriane ABBOTT (Advancement Director), Ms. Julie Green (Registrar), Ms. Katie MERWIN (Dean of Students), and Ms. Bonnie SANDS (Bursar)

REGRETS: Mr. Paul THOMSON (Alumni Representative)

STAFF: Mx. Janet HATHAWAY (minutes)

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

(2020:14) OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair made opening remarks. He noted Levi Clarkson's grandmother passed away last evening so they are not here today.

The Chair spoke at length about the mass shooting in Nova Scotia, COVID-19 and asked members to take a moment of silence to think of those who are no longer with us.

The President thanked the Chair for his words and noted that in addition to the flags being at half-mast, the University is preparing to share the Choir singing a requiem.

(2020:15) COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE BY THE PRESIDENT/PANDEMIC COMMITTEE

The President asked if anyone had anything in particular they were interested in hearing about. Board members asked whether COVID-19 and what happened in Colchester might affect parents' thinking about sending their children to school in this province. The President responded that it might. The situation the University is facing could end up as being as serious as the situation King's and higher education faced back in the Depression and World War II, or that faced after the fire and the pandemic of the Spanish flu in 1919-1920, which came right after World War I. The magnitude of the drop in enrolment and residence occupancy (and therefore revenue) and of the potential increases in costs currently faced by higher education are extraordinary.

The President spoke about his optimism. While King's is facing significant challenges that are not only financial challenges, the University has to face those challenges by following what was previously

identified as priorities: equity, diversity and inclusion; faculty renewal; the restoration of campus; and the financial stability of the University. King's cannot allow those priorities to be sacrificed.

The President reported that three areas are currently occupying his thoughts:

1. In lockstep with Dalhousie, King's is proceeding to prepare for the coming academic year with the assumption the University will be teaching totally online in September, because that is the most likely scenario and a strong possibility. That is a huge ask of faculty, who have already responded to a huge ask over the past few weeks. The President was encouraged by the work that has already gone into that, especially in the Foundation Year Program. Resources need to be made available to faculty to continue that important work.
2. The Registrar and her team are implementing changes to recruitment activities, not only with first-year students. There is danger that the whole system will lose a significant part of its first-year student population. There is a lot of information saying that people want to be close to home right now. There is a lot of work going on at present, and a lot of it has to be specific to the Foundation Year Program. The President is of the view that the University can provide a really good Foundation Year Program experience online in a way that will differentiate what King's can offer to first-year students in contrast to what other universities offer first-year students.
3. There will almost certainly be a deficit of between three and five million dollars, the biggest deficit ever contemplated at King's. The President shared that with the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education yesterday. The deficit needs to have a looseness built into it so the University can spend the money where it is needed. If those projections are accurate, depending on what the government does to bail out universities, King's will need to think about where money is spent and how that could affect people's livelihoods.

The President acknowledged the giving by the Alumni to help students. The President noted that he wants to make sure what King's gives to students is not limited to the reserve funds to help students. The University is working hard to create as many online jobs for students at King's as possible. A colleague of the Treasurer is working with King's on this, searching through government programs that have money to spend and which can be persuaded to hire King's students to help work online. An alumnus has contributed some money for student jobs. There is a \$400,000 academic innovation fund that could be used to create jobs. If King's could create 50 jobs, the President noted he wants to do that.

The federal government is going to create an infrastructure program as part of the recovery for the economy. It has reached out to the university sector for projects relating to accessibility, building projects that will improve environmental conditions, projects that will contribute to the further digitization of the university sector. Facilities Director Ian Wagschal is working on getting Alexandra Hall accessible. He is also working on making Alumni Hall a top-notch online facility for the Foundation Year Program.

The President reported that his role as Chair of CONSUP parallels the Atlantic Association of Universities and Universities Canada. He notes he is unavoidably spending a lot of time on that, which keeps him from spending time on King's, but he is at the centre of things and what is going on.

The President reported that the University is trying to coordinate online education. Dalhousie is strong on that. There are regular meetings of Vice-Presidents Academic and Administration. There are conversations about resource sharing. Starting next week, there will be biweekly meetings with university presidents and the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. University presidents will be meeting weekly. Everyone is anticipating a significant drop in enrolment, particularly of international

students. The President expressed concern that government attention will be focussed on international students.

The Bursar noted that a deficit of three to five million dollars is not an unreasonable figure and that she has been working on a template with various scenarios. One scenario is being entirely online with no residences – that would be a \$3 million deficit. Another scenario is a social distancing scenario. With this scenario, there will be an assumption of 25 students in a class. In that scenario, the University will have to be partially online to accommodate. She is also looking at social distancing in residences. The Dean of Students believes King's could accommodate about 52 out of 254 beds in residence with social distancing requirements. She is working on these options.

The Bursar advised that the University is looking at having the principal on its long-term debt deferred. RBC is looking at possibly deferring the debts with smaller principal repayments for six months and the debts with larger principal repayments for 12 months. The deficit of three to five million dollars does not include savings from deferring debt.

Board members asked what the impact would be on tuition if learning conditions were drastically different. The President responded that the students of the future will definitely be shouldering part of the cost of this deficit. On tuition for next year's courses, this conversation has happened among universities. It is the intention of Dalhousie and King's to charge the same tuition they would have charged if teaching in person. Other universities in the region have the same intention. The President noted that students may feel they didn't get the same education they would have in the past few weeks. However, the objective is to work toward quality in online education.

The President also indicated that King's is thinking about how online students can have a virtual residence program. What does athletics look like in an online world? How does the University bring those pieces together, instead of assuming residences or athletics are out of the picture?

Board members asked if there is online residence or athletics, will those fees still be charged. The President responded that this has not been discussed in detail, but generally speaking, if people are not living here, they will not be charged.

The Vice-President gave an update. He indicated that his areas of primary concern are the academic side and what happens in the fall. Certain aspects of teaching fall under Dalhousie, and their Senate makes decisions. King's will need to follow suit. He is participating in the Council of Chairs of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences that is considering how to move programs online in their entirety in the fall. Faculty are also having conversations here about the Foundation Year Program in the fall. The working group of that body has identified that planning for a universal form of delivery - the option to go entirely online, or to combine online with other forms of teaching as those opportunities arise - makes for a supple form of teaching and allows King's to realize the advantages of going online versus delivering things in the traditional mode. The University can reach new audiences of students. Conversations with faculty have moved from despair to enthusiastic conversations.

The Vice-President reported that he is still on planning teams in FASS at Dalhousie, and the Associate Deans Academic Council has become the *de facto* clearinghouse where major ideas go. He reported that he was also on a team at Dalhousie charged with planning virtual communities – ways of engaging students other than face-to-face. It is important to know what Dalhousie is doing that way.

The Vice-President also advised that he has been part of the conversations with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. He advised he has also been working on "usual business": meeting with the KSU Executive team and attending a meeting of the Sexualized Violence Policy Implementation

Committee today, which is moving forward with its review of the Sexualized Violence Prevention Policy. The Vice President noted he is also part of the team with the President considering student jobs and expanding what is available. With the assistance of administration, the Vice-President advised that he is also looking at ways to support faculty and to expand online mental health supports.

The Registrar gave an update. Her office has been developing different scenarios regarding enrolment. Thirty per cent of the application pool is from Nova Scotia. The majority of students are from out of province. Her team is looking at how that might affect FYP enrolment, upper year enrolment, and the Master's programs. The University is anticipating having fewer out-of-province students. King's will roll out a new campaign in Nova Scotia to remind students of the different approach to first year here. Although there are many challenges with enrolment, it also provides an opportunity to speak about the curriculum, and to appeal to students and let them know that this approach to first year will be an advantage to them in these uncertain times.

The Registrar reported that they are also doing a campaign in Ontario, and online webinars with virtual tours of campus, meet and greets, letting people know what King's is thinking of doing this fall and that the University will continue to be the caring community that it is. She is trying to figure out how to tweak communications to communicate King's strengths to Grade 12 students who are struggling with finishing their high school. The University is trying to show the good experiences of FYP with testimonials by current students. She reported that although it was a struggle for students to adjust to the move off campus at the end of the semester, the support offered to King's students put the University in a good position.

The Chair asked if the plans that are currently in place take into account that there might be a re-emergence of COVID-19 in the fall.

The Vice-President responded that this was taken into account with the universal form of planning for the fall, which will allow the University to meet any challenge. The President noted that Dr. Robert Strang may be the one who decides how universities are going to be delivering academic programs in the fall.

The Vice-President advised that the anxiety about online teaching that students and faculty rightly have needs to be mitigated by knowing that online teaching in the fall will not be like it was at the end of this term. He noted that the University did a remarkable job, but that this is not how the University will want to continue.

The President advised that King's has promised them there will be an Encaenia but it is uncertain when that will happen. There will be more to it than just receiving their parchment in the mail.

(2020:16) ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Board members asked how the University will go to market and let students know what an online experience might look like. The President responded that he recognizes the difficulty and the University is working on it. Other universities may have a more difficult time than King's with this because they are interested in delaying the decision whether to go online.

Board members asked about deferrals by students. The Registrar responded that students may take a term or a year off without having to reapply.

The Chair asked about governance in this environment. The President responded that the Council of Coordinators and the tutors have shown themselves to be nimble.

The President noted that the Executive Committee has full authority to make decisions, and can do so in emergencies and the University will use that authority when circumstances require.

The Chair thanked everyone attending the extraordinary meeting.

The meeting of the Board of Governors' Executive Committee was adjourned at 4:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Ruck

Jennifer Gray