

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

The Executive Committee of the University of King's College Board of Governors met by Zoom teleconference and in person on Thursday, September 19, 2024, at 12:00 p.m.

Last Name	First Name	Title	Present	Regrets
BURTON	Kathryn	(Diocesan Representative)	Zoom	
CLIFT	Dr. Sarah	(Vice-President)	X	
GRAY	Jennifer	(Secretary)	Zoom	
LAHEY	Prof. William	(President and Vice-Chancellor)	X	
MACCALLUM	Sara	(King's Students' Union President)	X	
McGRATH	Stephanie	(Alumni Representative & Vice-Chair)		X
MACLENNAN	Dale	(Treasurer)	X	
MORRIS	Kathryn, Dr.	(Faculty Representative)	Zoom	
RUCK	Douglas, K.C.	(Chair)	X (12:30 p.m.)	
WRIGHT	Hugh	(Diocesan Representative)	X	

By invitation:

Last Name	First Name	Title	Present	Regrets
ABBOTT	Adriane	(Advancement Director)	Zoom	
HAZEL	Pam	(Manager of Governance and University Ceremonies)	X	
SANDS	Bonnie	(Bursar)	X	
ULKUER	Kutay	(Chief Enrolment and Student Life Officer)	X	
WILSON	Jeff	(Interim Dean of Students)		X

At 12:03 p.m., the Secretary called the meeting to order.

(2024:26) INVOCATION

The Secretary welcomed the new members to the committee. There was no invocation due to the absence of the Chair.

(2024:27) NECROLOGY

The Secretary read the necrology. A moment of silence was observed. Remembrances were shared concerning several individuals particularly Erik Hillgard, a member of the King's Facilities staff.

(2024:28) CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Secretary proceeded with the agenda.

(2024:29) CONSENT AGENDA

A Consent Agenda addressing the following matters was circulated:

- a) Approval of Minutes of June 13, 2024

- b) Reports from Officers:
 - i. President
 - ii. Vice-President
 - iii. Bursar
 - iv. Advancement Director
- c) Committee Reports
 - i. Campus Planning

Motion: (Gray, Wright) The Secretary declared the consent agenda approved as presented for this meeting.

(2024:30) BUSINESS/DECISION ITEMS

a) Financial Update

The Bursar mentioned that there has been an improvement in the deficit since the June budget (\$1.5M down to \$1.3M). Items to note: there were 41 more upper year BA students and eight fewer international students, salary savings from staff vacancies, offset by a loss in Conference Services.

b) Residence Update

The Bursar noted there are 268 students in residence which is down from 271 on move-in day. We have had three withdrawals so far and expect to be down seven for the fall. There is a waitlist for the empty rooms.

c) Vice-President's Update on Statement of Principles: Cultivating Healthy Boundaries & Guidelines for Healthy Relationships with Students

The Vice-President reminded the committee that when the Board approved the **Statement of Principles: Cultivating Healthy Boundaries & Guidelines for Healthy Relationships with Students** in June of 2023, it was with the condition that there would be a formal review in one year. She previously requested that the review be conducted in the fall of 2024, instead of June 2024, to allow for a greater number of students to be available to participate. The review is currently in progress. Her plan is to bring the feedback and revised principles to the December 2024 meeting of the Board. She will explain this to the Board of Governors at the October meeting.

The President of the KSU asked if there would be an opportunity for the broader community to contribute. The Vice-President explained that as this is an informal review, no input will be sought from the broader community. However, she will reach out to the KSU to ask about further input.

d) President's update on Implementation of the conclusions and recommendation of Susan Mesheau

The President reminded everyone that in December 2023, the Board asked for updates on the implementation plan for the Mesheau Report at every Board meeting. He acknowledged Kutay Ulkuer, attending his first Board Executive Committee meeting, and recognized his considerable contributions to the report included in the meeting package (Update on Implementation Plan – Enrolment and Recruitment) and its implementation.

The President noted that it will soon be time to transition away from reporting on the Mesheau recommendations, as we have made considerable progress beyond them. Moving forward, we would like to provide the Executive and the Board with updates on the progress of our own plan.

The President of the Students' Union inquired about the Community Engagement Officer position. The Chief Enrolment and Student Life Officer explained that they are looking for better ways to serve students and decided to rework an existing position rather than add new staff. This role will facilitate communication between faculty and students and focus on improving retention. In the future, they plan to adopt a more data-driven approach to retention. The position has not yet been filled.

The KSU President then asked if students were consulted during the development of this role. The Chief Enrolment and Student Life Officer confirmed that they conducted online surveys with current and former students, as well as in-person discussions through a student focus group. The KSU President requested that the KSU be consulted in the future to assist in providing additional students in these processes.

The Chief Enrolment and Student Life Officer then presented a PowerPoint presentation outlining his work to date and plans moving forward.

Questions arose about recruiting student athletes. The Chief Enrolment and Student Life Officer noted that current recruitment efforts include tailored messaging for athletes. The President added that since 2016, they have focused on attracting the right kind of student athletes through the Chancellor's scholarships, highlighting that we are unique in Canada as an associated university with its own varsity athletic program.

The President urged the executive committee to notice that we have reconsidered the conclusion drawn by Misheau that we have insufficient staffing. The reconfigured positions filled by the Chief Enrolment and Student Life Officer's team are crucial, and they are actively recruiting in both admissions and recruitment—a new approach at King's that is routine at other universities. Historically, we have awarded many scholarships and bursaries after students decided to attend King's, but now those decisions will be made earlier to influence their choices to come to King's. Our customer engagement system, bolstered by our partnership with Dal, is among the best in Canada, enabling continuous communication with applicants. The plan is to implement separate recruitment programs for Journalism and upper-year programs, with recruiters now in a position to better inform potential students about available funding. Alumni will also play a role in recruitment. The operational changes already made are promising and inspire optimism.

All communications will focus on fostering conversations and connecting prospective students with passionate representatives of our community. Notably, 10% of those who attend open houses end up enrolling.

The Board Secretary asked about the changes made to the office structure. The Chief Enrolment and Student Life Officer presented the revised organizational setup.

The Chair then resumed presiding over the meeting.

e) Enrolment Update

This item was covered during the presentation of the Chief Enrolment and Student Life Officer. For 2024-2025, we came very close to meeting our enrolment targets for FYP students, largely recovering from the dramatic loss that happened in 2023-2024. Enrolment in first year undergraduate journalism is higher than it has been in several years. Enrolment of other first year students is also higher than last year. Enrolment of first year international students is up slightly, but not enough to prevent an overall reduction in the number of international students. Enrolment in upper year humanities programs has increased. With continued strength in MFA enrolment, these positive developments in undergraduate enrolment means that King's is once more a university of more than 1,000 students which last occurred in 2015.

f) Preliminary Discussion of proposed approach on financial planning matters

The President addressed this topic, highlighting commitments to and directions from the Board of Governors to develop a plan B to address the financial deficits. Last spring, the focus became using internally restricted reserves (IRR) as the exclusive option for funding deficits.

He had been seeking feedback on how to develop a plan B, but proposes that we hold off on creating one for now. If the premise is that we cannot increase enrollment to mitigate the systemic deficit, we would essentially be looking at a spending reduction plan. Given the size of the university and the magnitude of the systemic deficit, such a plan would necessarily include significant job losses. Maintaining current objectives and service levels would be impossible with fewer staff, necessitating a reduction in functionality. He estimates that this plan could result in the elimination of 10 to 15 (possibly 20) positions, which would severely impact morale and distract from the ongoing work led by the Chief Enrollment and Student Life Officer to increase enrolment. This would also concern staff and students, leading to a reduction in support for students.

His recommendation is to place confidence in our current plan to increase enrolment for at least this fiscal year and reassess at the end of the fiscal year. The risk lies in potentially worsening our situation.

At the March 2024 meeting of the Board, the plan presented was for the President to take the lead in reducing the deficit by \$500,000 each year for the next two years. The President stated that he now believes this can be achieved (or come close to being achieved) for 2025-2026 under the current plan without resorting to drastic job cuts.

There is now a growing capacity to provide evidence-based enrollment projections from each September and throughout the recruitment cycle, and the current advertising efforts with m5 are unprecedented for us. We may need to reconsider reductions in future years once we better understand how the growing enrolment plan is performing.

As mentioned in the report in the meeting package, the President would also be taking the lead in developing a plan for “...reducing expenditures in the next two fiscal years on a more significant scale if enrolment increases fail to materialize “on the understanding that this would not be a budgetary plan but a plan to fundamentally restructure and reduce King’s to a mission and scale that corresponds with its available revenue”.

The President reiterated that he will be asking the Board not to move forward with the creation of a plan B at this time. Implementing this could have negative effects on morale, create anxiety, and we cannot assume that revenue will remain flat or stable if we reduce support through job eliminations. Decreases in enrollment and government funding are also potential concerns.

Lastly, while there was also an undertaking to establish a limit on how much we can draw from internally restricted funds to cover deficits, the President is now suggesting we explore other deficit financing options, including borrowing.

He spoke of the meeting of AAU presidents that he attended this morning, where it was noted that King’s has seen a 20% increase in first-year enrollment. In contrast, most other universities are experiencing significant declines. From 2012 to 2017, our enrollment dropped from 1,300 to just over 800, but we’ve now once again surpassed 1,000 students. Despite some fluctuations, we’ve had over 200 FYP students in three of the last four years. Our new expectations for first-year enrollment are set at above 220, rather than the previous 180 to 190. The success of our MFA programs has played a major role in the overall increase in enrolment.

Alongside this positive trend, there is a sense of optimism and confidence in our direction, and he recommends that we stay the course. We can reassess our situation in two to three years.

The Treasurer advised that she fully supports the President's recommendations. Reflecting on our discussions from last fall about developing multi-year strategies, we aimed to understand the root of the problem and identify effective solutions.

The only internal resource we can fully control is the internally restricted reserves (IRR). We need to plan for the potential consequences of depleting the IRR. This scenario would not only be damaging but would also send a negative message to our donors. If we exhaust our reserves, we will be merely covering a deficit rather than investing in our priorities. The data suggests that we should avoid or minimize using IRR to cover deficits. We need to explore alternative financing options, recognizing that there will be associated costs. We will conduct this analysis and expect to present our recommendations to FAR in October, outlining our rationale and budget plan for 2025/26 and beyond.

She is committed to investigating the most impactful solutions that require minimal financial resources.

The Secretary expressed her support for the recommendation, emphasizing the importance of not sending the wrong message, as it could undermine the Chief Enrolment and Student Life Officer's work. She asked if there is a way to signal that the December data will inform our decisions and whether there are other data points we should consider.

The President noted that the December budget estimates come with too many uncertainties, with significant changes possible between December and March, and he prefers not to rely on those.

From a budgeting perspective, he believes we should shift our focus from enrolment in specific programs to overall enrollment and therefore overall revenue, specifically from FYP enrollment to overall first-year enrollment and overall enrolment, considering all programs including upper year undergraduate and graduate. The future remains uncertain, but December data will provide first insight into overall enrollment and the revenue we can expect for the coming year.

The Chief Enrolment and Student Life Officer explained that predictive modeling examines key dates in the enrollment cycle to assess the health of different student pools. This process takes a couple of years to refine, and the size of the sample is crucial—King's small size complicates this. However, we should be able to identify a safe zone for meeting our enrollment targets. Of course, various external factors will also influence these predictions, but this approach is backed by solid mathematical methods.

1:49 – Break

1:56 – Meeting resumed

(2024:31) PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President asked for questions on his report provided in the meeting package. There were none.

The President of the KSU asked about the Black Cultural Centre Advisory Committee. The President spoke about his recent meeting with the Black Cultural Centre of Nova Scotia and their request to set up two committees, an advisory committee and a partnership committee.

(2024:32) GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RESOURCES AND NOMINATING BUSINESS AND CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair of Governance announced that new co-opted member Alexa Bagnell will be attending her first Board of Governors meeting in September. Additionally, Nevin French will join as an alumni representative, while Ian Stewart and Lisa Taylor will be attending their first meetings as faculty representatives.

She noted that there are several vacancies on various committees, and she is actively reaching out to fill these positions.

She also informed the Executive that Dale MacLennan will be stepping down as Treasurer of the Board, with Bruce Fisher proposed to take over the role. Dale will transition to a co-opted member of the Board of Governors and will also serve on the FAR Committee.

She also mentioned that there are some changes needed to the Blue Book. These include the inclusion of the new position of Chief Enrolment and Student Life Officer as well as another potential new position, and a President's evaluation process amendment. These will be forthcoming.

She shared the following motions she will present to the Board of Governors and moved they be recommended to the Board (Gray, Lahey)

That the Board accept the resignation of Dale MacLennan as Treasurer and appoint Bruce Fisher as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee until the next Annual Meeting of the Board; and

That the Board appoint Dale MacLennan as a Co-opted member of the Board and a member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

Carried

(2024:33) COMMITTEE BUSINESS AND UPDATES

There were none.

(2024:34) KING'S STUDENTS' UNION (KSU) REPORT

As the President of the KSU had no written report, they verbally updated on the following items. Orientation week went really well. She attended a meeting of the Mawaknutma'tnej Advisory Circle. Disclosure from the investment committee happened and she is happy for this. Students representatives on the Board are working on increasing student connections to the Board. They are also working on proposals for more Board outreach to students.

(2024:35) OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

(2024:36) *IN CAMERA (2:08 p.m.)*

MOTION: (Ruck/Gray) that the Board of Governors enter an *in camera* discussion. CARRIED.

The meeting moved to an *in camera* discussion at 2:08 p.m.

**MOTION: (Gray/Ruck) that the Board of Governors move out of the *in camera* discussion.
CARRIED.**

The meeting of the Board of Governors' Executive Committee was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Ruck

Jennifer Gray