

**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 Teams teleconference and in person on Monday, September 22, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Regrets</b>
ANDERSON	Ellie	(King's Students' Union President)		X
BURTON	Kathryn	(Diocesan Representative)	Teams	
CURRIE	Prof. Tim	(Vice-President)	X	
FISHER	Bruce	(Treasurer)	X	
LAHEY	Prof. William	(President and Vice-Chancellor)	X	
L'ESPERANCE	Peter	(Secretary)	X	
McGRATH	Stephanie	(Chair)	X	
TAYLOR	Prof. Lisa	(Faculty Representative)	Teams	
THORNHILL VERMA	Jennifer	(Alumni Association President)	Teams	
WRIGHT	Hugh	(Diocesan Representative)	X	

By invitation:

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Regrets</b>
ABBOTT	Adriane	(Advancement Director)	X	
HAZEL	Pamela	(Manager of Governance and University Ceremonies)	X	
MUTYABULE	Karen	(Director of Equity and Community Supports)	Teams	
SANDS	Bonnie	(Bursar)	Teams	
ULKUER	Kutay	(Chief Enrolment and Student Life Officer)	Teams	

At 3:02 p.m., the Chair called the meeting to order.

**(2025:29) INVOCATION**

The Chair began with a land acknowledgment and an invocation centered on reflection and gratitude. She welcomed everyone back and acknowledged that the year ahead will bring its challenges. She expressed appreciation for the time and commitment each person dedicates to the work of King's.

**(2025:30) NECROLOGY**

The Chair read the necrology, highlighting the passing of Mike Melski, a respected filmmaker and a friend of King's. A moment of silence was observed in his memory.

**(2025:31) CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair moved directly to the agenda.

**(2025:32) CONSENT AGENDA**

A Consent Agenda addressing the following matters was circulated:

- a) Approval of Minutes of June 19, 2025
- b) Reports from Officers:
  - i. President
  - ii. Vice-President
  - iii. Bursar
  - iv. CESLO
  - v. Advancement Director

**MOTION: (Lahey/L'Esperance) The Chair declared the consent agenda approved as presented for this meeting.**

**CARRIED**

**(2025:33) BUSINESS/DECISION ITEMS**

Business Items

**a) Update on financial situation and action plan**

The President provided a brief update on the financial situation, noting that while the format of the update may differ, the overall circumstances remain unchanged since the September 5, 2025, special meeting of the Board.

Conversations are happening regarding the mandate of the promised committee on cost-control measures. A meeting is planned later this week with the President, the Bursar, and Board members Nevin French, and Graham Flack, the latter of whom raised important points concerning the use of consultants. The President has drafted a preliminary report exploring the possibility of a salary freeze. A version of the draft was shared earlier today with a few colleagues for initial feedback. Once it is more fully developed, it will be shared with all employees for comment. He hopes to have a working draft ready for the October 2 Board meeting, while still remaining open to input from faculty and staff.

As for the fundraising report, it will be delayed, possibly until the December Board meeting.

The President noted that CONSUP (Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents) met last week, and it is clear that King's is not alone in facing serious financial challenges. This raises questions about what action the province may take, especially considering the broad authority it has granted itself.

The Chair asked whether the President required anything specific from the Board at this time. Bill responded that, given the remaining portion of the fiscal year, there is little immediate action to be taken. Outreach has already been made to the province, which has seen the contents of the recent communication sent to the community. Conversations are ongoing with government relations advisors about possible next steps.

The Bursar has conducted an analysis based on realistic revenue projections for the upcoming year. This includes allocating a percentage of that revenue to each department and program in a way that is proportionate to the percentage of overall spending that is made by each department and program. This will help to identify the location of the major funding gaps at the departmental and program level. Emerging patterns from this exercise are noteworthy. The Board's policy of moving toward a zero-based budgeting approach can be supported by this analysis, potentially guiding the budget process in the coming year.

It was asked whether any broader trends have emerged from discussions with other universities that might inform King's planning. Bill replied that enrolment is the primary concern across the sector. For example, Acadia has experienced significantly lower enrolment than anticipated for the second consecutive year. Nationally, Canadian universities are seeing far fewer international students than they are permitted to enroll under the cap that is reduced significantly from previous years. In Ontario, competition for domestic students is fierce, with universities competing aggressively to retain and attract domestic students to make up for the dramatic loss of international students.

The CESLO emphasized the steep challenges posed by declining international student numbers. Both Ontario and British Columbia are taking active measures to retain their students within their respective provinces. Institutions that can adapt quickly and demonstrate flexibility are more likely to succeed in this evolving landscape.

#### **b) Enrolment management: analysis of 2024-25 and planning for 2025-26**

The CESLO spoke to the report included in the meeting package, which reviewed the past year's enrolment and provided projections for the year ahead. He emphasized that current market conditions and evolving student expectations require a reassessment of our academic footprint.

In this challenging environment, attracting a significantly larger Foundation Year Program (FYP) cohort will be difficult. This raises a key question: if growth in FYP is unlikely, where should our recruitment efforts be focused? One possible area is the MFA program.

Retention remains a priority, and while a modest increase in FYP enrollment is projected, efforts are being made to strengthen recruitment strategies for students going into the second year and subsequent years. This includes involving faculty more directly in the communications and outreach process. There is cautious optimism that these efforts will yield results.

Going forward, predictions for year-over-year enrollment growth will be made with greater care, and application data will be closely monitored. Notably, 33% of last year's applications were never completed, a significant factor in enrollment outcomes.

He invited questions. There were none.

#### **c) Brand Development**

The CESLO provided an update on the new brand strategy and the accompanying brand book. This work has been led by m5, in collaboration with staff from the CESLO's office, including Kelly and her team. m5 is scheduled to present the strategy at the October 2 Board meeting.

The Chair asked whether fundraising was included in m5's mandate. The CESLO responded that, given the limitations of the current budget, fundraising was not within the scope of m5's work. However, the refreshed brand elements are expected to support and enhance related efforts over time.

The Director of Advancement added that while the project is not directly tied to fundraising, having a unified brand narrative ensures that everyone is telling the same story which will significantly support Advancement's communications and outreach.

The Chair suggested that Board members use consistent language from the brand strategy when sharing King's-related content on their personal social media platforms.

#### **d) Update on Reports on possible salary freeze and accelerated fundraising**

The President covered this in his previous reporting.

**e) Resolution authorizing increase in projected deficit spending**

The Treasurer noted the resolution came out of the recent FAR Committee meeting. He read the resolution. He asked for questions. There were none.

**MOTION: (Fisher; Wright) The Executive recommend to the Board the following resolution: Be it resolved that the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee recommends to the Board of Governors that, with respect to the Resolution of June 26, 2025, and the recent Special Meeting of the Board of Governors on September 5, 2025, and the current operating cash forecast of September 10, 2025, that the President is authorized to exceed the budgeted operating cash deficit of \$750,000, irrespective of the additional overall spending reduction of \$250,000.**

**CARRIED**

A member inquired about the potential impact of the DFA settlement on the King's budget. The President noted that official details have not yet been released. Projected increases for the current fiscal year are already incorporated in the projected deficit. He added that the financial impact over time will also depend on the Board's decision regarding a possible salary freeze.

Another question was raised about how the University's residence capacity might factor into the ongoing provincial review. The CESLO advised that the residence is currently operating at 100% capacity.

**(2025:34) GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RESOURCES, AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Chair of G, HR, and N noted that there are three motions coming out of the last meeting of the G HR & N Committee.

**Appointment of New Vice-Chair**

First is the recommendation that the Honourable Darrell Dexter be appointed as a co-opted member and Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors. After discussion, he read the motion.

**MOTION: (Fisher/McGrath) Upon the recommendation of the Governance, Human Resources and Nominating Committee, the Executive Committee recommends to the Board of Governors the appointment of the Honourable Darrell Dexter as a co-opted member and as Vice-Chair of the King's Board of Governors.**

**PASSED**

**Governance Manual**

Peter introduced the next item of business regarding the Governance Manual. He explained that the manual is intended to supplement existing policy documents (coloured books) as well as the legislation regarding university governance. The manual includes annual plans for each Board committee. He acknowledged that, to date, these annual plans have not been strictly followed. The Governance, Human Resources, and Nominating Committee (GHRNC) believes it would be beneficial for Board committees to adhere more closely to the manual going forward.

**Motion: (L'Esperance/Lahey)** The GHRNC recommends that the Executive Committee recommend to the Board of Governors the endorsement of a policy of more faithfully applying and adhering to the UKC governance manual. As a starting point, the GHRNC recommends that the UKC Board of Governors directs:

1. **The GHRNC to prepare a brief, written report to the board of directors itemizing the policies, practices, and safeguards within the governance manual that can be applied immediately and, in appropriate instances, with retroactive effect; and**
2. **The chairs of the various UKC board of governors' committees use best efforts to align annual committee reporting with the requirements described under the committee terms of reference within the governance manual.**

The Treasurer asked for more context regarding non-compliance. The Secretary cited the Code of Conduct as an example of an item that remains incomplete. The President noted that he would compile a summary on the matter and share it with Board members. The Secretary committed to revising the motion language before the Board meeting to include specific recommendations and a fuller explanation of where committees have not met expectations.

### **Motion Passed with Amendments**

#### **Reviving and Amending the terms of reference for the Equity Committee:**

MOTION: (McGrath/Lahey) The GHRNC recommends that the UKC Board of Governors endorse the revival of the Equity Committee (which is currently non-active) in a manner that aligns with UKC's existing partnerships, objectives, and administrative appointments in the equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility spaces.

After discussion the motion was amended as follows:

**MOTION: The GHRNC recommends that the UKC Board of Governors endorse the revival of the Equity Committee in a manner that aligns with the University of King's College's existing partnerships, objectives, and administrative appointments and to task the GHRNC to work with the Board and administration to (a) propose a committee membership and leadership structure, (b) coordinate preparing and submitting for Board approval any updates to the Equity Committee terms of reference, and (c) provide the Board with an overarching implementation plan for approval no later than May 25, 2025.**

#### **Passed as Amended**

The Secretary noted that he will be working with the Manager of Governance to develop a set of tools and resources to support governance practices. This will include a running list of Board motions and action items to track progress, a system for monitoring Board membership changes, and updated internal governance documents.

The Board Chair asked whether there was anything specific to be added to the onboarding process for new Board members. The Secretary responded that enhancements to onboarding will emerge naturally from the broader revisions to the governance documents, and he anticipates additional recommendations or content to be developed as that work progresses.

He invited further comments. There were none.

**(2025:35)      ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Chair of the Advancement Committee referred to her written report and provided a brief update. The committee met recently, with part of the discussion focused on the University's current financial situation.

Regarding the Future King's Campaign, \$11 million has been raised to date, leaving \$4 million to be secured in the coming months. While this represents significant progress, there is still considerable work ahead. Campaign brochures have been received, and Board members are invited to assist by reaching out to contacts in various cities to coordinate meetings with the President.

The committee welcomes ideas from Board members and encourages them to share the names of any potential donors who may be interested in supporting the campaign.

**(2025:36)      UPDATES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES****(2025:37)      VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The Vice-President referred to his written report, noting that the ongoing work stoppage at Dalhousie has required significant attention. A resolution is expected by tomorrow. As a result, the academic term may be extended by one week, and the exam schedule has been adjusted accordingly.

**(2025:38)      KING'S STUDENTS' UNION REPORT**

In the absence of the KSU President, there was no report.

**(2025:39)      PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The President referred to his written report included in the meeting package, noting that it addresses several significant and complex topics.

He highlighted that, in addition to the outreach initiatives already discussed, there will be a public unveiling event for the Southeast Corner Project in early November. The University is also preparing for its first major reporting on the bilateral agreement in the coming weeks. This will include both financial updates and progress reporting on the 16 goals outlined in the bilateral agreement. The President noted that King's is in good standing with most of these goals, thanks in large part to the work completed over the summer.

He also expressed appreciation for the recent report on the future relationship between Dalhousie and King's. While it is important to remain realistic about the challenges ahead, the President of Dalhousie has made strengthening the Dal-King's relationship a clear priority, which is an encouraging development.

Reflecting on the start of the academic year, the President described late August and September as a particularly joyful and busy time on campus, even with the labour disruption at Dalhousie underway. Last week, the University hosted two Matriculation ceremonies, followed by a Formal Meal attended by Their Honours, Michael Savage and Darlene Savage, a King's alumna. His Honour delivered a compelling address and spent time engaging with students after the meal.

The President also noted the recent first meeting of the advisory committee with the Black Cultural Centre which was marked by high levels of enthusiasm and shared purpose. Earlier today, the Mawaknutma'tnej Circle held its first meeting of the academic year. He emphasized the importance of the

Circle's continued support and guidance in shaping many recent initiatives at King's. A formal message from the Circle will soon be shared, confirming their support for the conceptual design of the Southeast Corner Project. There is also movement on the revitalization of the A&A Building foyer.

During the discussion, the CESLO added that moments of crisis can present new opportunities. He noted that the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Dalhousie has become increasingly open to conversations about how King's can be integrated as a value-added partner within the broader academic framework. In response to a question from the Chair about upcoming events that Board members should be aware of, the CESLO mentioned the upcoming Open House and encouraged members to help promote it by sharing social media posts. The President added that one simple but effective way Board members can support ongoing outreach is by following King's official Instagram account.

**(2025:40) OTHER BUSINESS**

There was none.

**(2025:41) *IN CAMERA***

The meeting moved to an *in-camera* discussion at 4:14 p.m.

**MOTION: (McGrath/L'Esperance) that the Board of Governors enter an *in-camera* discussion. CARRIED.**

**MOTION: (McGrath/L'Esperance) 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 4:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Stephanie McGrath

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Peter L'Esperance