

UNIVERSITY OF KING'S COLLEGE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING MINUTES

The University of King's College Board of Governors met by hybrid meeting (Teams/Boardroom) on Thursday, October 2, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.

Last Name	First Name	Title	Present	Regrets
ANDERSON	Ellie	(KSU Representative)	X	
BAGNELL	Alexa	(Co-opted Member)	X	
BRANDES	Daniel	(Faculty Representative)	X	
BURTON	Kathryn	(Diocesan Representative)	X	
CURRIE	Tim	(Vice-President)	X	
DAKIN	Pauline	(Faculty Representative)	Teams (in person at 2:30)	
DEANE-LITTLE	Debra	(Chancellor)		X
DEXTER	Darrell	(Co-opted) (Vice-Chair)	X	
EDWARDS	The Most Reverend David	(Archbishop of Fredericton)		X
FERGUSON	Rhema	(Diocese of Fredericton and PEI)		X
FERNANDO	Carolle	(Co-opted Member)	X	
FISHER	Bruce	(Treasurer)	X	
FLACK	Graham	(Co-opted Member)	Teams	
FRAPPIER	Melanie	(Faculty Representative)	X	
FRENCH	Nevin	(Alumni Association Representative)	X	
FYFE	The Right Reverend Sandra	(Bishop of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island)		X
HARRIS	Nick	(Alumni Association Representative)	Teams	
LAHEY	Prof. William	(President and Vice-Chancellor)	X	
L'ESPERANCE	Peter	(Board Secretary)	X	
MacLENNAN	Dale	(Co-opted Member)	Teams	
MARTIN	Catherine	(Co-opted Member)	Teams	
McGRATH	Stephanie	(Chair)	X	
PATTILLO	Stuart	(Co-opted Member)		X
SOREN	Andrew	(Alumni Association Representative)		X
TAYLOR	Lisa	(Faculty Representative)	X	
THORNHILL VERMA	Jenn	(Alumni Association President)	X	
WAUGH	Erica	(KSU Representative)	X	
WRIGHT	Hugh	(Diocesan Representative)	X	

By invitation:

Last Name	First Name	Title	Present	Regrets
ABBOTT	Adriane	(Advancement Director)	X	
DUKE	Jon	(m5)	Teams	
GILLIS HOGAN	Sam	(UKCTA)	Teams	
HAZEL	Pamela	(Manager of Governance and University Ceremonies)	X	
MUTYABULE	Karen	(Director of Equity and Community Supports)	X	
RUSSELL	Kertney	(m5)	Teams	
SANDS	Bonnie	(Bursar)	X	
ULKUER	Kutay	(Enrolment and Student Life Officer)	Teams	

At 1:03 p.m., the Chair called the meeting to order.

(2025:38) INVOCATION

The Chair opened the meeting with a land acknowledgment and recognition of the contributions made by the Black Nova Scotian community. She shared an invocation written by former Board Chair Doug Ruck, followed by an invitation for a moment of reflection and gratitude.

(2025:39) NECROLOGY AND REGRETS

The Chair read the Necrology and welcomed thoughts and comments from the members. She noted the passing of Mike Melski. A moment of silence was observed.

(2025:40) CHAIR REMARKS

The Chair welcomed the new alumni representatives, Andrew Soren and Nick Harris, along with new faculty representatives Pauline Dakin, Mélanie Frappier, and Daniel Brandes. She also welcomed non-voting member Karen Mutyabule, Director of Equity and Community Supports, and noted that Darrell Dexter, who is present, would be shortly recommended for approval as a co-opted member and Vice-Chair.

She thanked all members for their commitment to serving on the Board and shared her personal motivation for doing the same. She outlined her approach to leading meetings as Chair, emphasizing collaboration. She concluded by referring members to her report, which had been circulated in advance.

(2025:41) CONSENT AGENDA

A Consent Agenda addressing the following matters was circulated. The Chair asked if anyone wishes to have anything removed. There was no response.

Consent Agenda

- a) Approval of Minutes of:
 - a. May 8, 2025
 - b. June 25, 2025

- c. September 5, 2025
- b) Reports from Officers:
 - i. President
 - ii. Vice-President
 - iii. Bursar
 - iv. CESLO
 - v. Advancement Director

MOTION (Burton/Taylor): that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED

(2025:42) GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RESOURCES AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Governance, Human Resources and Nominating Committee presented the following motion for consideration. Mr. Dexter was asked to leave the meeting while the motion was being considered.

MOTION: (Frappier/Waugh) The Board appoints Darrell Dexter to the University of King's College Board of Governors as a co-opted member for a three-year term and as Vice-Chair for a one-year term.

CARRIED

Mr. Dexter returned to the meeting.

(2025:43) BUSINESS/DECISION ITEMS

a) Update on financial situation and action plan

The President reported that the projected \$1.8 million deficit previously shared with the Board in September remains unchanged.

He reminded members that the Board was informed in June of several measures being considered to address financial challenges. These measures were reiterated in a message to the community in August. Among them was the formation of a committee focused on cost control and broader strategies for achieving financial stability. A related step involved securing a consultant to support the committee's work.

Efforts to identify a suitable consultant included outreach to several well-known organizations. At the special Board meeting in September, two Board members raised important considerations regarding the selection of consulting services. They later discussed these further with the President, Treasurer and the Board Chair.

Following those discussions, the University reached out to Dr. Ron Bond, a retired literature professor and former Provost of the University of Calgary. Dr. Bond previously worked with King's in 2017-18, authoring a report on the financial arrangements between Dalhousie and King's. While a provisional agreement between Dalhousie and King's was reached at that time, the proposed changes were never implemented by Dalhousie. Dr. Bond has expressed strong interest in supporting King's once again. He is highly regarded, familiar with the institution, and committed to its success. Although a final agreement has not yet been reached, Dr. Bond has already submitted a draft work plan, and a follow-up conversation is scheduled.

The President stated the finalized work plan would be shared with senior officials at the Department of Advanced Education, providing them with an opportunity to offer input into the process.

During the discussion, questions were raised regarding the Dalhousie–King’s financial arrangement. The President and Bursar provided further context and information in response.

b) Enrolment Management: analysis of 2024-25 and planning for 2025-26

The Chief Enrollment and Student Life Officer (CESLO) referred the Board to his report on page 47 of the meeting package. He provided an overview of the 2025–26 enrolment results and outlined strategies being implemented to improve outcomes for the 2026 intake. These include the introduction of tools to better understand student behavior, which will support more effective enrolment planning in future years. He noted that this year has allowed for significant progress in updating the products used in his office and putting foundational systems in place.

The CESLO also highlighted the increasing competition for domestic students. He reported that residence is currently at full capacity, with 262 students housed. He added that the University does not anticipate any penalties related to the government’s bilateral holdbacks regarding residence.

The Chair encouraged Board members to support enrolment efforts by promoting King’s events through social media and leveraging their networks, including potential students and school counsellors. The CESLO noted the development of a brand strategy that includes a promotional toolkit designed for staff, faculty, and friends of the University to help raise awareness of King’s and its offerings.

A Board member pointed to a concern in the report about retention among King’s students taking upper year programs and asked how King’s plans to support students who are primarily taking classes at Dalhousie.

The CESLSO responded that retention efforts include both King’s students studying at King’s and those attending classes at Dalhousie. His team has shared plans with the VP and Program Directors of the strategies to engage students across both campuses. These efforts include promoting King’s upper-year programs at Dalhousie events and collaborating with Dalhousie’s Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) to feature King’s content in their newsletters, helping to raise awareness among Dal students about what King’s has to offer.

The Board member also raised the issue that the brand materials do not sufficiently address a common concern from students and parents: the perceived value of a humanities education. She asked whether there were plans to incorporate this into King’s promotional messaging.

The CESLO clarified that while the brand sets the foundation, it is the communication plan that delivers targeted messaging. Demonstrating the value of a humanities education, especially to students and their parents, will be a key part of that communication strategy.

A question was raised regarding retention, emphasizing the need to dig deeper into the data to determine the reasons retention has decreased. Various recent Dalhousie decisions and activities were discussed.

The CESLO shared that King’s staff have reached out individually to students who did not register this term to understand their reasons, ranging from scheduling conflicts to loss of interest. Given the disruption caused by the DFA actions, they are waiting for things to settle before finalizing upper-year enrollment figures. Once available, a detailed report will be submitted to the VP's office to provide a clearer picture of the situation.

It was suggested that providing historical retention data would be helpful to identify trends and better inform the Board's understanding. It was added that this data should be viewed alongside other metrics, such as changes in full-time enrolments, faculty teaching loads, and student-to-faculty ratios. This will help clarify whether students are leaving for Dalhousie or if other factors are at play, and what measures might support improved retention.

The President provided some historical context, noting that retention improved significantly from the low 50s in 2006 to the low 80s by 2020. Ideally, King's should aim for a 90% retention rate. A core challenge is that many students attend primarily for the Foundation Year Program (FYP). In 2015, recruitment efforts began to target both King's and Dalhousie more intentionally, though it's unclear if this shift directly caused the increase in retention. He emphasized that comprehensive data analysis is essential. The CESLO is working to build capacity for this within the Registrar's Office but acknowledged that current resources are limited and this work is time intensive.

c) Brand Development - m5

Kertey Russell and Jonathan Duke from m5 joined the meeting at 1:46 p.m. They were invited to speak about the work their firm has been doing with King's, specifically regarding both the marketing campaign and the broader brand strategy. Following introductions, they launched into a PowerPoint presentation that outlined their process and findings.

They acknowledged the inherent challenges of building a strong and distinctive brand in the context of higher education, a sector where many institutions rely on similar language and values. The process m5 undertook was typical of brand development: it began with extensive research, followed by stakeholder consultations, and was ultimately validated through engagement with the senior management, faculty, and staff.

At the core of their presentation was the concept of positioning, how King's presents itself and its values in a crowded academic landscape. They walked the group through the core components of the brand strategy, as presented in their deck. Throughout, they emphasized that while the strategy was broad and conceptual, it laid the groundwork for more specific messaging in future campaigns.

Discussion followed the presentation. The m5 team explained that the brand strategy was intentionally broad, designed to support the university's identity rather than define it entirely. It was one piece of a much larger communications strategy, which also included recruitment campaigns with more targeted, program-specific messaging, particularly for programs that are shared with Dalhousie.

President Lahey noted the need for a brand which provides a flexible path forward, one that not only reflects the diversity of students already at King's but also the many different reasons prospective students might choose to come. The brand, he reminded the group, is not a fixed or final statement. Rather, it is an evolving concept, something to be refined over time. In fact, he suggested that the very diffuseness of the brand, its openness and nuance, was part of what made it authentically King's. He described this work as an important starting point.

A Board member raised a final concern: in many of these conversations, there is a tendency to focus only on the students who are already here. What about those who aren't but could be? This, they argued, needs to be a more deliberate part of the brand's future direction. One of the m5 consultants agreed, noting that this is precisely the kind of work that should be pursued in the next phase of engagement.

The consultants were thanked for their presentation and the work done to date. They left the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

d) Updates on Reports of possible salary freeze and accelerated fundraising

The President provided an update on the status of the reports requested by the Board in June. He noted that neither report is yet ready for Board review.

A draft report on a potential salary freeze has been prepared, with significant contributions from the Bursar, whom he thanked. This draft was circulated to faculty and staff via the listserv yesterday, with a request for feedback by October 8. The President committed to sharing the responses and input received with the Board, possibly in verbal form.

Regarding the fundraising report, the Director of Advancement and the President have been leading the work. The Advancement Committee is scheduled to meet on October 9, and it is hoped that the Committee will be able to provide input at that time.

During the discussion, a member asked about the timeline for the salary freeze report. The President responded that they are considering holding a special meeting of the Board ahead of the scheduled December 4 meeting to discuss the report.

The Director of Advancement clarified that the Board's request was for raising unrestricted funding. She noted that donors rarely give to fully unrestricted funds, but it may be possible to secure support for initiatives currently funded through the operating budget.

e) Resolution authorizing increase in projected deficit spending

The Treasurer introduced the resolution from the FAR Committee, providing background information and explaining the rationale behind the motion.

MOTION (Burton/Taylor): 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

BREAK: At 2:21 p.m. the Board took a 10-minute break.

The meeting resumed at 2:33

(2025:44) GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RESOURCES AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Chair of the GHRN Committee continued with his report, noting that there were two remaining items he wished to address.

The first was the Governance Manual, which outlines policies and committee structures that have not always been followed precisely. He emphasized the need to examine these more closely and ensure greater alignment with established guidelines.

He then read the following motion into the record.

Motion #2: Governance Manual

Motion: (Frappier/Anderson): The Board directs the GHRNC to prepare a written report to the Board identifying (a) the areas of variation of Board practice from Governance Manual (as outlined in Board of Governors Governance Documents and Blue Book), (b) the policies, practices, and procedures within the Governance Manual that can and should be applied immediately and, in appropriate instances, with retroactive effect, and (c) the policies, practices, and procedures within the Governance Manual that should be amended or removed due to inconsistencies with the University of King's Colleges enabling legislation, other governance documents, or corporate governance structure.

CARRIED

Motion #3 Equity Committee

The Chair of GHRN provided context regarding the challenges the Equity Committee has faced over the past several years. To help address these issues, he presented the following motion.

Motion: (Verma/McGrath) to 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 propose a committee membership and leadership structure, which, working in concert with the Board, GHRNC, and administration, would be tasked with evaluating and proposing for Board approval updates to the Equity Committee mandate and terms of reference and an overarching implementation plan.

CARRIED

The Chair and the Board thanked the Governance Committee for their work.

(2025:45) ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Advancement Committee presented the Advancement Committee report, emphasizing the importance of their work, especially considering the Board's recent decision to draw more heavily on unrestricted funds to help stabilize the institution. She stressed the critical importance of 100% participation in giving among Board members and noted that \$312,000 had been raised since the last Board meeting.

Work continues on the Future King's Campaign, which has raised \$11 million to date, with \$4 million remaining to reach the goal.

She also mentioned that the annual giving plan is in its final draft stage.

The Director of Advancement provided an update on the communications piece, which include a stronger focus on donor storytelling. Numerous events are being held to support the building of the King's brand as well as fundraising efforts. The annual stewardship report has been published which is a key tool in donor relations, as it publicly acknowledges and thanks donors while showing the impact of their gifts. She noted that additional contributions are anticipated and hopes to provide updates soon. The President is also scheduled to attend a series of meetings across the country, which may generate further support.

The Alumni Office continues to host virtual "Nostalgia Nights," with a recent event themed around the 1950s.

The Advancement Committee Chair encouraged Board members with connections in cities such as Toronto, Ottawa, and Calgary to share information about upcoming events with their networks. The Director of Advancement will provide further details on these events to the Board.

The Director of Advancement also invited Board members to send her the names of individuals they believe could be approached as potential donors.

A Faculty representative thanked the Advancement team for their efforts and shared an example of how even restricted donations can make a significant impact, citing a conference funded by restricted gifts that eventually led to the creation of the Medical Humanities program.

(2025:46) UPDATES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

The President of the Alumni Association announced that the first meeting of the academic year will take place on October 7, which will also be her first as President. She emphasized her aim to strengthen alumni engagement.

The Alumni Association President also mentioned they are seeking a King's alum with a background in finance and encouraged anyone with relevant expertise to come forward.

(2025:47) VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Vice-President referenced his report in the meeting package. The work stoppage at Dalhousie has ended as of last Tuesday. This resulted in the final group of King's professors (Carnegie professors) returning to the classroom.

He asked for questions. There were none.

(2025:48) KSU UPDATE

The KSU President noted that Orientation Week was a great success, and efforts are underway to maintain that positive momentum. Nominations are currently open, with elections approaching soon. The King's Students' Union played an active role in supporting students during the recent Dalhousie faculty lockout, including hosting a Q&A session with King's faculty and representatives from the DFA. They are also backing the DSU in its call for tuition refunds in light of the disruption.

Over the summer, KSU representatives met with student support officers to plan for the year ahead. One major concern that has since emerged is the cancellation of the notetaker program at Dalhousie, which has had a significant impact on students who rely on this accommodation. The change was not communicated to students in advance, and faculty are now being asked to record their lectures, raising concerns about intellectual property and placing added pressure on both faculty and students.

Yesterday, the KSU President visited the Accommodations Office at Dalhousie to ask questions about the decision. She was told that the office had made the choice to cancel the program and was advised to use AI to generate notes from lecture recordings. A suggestion she found inadequate. The hope is that Dalhousie will reinstate the notetaker program. If that does not happen, she expressed a desire for King's to consider offering the service independently.

(2025:49) PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President referred to his written report. He emphasized that it's important for the Board to be aware of the options for increasing the number of King's students taking upper-year courses at King's. He also

highlighted the ongoing challenges the King's and Dalhousie face in collaborating on academic matters. It's a bureaucratic minefield, with complex approval processes required at King's, Dalhousie, and MPHEC.

The task force created by him and Dr. Brooks has submitted a report, which may present an opportunity for deeper collaboration between the two institutions. Many of the report's themes echo the discussions held today.

Regarding the Bilateral Agreement: there are 21 outcomes we must achieve in order to maintain our funding. We are required to report on each of these priorities over the next two years. We continue our work on indigenization, reconciliation, and engagement with the African Nova Scotian community.

We are also working on increasing the number of for-credit courses in experiential learning. The deadline for this submission is October 15. Additionally, we must provide the province with an update on our financial situation by the same date.

King's was the first university to sign an agreement with the PREP Academy, and we've continued to build strong relationships with the African Nova Scotian community. These partnerships are essential for demonstrating progress on provincial priorities and for meeting our reporting requirements.

On November 17 (4:30–6:00 p.m.), the Southeast Corner Project will be showcased in the King's gym. Significant work is underway to organize and secure external support for the project. We have the backing of the Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities, as well as Dalhousie. We now need to engage potential donors.

Regarding equity: the Equity Committee will be reconstituted as part of a broader update to the Equity Policy, which is currently outdated. Under the obligations of the Scarborough Charter, we are also required to develop and adopt an action plan. The proposal is to use the Board's Equity Policy as the foundation for establishing the committee that will both review the policy and create the action plan.

We are also working with government relations advisors to seek provincial funding for a proposed Screenwriting program. This would require approvals from King's, Dalhousie, and MPHEC. If successful, the program would bring in 20 additional students per year. Securing seed funding for this initiative is a key component of our broader fundraising efforts. We hope this also contributes to strengthening our relationship with the provincial government, which has shown interest in supporting the film industry in Nova Scotia.

(2025:50) PRESIDENT'S PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS

MOTION (Lahey/Wright): that the Board approve the appointments and reappointments as set out in the President's Personnel Recommendations.

CARRIED.

(2025:51) OTHER BUSINESS

There was none

(2025:52) *IN CAMERA*

The meeting moved to an *in camera* discussion at 3:47 p.m.

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

**MOTION: (Lahey/French) that the Board of Governors accept President's recommendation on the question of the award of tenure to Dr. Laura Penney as set out in a tenure decision memo issued to the Board of Governors dated October 2, 2025
CARRIED**

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

(2025:53) ADJOURNMENT

MOTION (McGrath/Burton) To adjourn the meeting.

CARRIED

The meeting of the Board of Governors was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie McGrath

Peter L'Esperance