

MINUTES

BOARD OF GOVERNORS —SPECIAL OPEN MEETING

Thursday, March 30, 2023 – 3:30 – 5:00 pm
ECU Boardroom (D2315) + Zoom webinar

ATTENDANCE:

Voting Members:

Carleen Thomas (Chancellor)	Don Avison, K.C.	Lindsay McIntyre
Keith Kerrigan (Chair)	Mary Macaulay	Alex Phillips
Lorcan O'Melinn (Vice-Chair)	Esther Rausenberg	Stephanie Schneider
Gillian Siddall (President + Vice Chancellor)	Keith Reynolds	Ishika Tripathi

Regrets: Gaye Fowler

Resource/Staff: Trish Kelly (Vice President, Academic + Provost), Viktor Sokha (Vice President, Finance + Administration), Michael Douglas (Executive Director, Financial Services), Adrian Tees (Associate Vice President, Human Resources), Natasha Himer (University Secretary), Bessie Chow (Recording Secretary), Holly Lewis (Assistant, University Secretary & President's Office), Alex Muir (IT)

Guests: None

Territorial Acknowledgement: *We respectfully acknowledge that Emily Carr University is situated on the unceded, traditional and ancestral territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.*

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1. **Call to Order** — K. Kerrigan, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m.

At the Chair's invitation, Board member L. McIntyre provided a territorial acknowledgement and shared reflections.

2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

MOVED / SECONDED that the Agenda of the Board Special Meeting – Open Session of March 30, 2023 be approved as circulated.

VOTING EXCLUDED

A request was made to add "Other Business" to the agenda for an opportunity to present two additional items. Following a discussion, where it was noted that this is an irregular meeting with the primary purpose of approving the 2023-24 Budget, a motion to amend was put forth.

MOVED / SECONDED to amend the tabled motion with the addition of Other Business to the agenda, time permitting.

AMENDMENT CARRIED

MOVED / SECONDED that the Agenda of the Board Special Meeting – Open Session of March 30, 2023 be approved as amended.

CARRIED

II. BUSINESS

1. Chair's Update and Remarks

K. Kerrigan thanked staff and the Finance + Audit Committee members for their work on the 2023-24 Budget and stated he looked forward to a good discussion during this meeting. He then reported on the Board's election during its closed session of Don Avison, K.C., as incoming Board Chair, effective upon K. Kerrigan stepping down in the next month or so. D. Avison's qualifications and leadership experience were recognized.

Vice-Chair, L. O'Melinn, and President + Vice-Chancellor, Dr. G. Siddall, thanked K. Kerrigan for his service to the Board and ECU community.

2. President's Update and Remarks

President G. Siddall noted that since this is not a regular Board meeting, she will not be giving a formal report, though she provided updates on the following:

- The Task Force, co-chaired by faculty members C. Badke and J. Andreyev, and Visual Arts student-now-alumni, E. Jantzen, will be finalizing the draft action plan and a presentation may be brought forward to the Board in due course.
- Consultations under the Strategic Planning process are nearing completion and work has turned to reviewing the results and shaping core themes. An update will be brought forward to the Board.
- The federal budget was released earlier in the week with significant investment in student assistance, but no increases in support for curiosity-driven research nor for graduate student scholarships. As a member of Universities Canada, Dr. G. Siddall will be joining efforts to bring attention to the importance of support for higher education, research, and innovation.
- Board members were reminded of the convocation ceremony date and encouraged to attend.

3. Approval of 2023/24 All Funds Budget

L. O'Melinn, Chair of the Finance + Audit Committee, stated the Committee's strong recommendation of the proposed 2023/24 All Funds Budget for the Board's approval, noting that the budget addresses two key structural concerns with respect to the University's current financial position: revenue generation and cost containment. The Committee was particularly satisfied with Management's preparation of the Deficit Mitigation Plan (DMP) and work with the Ministry. The Budget was further described as moving away from short-term planning to address the longer-term needs of the University. The Ministry's support for ECU was highlighted in the government's verbal commitment of \$2 million in one-time funding and an additional \$680K in capital funding for two animation labs. The Committee also noted the consultation efforts that were undertaken, and an improvement from past practice. Appreciation was expressed for staff's efforts to move up the budgeting process to better align with other public institutions as well as with Ministry timelines. It was noted that the revised timeline will allow staff and Management to better prepare for the September intake. Thanks were directed, including to the Academic and Finance teams, whose strong collaborative relationship was felt by the Committee. L. O'Melinn also recognized government for the ongoing support.

V. Sokha, Vice-President, Finance + Administration, expressed thanks to L. O'Melinn and the Committee as well as to the Finance and Academic Teams. He highlighted that the proposed

2023-24 All Fund Budget's deficit of \$470,558 and Operating deficit of \$1.036 million were approved by the Ministry. He emphasized the significance of the Ministry's support for ECU as demonstrated by the one-time funding and additional capital funding. The depletion of the University's accumulated surplus was underlined as an intentional action under the three-year DMP, with anticipated regrowth following the third year. Finally, the revised budget timeline was justified by its impact on planning, projects, and the consultation process.

M. Douglas led the Board through a review of the budget package as provided in the meeting materials.

President G. Siddall shared discussion points from the Senate and Senate Budget Committee meetings since November 2022. Key themes included the importance of a well-informed understanding of student needs, including how and what type of support is required; the wish of some senators to increase the allocation of operational funds for student awards to ensure sufficient support for students impacted by tuition fee increases; the desire for a greater level of detail or alternate presentation of financial information to enable a more holistic understanding of the relationships between different funds; and interest in continued improvements in community engagement.

Questions and comments were received from the Board. It was noted that ECU, like many institutions in BC, is significantly dependent on tuition from international students with domestic students subsidized by provincial grants. A request was made for comparative figures between administrative and faculty salary growth over the years and relative to other institutions. There was a discussion about the challenges ECU faces in talent recruitment in competition with other institutions and industries, especially with respect to economies of scale, evolving technology and other market factors. In response to questions. The importance of strategic investments to balance growth while reducing the deficit was underlined as a key element of the DMP's Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM). Management noted the government's awareness of ECU's lean operations. A request was made for additional breakdowns between salaries and other expenses in each area to help clarify human resources versus operational costs. In response to a question, Management clarified that the number of faculty hires included in the budget reflects estimates based on the timing of hires in accordance with known and expected retirements. Management also clarified that the estimated 5% in excluded wage benefits was included on the assumption that the provincial government would not be covering the anticipated increase. Finally, Management stated that there are no plans for additional tuition fee increases with an impact on current students, except for the regular 2% increase for domestic students.

MOVED / SECONDED that the Board of Governors approve the 2023/2024 All Funds Budget, based on \$2M in one-time funding from the Ministry.

In response to a question, Management clarified the expected depletion of the accumulated surplus as part of the DMP. It was noted that the \$2M in one-time funding has been confirmed by the Ministry; however, additional funds may become available through other means, such as the \$680K in capital funding. V. Sokha expressed his confidence in the Ministry's support for ECU. In response to other questions, Management clarified the funding for Research projects versus operations from Special Grants versus Operations, and the differences between Instruction and Instruction Support under the Operations and Capital Fund budgets.

MOTION CARRIED

III. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Query on FOI Request

A question was raised about a Freedom of Information (FOI) report. A. Tees, Associate Vice President, Human Resources, confirmed the call was not initiated by anyone from the University community.

2. Honorary Doctorate Recipient Nettie Wild

A Board member shared that documentary filmmaker Nettie Wild, 2021 recipient of an ECU Honorary Doctorate Degree, was recently awarded a 2023 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts on Tuesday, March 28.

IV. NEXT MEETING

The next Regular Meeting – Open Session of the Board is scheduled for April 27, 2023.

V. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 pm.