

## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY**

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APPROVED minutes of the open session of the 260<sup>th</sup> regular meeting of the Board of Governors of Athabasca University held virtually on Friday, December 9, 2022.

**Present:** Byron Nelson (Chair), Peter Scott, Leo de Bever, Don Gnatiuk, Dan Leckelt, Terry Lovelace, Mike Lovsin, Lori Van Rooijen, Wilfred Willier, Elena Gould, Jacqueline Hobal, Roger Morrill, Martha Cleveland-Innes, Richard Huntrods, Liam Connelly, Karen Fletcher, Chris Edwards and Dur-E-Najaf Syed

**Governance Staff:** Sara Kunto (Chief Governance Officer and General Counsel) and Barbara Kowalchuk (Recording Secretary)

**Others Present:** Matthew Prineas, Jennifer Shaeffer, Kristine Williamson, Charlene Polege, Gilbert Perras and David Head

**Absent with Regrets:** Larry Spagnolo

### **Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m. having achieved quorum followed by the delivery of the AU land acknowledgement.

### **1.0 Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda**

**260-01 MOVED** That the Board of Governors approves the open session agenda for meeting 260, and thereby approves the consent agenda including the open session minutes of meeting 258, held September 23, 2022, as presented.

**Fletcher /Scott**

**Carried**

### **2.0 Conflict of Interest Declaration**

Subject to the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Guidelines for the Board of Governors, members were asked to declare any conflict they may have with respect to particular agenda items contained within the meeting agenda.

No conflicts were declared.

### **3.0 President's Discussion and Analysis**

#### **3.1 Board Member and Executive Team Introduction Session**

This being the first open session meeting of the Board since the recent public member appointments, the members of the Board and Executive each introduced themselves and provided a brief background about their skills, experience and other attributes.

## **4.0 Presentations/Information Sessions**

### **4.1 Athabasca University Students Union Presentation: Tuition, Competition and Quality: A Student Impact Assessment**

Member Fletcher, President, Athabasca University Students Union, introduced members of AUSU that were also present at the meeting, and provided a presentation in support of the AUSU Report entitled "Tuition, Competition and Quality: A Student Impact Assessment.

Following the presentation the members discussed the uniqueness of the Athabasca University student base, the current funding model, course/program quality, development and value, price sensitivities, the student experience, as well as recruitment and retention of learners.

## **5.0 President's Discussion and Analysis**

### **5.1 Discussion and Analysis**

Further to the President's report as contained in the package provided to members in advance of the meeting, the President highlighted the following

- Currently in the last phase of IMAGINE strategy - culminated a few weeks ago in the release of the new Integrated Learning Environment which is our technical platform and will enable data and change forward
- Focusing now on a consultative process in support of developing the platform for the new strategy moving forward
- Provided overview of anticipated timelines for the development and approval of the new strategy for Athabasca University (2023-2030)
- Confirmed that a working group has been struck to review student fees

Although not part of the President's Report, the Board Chair noted the recent announcement regarding the hybrid format for convocation 2023 and requested further information after having received a number of complaints from members who are also community members. The President, and Vice President University Relations, informed members that this pilot hybrid model was conceptualized based on the success of the virtual convocation and incorporating an in-person learner experience. Following learner consultation and input, the decision was made earlier in the summer to host the in-person portion of the pilot hybrid convocation in Edmonton to allow for the most inclusive experience possible for the learners. Homecoming for its part has been planned for recent alumni (graduates) and their families to travel together to the Town of Athabasca the day after convocation affording the Town and the University the opportunity to showcase the community for a full day, all the while ensuring that the learners experience the kind of convocation they have requested of AU and have come to expect from AU.

Members of the Board who are also members of the Athabasca Town, County and Region voiced their displeasure and lack of appreciation that Edmonton was chosen for the in-person portion of the pilot hybrid convocation and more specifically, that the

Town of Athabasca was not the chosen location for the convocation ceremony and this, given the IMA which was signed just over a week ago. The members queried details regarding the operational reasons which lead to the decision to hold the in-person portion of the event in Edmonton rather than the Town of Athabasca and requested further information on future planning of the event, specifically how the Athabasca community would be involved and if the University would be holding future convocation ceremonies in the Town of Athabasca. It was noted that future planning would evolve from the results of this year's convocation in terms of success and engagement both in respect of the convocation ceremony and the Athabasca homecoming. Learner feedback shall be solicited and underpin the decision making for future convocation ceremonies as was the case for 2023.

Further discussion took place in respect of community relations and communication.

## **6.0 Action, Information / Discussion Items**

### **6.1 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Variance & Year-End Forecast Report**

The President and Director, Strategic Initiatives and Performance Services presented this item providing an overview of the key drivers behind the second quarter results and year-end projections.

### **7.0 Business Arising from the Consent Agenda - None**

### **8.0 Board Chair Report and Closing Comments**

The Board Chair thanked the members for their participation in the discussions. He noted that requests had been made for future meetings to include a standing In Camera session.

### **9.0 Adjourn**

The open session of Meeting 260 was adjourned at 11:46 a.m.