

**Cape Breton University  
Board of Governors  
Public Meeting**

**Friday, March 7, 2025**

**Following Prologue**

**Board of Governors Conference Room – CE339 / MS Teams**

**1 – 5 Opening Information/Discussion**

**1. Roll Call**

**Present:**

Ms. Denise Allen (Chair), Mr. Kirk Mac Rae (Vice Chair) Mr. David Dingwall (President), Mr. Gordon MacInnis (Treasurer), Dr. Rod Nicholls (Secretary), Ms. Harsimran Kaur Antaal, Dr. Sahand Ashtab, Dr. Matthias Bierenstiel, Ms. Melissa Deane, Dr. PJ Devereaux, Dr. David Gerbasi, Ms. Ava Graham, Mr. Michael Henick, Ms. Sarah Hines, Mr. Rany Ibrahim, Mr. Adam Jamieson, Mr. Terry Kelly, Ms. Lori Kennedy, Mr. Brett MacDougall, Mr. Keith Maher, Mr. Olabode Peters Olaniran, Ms. Monette Pasher, Ms. Nancy Samson, Ms. Harman Singh, Ms. Ann Sylliboy, Mr. Steve Wadden

**Regrets:**

Mr. Michael Claener, Ms. Sophia Butler-Doucette, Mr. Kendrick Douglas, Ms. Sandra Kanchuk, Mr. Ian Parker, Mr. Bill Smith

Quorum was declared, and the meeting was called to order at 11:45 am.

Ms. Allen acknowledged that Cape Breton University is located in Unama'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people, who are acknowledged as the past, present, and future caretakers of this land. Our relationship is based on a series of Peace and Friendship treaties between the Mi'kmaq Nation and the Crown, dating back to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. We recognize that "We are All Treaty People." She also acknowledged that people of African descent have been in Nova Scotia for over 400 years, and we honour and offer gratitude to those ancestors of African descent who came before us to this land.

Unfortunately, Mr. Douglas was unable to attend the meeting, but for the purposes of the minutes, Ms. Allen asked that it be noted that originally from Whitney Pier and was presented with the 2025 Tom Miller Human Rights Award at the African Heritage Month Gala on February 1<sup>st</sup> at the Membertou Trade and Convention Center. This prestigious award honours the legacy of Tom Miller and recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of human rights, equality, and justice in the community. Kendrick Douglas was recognized for his remarkable contributions to human rights and community advocacy. Mr. Douglas has built a career focused on justice, inclusion and youth empowerment as legal counsel for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, and he works to ensure fairness and equity for those facing discrimination.

Ms. Allen then welcomed new member Dr. Matthias Bierenstiel as the new Senate representative, replacing Dr. Janke Khunke and Ms. Monette Pasher, who is attending her first meeting.

President Dingwall then acknowledged that March 8<sup>th</sup> is International Women's Day. A day recognized worldwide as a day to raise awareness and celebrate women's achievements. He noted that CBU does not have to look very far to find high-achieving women to celebrate at CBU, among them, our board chair, senior leadership, well-regarded faculty members, and support staff who are vital to the operation of CBU. He acknowledged all women and thanked them for their commitment and contributions to Cape Breton University.

## **2 Minutes**

**2.1 - It was moved** by Mr. MacInnis, seconded by Mr. Maher, to approve the Public Minutes of December 5, 2024. **Motion carried.**

## **3 Business Arising**

Ms. Allen also noted that during the Executive Committee, members were reminded that all meetings of the CBU Board of Governors adhere to the Chatham House rules and a certain level of privacy is expected in order to have an open dialogue, and any recording of these discussions is strictly prohibited. An update to the code of ethics will be recirculated for execution.

**It was moved** by President Dingwall, seconded by Mr. Kelly, to amend the Code of Ethics to reflect this change. **Motion carried.**

## **4 Reports**

### **4.1 Report of the Senate**

Mr. Henick reported that the Senate has met four times since the last Board meeting. He highlighted from the report the Planning and Review Committee's recommendations to the Budget Advisory Committee.

### **4.2 Report of the Students' Union**

Ms. Harsimran Kaur Antaal referred to the circulated report and highlighted the following:

- The Caper Cafe grand opening is scheduled to coincide with Women's Week.
- Applications for International and Indigenous Scholarships for Winter 2025 are now open.
- Planning is underway for Multicultural Creative Arts Week, which will showcase student talents and cultural expressions.

- The General Elections for the 2025-2026 academic year have concluded. There was significant student participation, and Rebecca Seymour and Harsimran Kaur Antaal were elected as the new Executive Vice President and President.
- A canteen store is expected to open at the Canada Games Complex, which is a wonderful initiative supporting and contributing to the Forever CBU Campaign.
- Rebecca Seymour, the Vice President of Student Services, has been actively organizing various workshops on essential topics to support students.
- On March 27<sup>th</sup> a Student Research Poster Showcase & Academic Appeal Info Session will take place.
- Guard.Me has donated \$4,100 to the Students' Union, which has been allocated as gift card giveaways in partnership with CBU Chaplaincy, the Foodbank Specialized Support Program, and the Hello Baby Program.
- During Students Nova Scotia Advocacy Week, Olabode Peters Olaniran and Rebecca Seymour represented CBUSU, ensuring student concerns were addressed in key provincial discussions.
- The Women's Centre has expanded its initiatives, with the introduction of a dedicated Women's Centre locker and products available in various departments throughout the campus for easy student access.
- A successful Healthy Living Week was held which featured a free breakfast cosponsored with Alumni Association giveaway, a puppy room, an annual health fair, pottery painting, yoga, and fitness classes. Additionally, the Pride Week events included a MythBusters Panel, a Pride Dance, a Pottery Night, and Tile Painting, all of which were highly successful and well-received by students.
- The Food Bank service has been restructured, which was deemed important in the face of this initiative being looked at as a free grocery program to include a Basic Package Program and a specialized Support Program.
- A recent Ski Trip to Cape Smokey saw great success, with nearly 40 students participating.
- The Union had an opportunity to work on our strategic plan for the remainder of the term.

### **4.3 Special Announcements, Questions**

#### **4.4 Report of the President's Report**

President Dingwall referred to his circulated report and highlighted the following:

- The Succession Planning process has begun with an outside firm.
- The unveiling of the logo for women's hockey will take place at Membertou on March 9th.
- Due to several unforeseen delays, the official grand opening of the CBU Med Campus will be delayed to October 31<sup>st</sup>.
- CBU's Early Childhood Centre has grown from 34 to 104 spaces.
- Designs of the CDI are expected by the end of the month, and it will be put out to tender at that time.
- Several discussions have taken place with various levels of government with regard to the Tartan Downs project, and an announcement with regard to funding is likely to take place soon.

## 5 Financial Report

Mr. MacInnis referred to the Treasurer's Report circulated with the meeting package. Responding to comments and questions as they arose, he highlighted the following:

- CBU's cash position, while somewhat reduced, remains very healthy thanks to capital financing received from the Province of Nova Scotia, deposits from international students seeking to study at CBU, and CBU reserve balances. The cash management strategy consists of a series of laddered GIC's and favorable banking treasury agreements with a goal of optimizing interest earnings while maintaining fluidity of cashflow. Interest earnings are declining as available rates are now below 4%.
- The Prepaid Student Deposit balance continues to decline and are a reflection of both reduced application volume for 2025/26 and the discontinuance of the IRCC Study Direct Student Visa processing Stream that required tuition prepayment of upwards of \$20,000 per student.
- The student accounts receivable balance remains high but is showing signs of stabilizing. Collections have occurred during the first three weeks of February. The allowance for uncollected accounts is sufficient to offset all receivables greater than one year old while also providing a level of coverage on current year receivables. An adjustment to the allowance balance is planned as part of year-end closing procedures.
- The requirement that Cape Breton University provide evidence of submitting a building permit to CBRM to build additional residence capacity (300 additional beds) by February 15, 2025. Following discussion with provincial officials as to the merits of constructing additional student housing at this time and government expectations of CBU, the required building permit application was submitted. Further discussion is planned before any further action to build housing capacity is confirmed on the part of CBU. Mr. MacInnis added that this is not something CBU is considering or suggesting with the expected decline in enrolment.
- Book value of investments held by CBU for residence replacement, endowment, and special purposes totals \$73,905,000 (2024 - \$63,949,000). The January 31, 2025, market value of investments totals \$64.0 million, with an additional \$10.1 million held in cash reserves at present. The reported book value reflects ongoing fundraising efforts, deposits to endowments, and realized gains/income distribution on investments.
- A newly implemented policy on forfeited student deposits reflects an administrative fee withholding of \$500 from accepted students who do not subsequently attend CBU.
- Work pursuant to the 2023 Major Capital Program continues. Cost certainty is at a high level for 50% of the planned capital spend, with continued potential risk for the \$120 million CDI project. Progress continues on the Forever CBU campaign, which has now reached 60% of its goal. By March 31, 2025, the risk mitigation framework in place for the 2023 Capital Program will generate sufficient financial capacity to offset known cost escalation/scope increase for the program.

- Reported expenditures are materially in line with what would be expected as part of CBU's normal business cycle and approved 2024/25 operating budget.

## 6 Committee Reports

### 6.1 Executive Committee

Ms. Allen reported that the Executive Committee met on March 6<sup>th</sup> when the Committee approved the agenda items for the meetings today. All items discussed at that meeting were covered by agenda items.

### 6.2 Audit Committee

Mr. MacRae reported that the Audit Committee met on March 6<sup>th</sup> where they were joined by Mr. Chiasson from MNP. Mr. Chiasson laid out the Audit Service Plan, and their findings will be presented during the June meeting.

## 7 Items Requiring Action/Decision

### 7.1 President's Contract Extension

Referring to the circulated memo, Ms. Allen noted that on January 20, 2025, President Dingwall provided notice to the Presidential Review Committee that he wishes to renew his appointment at CBU for an additional two years. The President's current term ends on March 30, 2026; therefore, the requested extension would extend his contract to March 30, 2028.

A recommendation from Presidential Review Committee was unanimously accepted by the Executive Committee and is now being presented to the Cape Breton University Board of Governors for consideration to extend the appointment of David C Dingwall as President and Vice Chancellor of Cape Breton University until March 30, 2028, with all other terms and conditions of his employment agreement remaining the same.

**It was moved** by Dr. PJ Devereaux, seconded by Ms. Nancy Sampson, that:

#### **WHEREAS**

- A. Pursuant to a Renewal and Amending Agreement dated September 30, 2022 (the "**2022 Renewal Agreement**"), the appointment of David C. Dingwall, P.C., K.C., ICD.D, as the President & Vice-Chancellor of Cape Breton University (the "University"), was renewed from March 31, 2023 to March 30, 2026;
- B. The 2022 Renewal Agreement provided that President Dingwall's appointment may be renewed for a further two (2) year term upon mutual agreement in writing between the Board and David C. Dingwall prior to the expiry of that term, and upon the President giving notice of his desire to renew, no later than March 30, 2025;
- C. On January 20, 2025, President Dingwall provided notice in writing to renew his

appointment for a further two years;

- D. The Presidential Review Committee has considered the President's request and believes it is in the best interests of CBU to renew President Dingwall's appointment for an additional two years, noting:
- I. President Dingwall's tenure has been marked by growth and change in the face of unexpected and unprecedented challenge;
  - II. President Dingwall successfully navigated the University through the COVID-19 pandemic, and is currently managing the impact of federal government changes to the international student system;
  - III. It is in the best interests of the University to maintain President Dingwall's leadership at this time, and allow him to continue to lead with a steady hand and a plan for financial prudence and strategic development;
  - IV. The 2024 Presidential Review found that President Dingwall has established a foundation that aligns with the long-term strategic objectives of the University, particularly in strengthening resilience, fostering inclusivity, and building sustainable resources for future growth, and noted the following achievements:
    1. Financial Oversight and Post-COVID Funding Stabilization;
    2. Medical Campus Advocacy and Affordable Housing Initiatives;
    3. Successful Collective Bargaining and Contract Settlements; and
    4. Advancement of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

**MOTION:**

That the Cape Breton University Board of Governors extend the appointment of David C. Dingwall, P.C., K.C., ICD.D, as President and Vice-Chancellor of Cape Breton University until March 30, 2028, with all other terms and conditions of his employment agreement remaining the same.

**Motion carried. Abstentions: 7**

**7.2 CBU Alumni Association Review Committee**

Ms. Allen noted that President Dingwall contacted her to ask for the Board's assistance in considering whether the CBU Alumni Association, as a separate entity, is the best way to structure CBU's relationship and engagement with alumni. Other universities and institutions have considered this as well. The Board was asked to convene an ad hoc committee to review this. Draft Terms of Reference were circulated with the meeting material, and the committee's purpose will be to assess the effectiveness of the Cape Breton University Alumni Association and recommend a structure for alumni relations at CBU. Committee members will include Board members, Alumni Association members, external members and CBU staff. The following were suggested as members of the committee: Mr. Bill Smith, Ms. Lori Kennedy, Ms. Valerie Sampson, Ms. Sara Hines, Mr. Robert Sampson, Ms. Sara Salter-Burke and Mr. Mark Inglis. **It was moved** by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Maher, that the Board convene an ad hoc committee to assist in the effectiveness of the Cape Breton University Alumni Association and

recommend a structure for alumni relations at CBU with the terms of reference as circulated and the suggested membership. **Motion carried.**

## **8 New Business**

### **8.1 January 28, 2025 Email Vote**

Referring to the email vote circulated on January 28, 2025 Ms. Allen noted reported that the Board of Governors has ratified, through that email vote, the Collective Agreement between CBU and NSGEU Local 18A with the changes as outlined in the materials reviewed and recommended by the Negotiation Advisory Committee at its January 20, 2025, meeting.

## **9 Presentation(s)**

### **9.1 Overview of Pending Legislation Changes**

In a PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Stephanie Myles provided an overview of changes to Bill No. 12: An Act Respecting Advanced Education and Research as introduced in the Legislative Assembly on February 19, 2025. She detailed each of the key features:

1. Research Nova Scotia Corporation Act amendments
2. Private Career Colleges Act amendments
3. Community Colleges Act amendments
4. Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act amendments
5. Creates the University Board Governance Act

She noted Bill No. 12 is presented in the context of the Auditor General's Report on Funding to Universities.

## **10 Open Session**

### **11 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Friday, April 25, 2025.

### **12 Adjournment**

**It was moved** by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Maher, to adjourn the meeting at 12:20 pm.  
**Motion carried.**

**Dr. Rod Nicholls**  
**Secretary to the Board**