Cape Breton University
Board of Governors
Public Meeting

Friday, March 6, 2026
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 MacRae (Vice Chair) Mr. David Dingwall (President), Mr. Gordon MacInnis (Treasurer), Dr. Rod Nicholls (Secretary), Dr. Sahand Ashtab (CBUFA President), Ms. Harsimran Kaur Antaal, Dr. Matthias Bierenstiel, , Dr. PJ Devereaux, Mr. Kendrick Douglas, Mr. Michael Henick, Ms. Sarah Hines, , Mr. Terry Kelly, Ms. Lori Kennedy, Mr. Brett MacDougall, Mr. Ian Parker, Ms. Nancy Samson, Mr. Bill Smith, Ms. Ann Sylliboy, Ms. Toyin Tade, Ms. Destiny Tobin, Mr. Jamie Tunnicliff, Mr. Steve Wadden

Regrets:
Mr. Michael Claener, Mr. Adam Jamison, Ms. Sandra Kanchuk, Mr. Keith Maher, Ms. Monette Pasher, Ms. Dena Richardson, Ms. Rebecca Seymour, Ms. Barbara Sylvester,

Ms. Allen declared quorum and called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m.

She then 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^{th} 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.
Members were also reminded that they are expected to abide by the Chatham House rules regarding information received in the course of Board of Governors meetings, including any committee meetings, and are prohibited from engaging in audio or video recording of the Board of Governors meetings, including any committee meetings.

2. Public Meeting Minutes of the Board

2.1 December 5, 2025
2.2 January 27, 2026

It was moved by Dr. Bierenstiel, seconded by Ms. Samson, to approve the Public Board Minutes of December 5, 2025.
It was noted that the attendance record for December 5^{th} minutes required correction: Mr. Terry Kelly attended the meeting but was recorded as absent.
Motion Carried.

3. Business Arising N/A

4. Reports

4.1 Report of Senate

Mr. Henick reported the following:

Senate has been active since the last Board meeting, with several meetings held and multiple action items addressed. Approval of the MBA programs was confirmed, noting that the programs were approved by Senate, forwarded to MPHEC, and have since received MPHEC approval. Work is now underway to bring the approved programs online.

4.2 Report of the Students' Union

Ms. Antaal noted that a full written report was included in the meeting package. She highlighted the following:

- Several student engagement and support activities were undertaken since December, including programming delivered during Pride Week 2026. Events included collaborative initiatives such as an Indigenous drag show, student bingo events, and STI testing take-home kits offered in partnership with the Nancy Dingwall Health and Counselling Centre. Pride Week programming was well attended and contributed positively to student engagement.
- Additional winter initiatives included Healthy Living Week activities, such as a ski trip and free breakfast program, and the annual student fair featuring campus and community organizations. Ongoing programs, including a cross-country running initiative, continued with participation reflective of current enrollment levels.
- The domestic student health plan was renewed with Campus Trust, citing its student-focused governance and self-insurance model. Updates were also provided on Student Union governance, including revisions to executive election eligibility criteria and preparations for upcoming elections and leadership transitions.
- Advocacy efforts were noted, including participation in Open Educational Resources (OER) Week and the collection of student feedback on textbook cost savings, which will be shared with the Minister of Advanced Education.

During discussion, clarification was provided regarding two separate referendums currently being conducted by the Student Union:

- One referendum relates to extending Student Union membership to master’s students, who are not currently members of the Student Union.
- A second referendum relates to potential access to the Student Union health and dental plan for domestic part-time students, who are not currently covered.

It was clarified that health and dental plans are administered through the Student Union and that participation by master's students has historically been complex due to cohort-based delivery models and the fact that many students have existing employer-provided benefits.

Operational considerations were noted, including the need for clearer communication regarding eligibility and participation as referendums progress.

Members also acknowledged the recent appointment of the Senate Secretary and expressed appreciation for her dedication and contributions.

4.3 Special Announcements, Questions

The Chair advised that the Forever CBU campaign is very close to reaching its fundraising goal. She noted that, following correspondence from the President and discussion with Development staff, she has made a personal commitment to the campaign. She encouraged Board members to consider participating, emphasizing that contributions of any amount are meaningful and that donations may remain confidential if desired. The importance of full Board participation was highlighted as the campaign approaches its final target.

4.4 President's Report

The President referenced his written report, which had been circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting, and invited questions from members. The following additional updates were provided for information:

- PJ Devereaux was congratulated on his appointment to the Order of Ontario, announced February 17, in recognition of his outstanding contributions.
- An update was provided confirming the safety of an international recruiter who experienced travel disruptions abroad and has since safely departed the region.
- Members were reminded of the upcoming opening of the medical school on May 14, with a save-the-date to be circulated.
- It was reported that the recent visit by Mrs. Carney to open the Keough Forum at CBU was highly successful and generated significant national media and social media attention.

5. Treasurer's Report

5.1 Report of the Treasurer

The Treasurer's Report was presented as circulated with the meeting package. Responding to comments and questions as they arose, Mr. MacInnis reported the following:

An update was provided on the university's financial position. Cash levels remain strong, reflecting ongoing construction activity. Reduced enrollment is now evident in accounts receivable, student deposits, and deferred revenue balances. The allowance for student accounts was reported as sufficient to cover outstanding balances.

It was confirmed that provincial receivables currently recorded are valid and will be received by fiscal year-end, including funding related to previously announced grant changes effective in future years. Clarification was also provided regarding the valuation of investments, noting that the difference between book and market value reflects fund activity and redistribution, not investment losses.

An update was provided on medical school funding, indicating that discussions with the province are ongoing to align approved funding with the original budget submission, with assurance that overall funding remains intact.

Capital budget updates included an increase to the Centre for Discovery and Innovation project budget due to tender pricing, offset by strong progress in fundraising and available reserves. It was noted that current planning may allow completion of capital projects without incurring additional debt.

6. Committee Reports

6.1 Executive Committee

The Chair reported that the Executive Committee met and addressed several items, including acceptance of the Ethics Committee report, which requires no further Board action at this time. Additional committee updates, including the Presidential Review Committee and Chancellor matters, will be addressed later in the agenda.

The Chair also noted that the Committee discussed the broader fiscal pressures facing universities and acknowledged the institution’s strong financial position, capital planning progress, and leadership. Appreciation was expressed to the Treasurer and President for their financial leadership, strategic planning, and effective risk management.

6.2 Audit Committee

Mr. MacRae provided a brief update, advising that the Committee met earlier in the week. It was reported that representatives from MNP attended the meeting and presented their audit plan, with audit fieldwork scheduled for April and results to be reported at the June meetings.

It was further noted that the university has engaged MNP for several years and that the decision was made to continue the engagement in light of the current financial environment and ongoing institutional changes.

An update was also provided on the university’s endowment, noting significant growth in recent years, supported by strong investment performance and fundraising activity.

6.3 Tributes Committee:

Item 6.3 was removed from the public agenda and placed as 7.1 on Prologue agenda.

6.4 Presidential Review Committee

Mr. Terry Kelly presented the committee's report with the recommendation for the bonus.

It was moved by Mr. Douglas, seconded by that Ms. Allen, following the report of the Presidential Review Committee, which conducted a comprehensive review and reported outstanding leadership and performance by the President in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025, particularly in the areas of:

- Leadership and vision,
- Strategic goals,
- Fiscal management and fundraising,
- Academic programming and research,
- Stakeholder relations and community engagement,
- Innovation and adaptability, and
- Governance and compliance,

And as authorized by the President's employment agreement with the Board of Governors of CBU, The Board of Governors authorize the payment of a performance bonus to President Dingwall in an amount equal to 12% of his base salary related to the March 31, 2025 fiscal year.

Students and Employees abstained from the vote.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

President Dingwall thanked the Chair for her remarks and the Board for its vote of confidence. He advised that, in light of the university's current financial constraints, he has chosen to defer acceptance of his bonus until his departure at the conclusion of his contract with CBU.

7.1 Appoint New Chancellor

President Dingwall documents were circulated to members in attendance and online.

Mr. Dingwall provided an update on the Chancellor appointment process, noting that the role and selection process are governed by the bylaws and that the President is responsible for making a recommendation to the Executive Committee. He reported that extensive consultation had taken place, with multiple potential candidates considered, and that confidentiality was maintained throughout the process.

Following review and discussion, the Executive Committee recommended Mr. Jack Graham as the preferred candidate for the position of Chancellor. It was noted that Mr. Graham brings significant leadership experience, professional expertise, and a strong understanding of the role of Chancellor. The President advised that he met with Mr. Graham and his spouse, and that Mr. Graham expressed strong interest in the role and support for working closely with the President and the university community.

It was further noted that the outgoing Chancellor was consulted and expressed support for the recommendation.

It was Moved by Mr. MacRae, seconded by Mr. Douglas, that the Board appoint Mr. Jack Graham, K.C., as Chancellor of Cape Breton University for a term of 5 years, effective May 1, 2026.

Motion Carried.

8. New Business

9. Presentations – N/A

10. Open Session – N/A

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Friday, April 24, 2026.

12. Adjournment

It was moved by PJ. Devereaux, seconded by Sahand Ashtab, to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 pm.

Dr. Rod Nicholls
Secretary to the Board