

Board of Trustees Report to the Senate Highlights from the December 2024 Meeting

Agenda: www.queensu.ca/governanceportal (select December 6, 2024 on the calendar)

The Chair welcomed attendees to the final Board meeting of the calendar year and wished students well for the final weeks of the term and the exam period. He informed members of a recent meeting with student leaders, noting that the conversations provided insight on campus life and the day-to-day experiences of students at Queen's.

The Chair noted that [Deputy Provost Teri Shearer](#) was at her final Board meeting before retirement and shared highlights of her 27 year career at Queen's. He thanked her for her many contributions and attendees joined in for a round of applause in recognition of her work.

Attendees observed a moment of silence for the passing of [Chancellor Emeritus Murray Sinclair](#) as well as for the [National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women](#).

On the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee, the Board approved:

- The Appointment of External Auditors ([Fiscal 2025](#))

On the recommendation of the Finance, Assets, and Strategic Infrastructure Committee, the Board approved:

- Updates to the [Affiliated Entity Policy](#)

On the recommendation of the Governance and Nominating Committee, the Board approved:

- [Amendments to the Board's Code of Conduct and By-Law 3.19.1.](#)

On the recommendation of the University Culture Committee, the Board approved:

- [Amendments](#) to the Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Response Policy (effective January 31, 2025)

The Board also received the following:

- A verbal delegation, in accordance with [Board By-law 3.11.1](#), from Dr. Michael Greenspan and Dr. Samuel Silver, representatives from Queen's Coalition Against Anti-Semitism. The Drs shared a document on data related to antisemitism at Queen's and around the world and their aspirations for an inclusive and diverse university community.
- Heather Woermke (Associate Vice-Principal, Finance and Administration) and Rob Clayton (KPMG) shared a [presentation on understanding the University's financial statements](#). This session was developed in response to the 2022 Auditor General's report on Laurentian University and the recommendation that all university board members in Ontario receive formal training on financial reporting with respect to the post-secondary sector.

In addition, the Board also received verbal reports from the Chairs of the Audit and Risk; External Relations and Development; Finance, Assets, and Strategic Infrastructure; Investment; Governance and Nominating; and University Culture Committees.

Principal's Remarks

Principal and Vice-Chancellor P. Deane reiterated the significance of December 6 as the day of action on violence against women. In the current global geopolitical context, he noted that the claim to institutional neutrality globally has been highly criticized, as universities are about values. He reminded trustees that Queen's University does not take a position on political issues, not because the university cannot be neutral on the events of the world, but because the university's values articulate themselves to advance the greater good.

Principal Deane shared that he has recently traveled to attend two major international conferences. The first, the [Observatory Magna Charta Universitatum](#), an association that assists institutions to comply with their commitment to the principles of the organization, focused on the ways in which institutions can support a plurality of perspectives on their campuses. The second, [the International Association of Universities](#) (IAU), a membership-based organization serving the global higher education sector, focused on the changing world and the steady erosion of society's respect for the university separateness.

He informed members that the university will begin comprehensive consultations on the vision for Queen's [bicentennial](#) in January. Principal Deane cautioned that, while it is important to be occupied with the university's financial sustainability, the cultural and the social pressures faced by universities at large should also be considered.

Student Reports

Rector

Rector Niki Boytchuk-Hale commented on her term to date, noting that it has been a mix of joy and challenges. She thanked the University Council members who fundraised \$2,228 at their recent AGM to contribute to the AMS foodbank. She informed members of the Board that Chancellor Shelagh Rogers has been welcomed by students as a skilled listener who makes students feel at ease.

Regarding the ongoing work on the bicentennial vision of the university, Rector Boytchuk-Hale urged the administration to demonstrate a genuine effort during consultations and to use them as an opportunity for the Queen's community to unite and build the vision together.

Alma Mater Society (AMS)

Owen Rocchi shared that there has been disappointment in the undergraduate community regarding the delay of the John Deutsch University Center opening. He noted the years of advocacy for this project and that the AMS is looking forward to the vibrant hub the building will be once open.

President Rocchi shared with the Board the current issues facing students, including the perceived lack of transparency from the university with respect to Queen's Bicentennial vision and expressed hope that consultation will demonstrate cooperation, transparency, and listening. He requested the help of the university and the Board to empower students to know what is happening on campus and the work that is done by Queen's governance bodies.

Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS)

The President of the Society of Graduate and Professional Students, Emils Matiss presented on the organization's priorities for progress. He urged the Board members to focus on transparency and to build community trust when discussing solutions to graduate students' financial challenges, such as food insecurity and insufficient funding, as well as on a vision for research excellence.

Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is March 7-8, 2025.