

Board of Trustees Report to the Senate Highlights from the September 2025 Meeting

Agenda: www.queensu.ca/governanceportal (select September 26, 2025 on the calendar)

The Chair welcomed new Trustees Carol Ann Budd, Paul Calluzzo, Amanda Gray, Chessa Jope, EJ Kelvin, and Emils Matiss to their first meeting. He acknowledged with regret the passing of four community members, including three students and a former Senator. He reflected on a busy summer marked by government consultations regarding provincial university governance, which were prompted by Bill 46, and significant progress on the [Bicentennial Vision](#).

Following recommendations from the 2024 Board-Senate Retreat to increase interaction between the two governing bodies, Trustee Jeremy Gooden (Chair, [Queen's University Board-Senate Advisory Committee](#)), led efforts to explore ways to enhance collaboration. This resulted in the creation of informal, forward-looking sessions between Trustees and Senators, including a recent discussion on generative artificial intelligence featuring remarks from Dr. Eleftherios Soleas (Special Advisor to the Provost). These collaborative meetings are planned to continue.

He noted the upcoming National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and encouraged participation in related events on campus.

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

- [Draft Audited 2024-25 Consolidated Financial Statements](#)

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

- [International Tuition Fee Approval 2026-27](#)

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

- [Student Health and Wellbeing Policy Statement Update](#)

The Board also received verbal reports from the Chairs of the External Relations and Development; Investment; and Governance and Nominating Committees. In addition, Heather Woermke (Associate Vice-Principal, Finance and Administration) and Rob Clayton (KPMG) provided a presentation on "[Understanding Queen's University Financial Statements](#)" aimed at enhancing understanding of the University's financial statements and developed in response to a recommendation from the Auditor General to provide formal financial reporting training to all university board members in Ontario.

Chancellor's Remarks

Verbal Report

The Chancellor acknowledged attendees as hardworking and visionary individuals united in supporting Queen's to flourish and lead, noting the optimism and positivity surrounding the start of the academic year.

She reflected on attending the recent Queen's Student Scholars event, recognizing the achievements of scholarship recipients who demonstrate creativity, community involvement, and how awards help reduce barriers to education.

In advance of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the Chancellor emphasized the importance of honouring residential school survivors, their families, and the children who never returned home. She noted that the day calls for both reflection and ongoing advocacy. Drawing on her experience as an Honorary Witness to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, she spoke to the profound cultural, linguistic, spiritual, and familial losses caused by residential schools, observing that “if community were a verb, the residential school era was to un-community.”

The Chancellor commended the work of the Queen’s National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Working Group, including initiatives such as the Heart Gardens at the John Deutsch University Centre and Richardson Hall. She invited the University community to attend the upcoming sacred fire ceremony and to wear orange in solidarity. She concluded by reaffirming Queen’s ongoing commitment to listening, reflection, and community building in support of survivors and their families.

Principal’s Remarks

Verbal Report

Principal and Vice-Chancellor Patrick Deane framed the University’s work within the broader global context of higher education, reflecting on his recent keynote at a forum in Prague on the “[Renewal of the Democratic and Civic Mission](#)” of universities. He observed that university leaders worldwide face challenges including declining public trust, political polarization, skepticism toward truth and expertise, and decreasing respect for academic authority.

At the provincial level, he highlighted a government-initiated consultation on university governance concluding this fall. He underscored concerns such as Bill 33, which, if passed, could impact the sector through the mandating of merit-based admissions and requiring increased transparency and regulation of ancillary student fees.

Nationally, Principal Deane emphasized the imperative for universities to radically reinvent themselves, safeguarding academic freedom and their democratic mission from political interference. Referencing a recent meeting with the Minister of Defence and U15 university leaders, he stressed the critical role universities play alongside national defence in supporting Canadian sovereignty.

He concluded by affirming the vital role of universities in addressing both immediate challenges and the broader project of higher education, an endeavor integral to the success and survival of democracy.

Principal’s 2025-26 Goals

Principal Deane outlined his goals for 2025-26, emphasizing the Bicentennial Vision as a central element to guide the University by providing a framework balancing long-term aspirations with short-term planning. He noted that the consultation is progressing well and that the draft document will be discussed in detail with the Board. He expressed gratitude to all contributors and optimism about the University’s trajectory toward 2041.

He noted ongoing work on the rebalancing initiatives and the Renew Project, acknowledging significant successes amid University-wide challenges. Strengthening Bader College and securing a sustainable future for the Castle is another priority.

Principal Deane noted a strong year for Queen's in global engagement and highlighted the University's consistent top-10 placement in Times Higher Education World University Rankings, being the only institution to have maintained this position for such an extended period.

He concluded by addressing the importance of fostering productive, open dialogue within the University community amid geopolitical, labour, and budget challenges, reaffirming a commitment to civility and urging all community members to contribute to advancing the University's broader vision.

Student Reports

Rector

Rector Boytchuk-Hale focused her verbal remarks on three priorities: the revitalization of the John Deutsch University Centre (JDUC), the implications of Bill 33, and the Bicentennial Vision. She reflected on the decade-long collaboration that restored the JDUC as the heart of student life on campus and emphasized the ongoing need to adapt spaces to support evolving student requirements. Regarding Bill 33, she underscored the importance of maintaining student engagement and transparency throughout the process in anticipation of legislation. On the Bicentennial Vision, the Rector encouraged students to reflect on the document and provide their feedback, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive education that prepares graduates for global citizenship, critical thinking, and leadership in a rapidly changing world.

Alma Mater Society (AMS)

AMS President Jana Amer spoke to current student experiences, noting concerns among Indigenous and BIPOC students about recognition and support on campus. She emphasized that commemorative observances such as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation need to be accompanied by action. J. Amer underscored the University's responsibility to Indigenous students through principles of reconciliation and reciprocity. She spoke to the values of respect, truth, honesty, and wisdom and encouraged Trustees to visit the Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre, support student initiatives, and listen to student perspectives to advance meaningful progress collaboratively.

Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS)

Surabhi Velagala (VP Graduate), on behalf of SGPS President Dawood Tullah, expressed concerns about Bill 33 and its potential impact on graduate and professional student wellbeing and autonomy. She highlighted that the potential elimination of some ancillary fees could reduce student support services critical during crises like food insecurity and rising living costs. The Bill's merit-based admissions approach could risk undermining diversity and inclusivity within the graduate student body and may hinder international research collaborations. Additionally, she noted that Bill 33 could impose further financial burdens, affecting both the student experience and the University's reputation. She indicated that the SGPS continues to address food insecurity through new financial support programs and is actively responding to geopolitical challenges impacting students, seeking to support student wellbeing and leadership development.

Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting is December 12-13, 2025.