



**UPEI BOARD OF GOVERNORS
BOARD OF GOVERNORS' PUBLIC MEETING
Tuesday, December 2, 2025
Alumni Hall, Room 102 and Via Teams
4:35 pm**

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Shannon MacDonald (Chair); Wendy Rodgers (President); Hon. Diane Griffin; Alex MacBeath; Geraldine Johnston; Don MacKenzie; Pam Montgomery; Brian Thompson; Mary Anne McMahon; Karen Creighan; Gary Evans; Erica Kyalo; Kevin Magee; Lynn Ellsworth; William Montelpare; Ajay Sahajpal; John McIntyre, Richard Raiswell, Kate VanGerven, Clare Cole.

Regrets: Alexander (Sandy) MacDonald; Luciana Quiroa Paredes, Brian Affouan, Kateri Coade

Staff Present: Tim Walker, Vice-President, Administration and Finance; Greg Naterer, Vice-President, Academics and Research; Mark Caduc, Chief Information Officer; Susan Connolly, Associate Vice-President; Pascal Robichaud, University Secretary; Pam Trainor, Chief of Staff to the President; Melissa James, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Programs and Student Success Business; Angelina Weenie, Dean, Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies; Gloria Tsoi, Administrative Assistant of University Secretariat; Raisha Anwar, Administrative Assistant of the Office of the President

1. Call to Order, Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

Chair S. MacDonald called the meeting to order at 4:34 pm and acknowledged the land.

The Chair reported on the proceedings of the closed session, namely that the Board has received training on its role in overseeing the negotiation of collective agreements, and appointments and proceeded to several appointments.

Mary Anne MacMahon, Brian Thompson and Alex MacBeath were respectively appointed Chair Elect, First Vice Chair Elect and Second Vice Chair Elect for a one-year term to start on June 1, 2026.

Clare Cole has been appointed to the Board of Governors for a term to start on January 1, 2026, and end on May 31, 2028.

Kate VanGerven, who was appointed to the Board by the Alumni Association last Friday, has been appointed to the Governance, Nominating and Appeals Committee.

The Chair offers Congratulations and thanks to all and welcomes Kate and Clare to the Board.

There being no request for items of business to be moved from the consent agenda to the deliberative agenda, the following are approved or received under consent: the open session agenda, the minutes of AGM on October 7, the minutes of open session of Board meeting October 7, the record of decision on appointment of Committee members November 4, the appointment of members of the Board of trustees of the University Pension Plan, the Board training plan, the Governance Review Implementation update, and the committee quarterly reports.

The Chair called on members to declare any conflicts of interest regarding items on the agenda. No conflict was declared.

2. Chair's Report

S. MacDonald delivered the quarterly report of the Chair. She acknowledges Pam Trainor who joined the University roughly two years ago to lend a hand at a time when we needed much help in rebuilding our governance. She was a lifeline for the Chair and instrumental in the work to improve governance. She transferred to the President's Office as Chief of Staff and so will continue to help the University.

3. President's Report

President Rodgers spoke about the results of the management's work since the last meeting of the Board. The President's report aligns with the eight Presidential Goals as approved by the Board. A written report was added to the meeting materials today. Themes broached in the report are:

1. Drive the successful launch and execution of UPEI's 2025 –2-26 Strategic Plan
2. Champion a positive, respectful, and inclusive campus culture
3. Strengthen and expand UPEI's visibility and reputation
4. Lead the ongoing implementation of UPEI's Action Plan in response to the 2023 Rubin Thomlinson review.
5. Build a high-performing University leadership team
6. Advance UPEI's academic and research priorities
7. Accelerate philanthropic growth
8. Enhance UPEI's financial sustainability

The President spoke of the official launch of the Strategic Plan on November 20, 2025. The Plan is structured around three pillars; Thriving People and Communities, Innovative and Connected Teaching, Research and Scholarship and Sustainability. Each vice president of the University has taken the lead on one of the pillars and move in unison to deliver connected initiatives. Priorities for the first year of the plan are being developed. As the plan unfolds, priorities will be reviewed and adjusted each year.

As the University looks to live its values, several training sessions for leadership teams have taken place to enhance our capacity to communicate and manage - and respond to – crises. To deliver the University's commitment to a positive, respectful and inclusive campus culture, a review of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion office is underway with the help of a panel of experts.

Making the University more visible and enhancing its reputation will require a stronger presence with Alumni, for which the President attended Alumni events in Ottawa and Toronto. Both of which were received with enthusiasm. It also requires connection with our peers in the sector, namely via Universities Canada. Though President Rodgers, UPEI will be part of the Universities Canada Mission to India to continue work on re-establishing relationships with the country in hopes of reinvigorating Indian students' interest in coming to Canada and to our campus.

There have also been discussions with MPs and other ministries, provincial and federal, supporting shellfish health, and supporting a proposed research chair in rural medicine with the Faculty of Medicine.

4. Strategic Enrolment Management

Vice President Naterer delivered a presentation on the University's first Strategic Enrolment Management Plan. A draft plan was shared with members as part of the meeting materials.

As members stressed the importance of the first-year experience, they noted the success of the Open House held on a Saturday this year and, more generally, efforts deployed by the University to enhance student advising; to establish a productive first contact with students. It was noted that the trend towards larger classrooms creates tension between the desire for first contact and the mass effect of larger classes. The VPAR indicated that the University is moving carefully towards growth, with the aim of sustaining a high-quality academic experience. As the discussion shifted to the optimal size of the institution, although no target has yet been set, a short-term and viable enrolment target would be 6000 students.

Members also discussed the development of graduate studies, noting that the current government quota on admission of international students does not at present apply to graduate students. Consideration is given to distance education as a means to increase enrolment in graduate programs, while noting that some programs do have residential requirements.

As per the cost of the SEM Plan, the VPAF indicated that preliminary costing has been done, but has not yet settled. It will be part of budget planning for the next fiscal year. He notes that not all initiatives under the Plan require additional resources or funding, but rather a shift in priorities within existing resources.

As members enquired about the role of AI to inform the Plan, the VPAR informed the Board that an AI Advisory Committee has been struck, which provided valuable guidance. The Committee is currently running a pilot project that will help us better understand our use of AI.

Knowing that SEM is predicated on data, members asked about the collective of data from students and the predictive tools developed to use it. The University is starting to collect feedback from students and, as part of the Plan, is moving towards greater data collection.

The use of best practices or Canadian standards regarding data collected in support of SEM was discussed, with a view to see how it could help the University retain students. Although not all institutions have SEM, it is becoming common in Canada, which does offer some opportunities for standardization of data across the sector. It is noted that UPEI has so far recruited students rather

organically from the domestic market and has had a hard time getting beyond it. The University needs to better know whom we are recruiting and losing and why, with an understanding that retention is worse among international students.

5. Student Perspective Update

E. Kyalo, in the absence of L. Paredes, delivered the Student Perspective Update. She spoke of confusion among students as to which fees they must pay and lack of clarity as to what is funded through these fees. The cost of course materials remain a source of concern for students, with some students spending \$1500 in one term for materials. The issue is particularly worrisome when students are made to pay for assessment platforms, which they feel should be funded through – and included in – tuition. Some students are upset that exams have been scheduled over the weekend when travel options using public transit are limited. The drop-off point for the foodbank in a high-traffic area creates a sense of shame for students who must avail themselves of its service. The previous drop-off point at the chaplaincy center was more discreet. The issue of access to buildings by students with physical challenges is raised, as several buildings either don't have accessible door buttons, have elevators that can't accommodate certain wheelchairs and often break down.

The need for greater clarity in student fees, both to inform students of fees upfront, but also of the use of the revenues, was stated.

Members enquired about learning platforms and their cost. They heard that some classes are delivered using learning platforms that must be purchased beyond tuition, with some students only hearing of it on the first day of class. Some students then must consider whether to drop the class, which could impact their course of studies. There are cases where professors receive commissions on the sale of the platform. There is also concern that the submission of materials through a third-party solution could lead to breaches of confidentiality of course evaluations. The VPAR indicated that there is a committee actively looking at the issues of Sales of Course Materials. A particular problem is the delivery of evaluations of student performance behind a paywall, where the Committee is of the mind that students should be able to take an evaluation free of charge. The Policy has been discussed in the Senate and is tracking towards a recommendation to the Board in March.

Members enquired as per the percentage of students who rely on the food bank. In 2023, there were some 4069 visits to the food bank, compared to 4034 in 2024. There is a slight decrease that may be the result of the reduction in the number of international students.

6. Senate Report to the Board

M. A. McMahon delivers the report of the Senate to the Board, with a written report provided in the meeting materials and considered read.

7. Establishment of the Bachelor of Arts, Major in Indigenous Studies

Vice President Naterer presents a recommendation for the establishment of a degree program for the Bachelor of Arts, Indigenous Studies. He points out that the degree program was approved by the Senate on November 21, 2025, after an initial approval in principle followed by a review and approval by the MPHEC. He confirms that the resources are currently available to deliver the program, which will build on the success of the minor in Indigenous Studies. Evidence suggests that there is solid student demand for such a program. Management is committed to hiring an Associate Professor to help deliver the program, as recommended by the MPHEC.

President mentions that we are one of a very few universities that have a faculty devoted to indigenous studies. This is important to build that faculty.

Angelina Weenie is in the room for the conversation.

MOTION: MOVED by Wendy and SECONDED by Gary, that the degree program of the Bachelor of Arts, Major in Indigenous Studies is established with immediate effect. CARRIED.

The Board offers its congratulations to Dr. Weenie, who has done a tremendous job in pulling this together.

8. Purchase of Land at 480 University Avenue

Chair MacDonald calls on the Chair of the Properties and Environmental Sustainability Committee (PESC) to introduce the topic. Chair Johnston indicates that the proposal was reviewed in a joint session of PESC and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and that both committees agreed to recommend it to the Board.

MOTION: MOVED by G. Johnston and SECONDED by W. Rodgers that the purchase of land at 480 University Avenue is approved.

Chair Johnston asks Vice President Walker to present the recommendation.

Vice President Walker presents a recommendation for the purchase of a parcel of land adjacent to the main campus at 480 University Avenue; a property colloquially known as “Blaze Pizza”. The property has recently become available and may not be so again for quite some time. The purchase would complete the University ownership of land on that side of the campus. He notes that the valuation of the property underestimates the cost of purchase, as the University is a strategic buyer. Acquiring the property will cost \$3.5M. The acquisition of the land opens opportunities for development that could be revenue generating or could help enhance campus life. VP Walker noted that the University does not need to seek the Province’s permission for the acquisition of the land, as the University could draw on current funds.

Members discuss at length the value of the property, the opportunity for development, and the cost of purchase at a time of financial pressures on the institution. After much consideration, members feel it best to delay a decision till there is a communication plan, some community consultation and a sense of the projected use of the land. The Board can consider the matter in a special meeting, if need be.

MOTION: MOVED by W. Montelpare and SECONDED by B. Thompson that the motion is tabled. CARRIED.

9. In-Camera Session

MOTION : MOVED by P. Montgomery and SECONDED by G. Evans that the Board move to an in-camera session. CARRIED

The VPAF is invited to stay.

MOTION : MOVED by D. MacKenzie and SECONDED by M. A. McMahon that the Board move to an open session. CARRIED

10. Adjournment

MOVED by D. MacKenzie, SECONDED by W. Montelpare that the meeting adjourned at 7:17 pm.

11. Consent Agenda

All items are approved and received.