



BOARD NOTES

St. Francis Xavier University Board of Governors
December 4th 2019

The Board of Governors met on Wednesday, December 4, 2019. The following is a summary of proceedings at the meetings.

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

President Wamsley updated the Board on a number of topics:

- **Quote in Mulroney Hall:** There was complaint made about the quote regarding paper mills on the Donor Wall in Mulroney Hall and it was shared widely on social media and complaints were received. The University issued a response following which there were a number of national news stories.
- **Priorities:** The Executive Team has met to set priorities to the end of July 2020. These priorities are Enrolment, balancing our budget for the year ending of March 2021, improving campus culture and fundraising.
- **Enrolment and Retention:** Dr. Wamsley provided background on the efforts that have been undertaken over the past several years to improve the University's enrolment numbers. All university practices, policies, and procedures have been examined and improvements made where necessary. Also, taking a more personalized approach to recruitment has been very successful, using alumni to promote recruitment, the Open House has been very important for us in winning our region and appointing a Director of Internationalization with a 3 year focus on international recruitment is bearing fruit, in addition to paying significant attention to our international markets. We also made full scale improvements to our recruitment materials and our social media approach and to our campus tours.
- **Mulroney Hall completion:** Mr. Beckett and our FM Staff continue to work with Ellis Don on a series of building deficiencies and disputes. We are holding back monies until this project is completed to our satisfaction
- **Coady:** We just celebrated 60 years of Coady this past Monday and with that came the announcement of \$1m in short term funding for various projects. Additionally, we expect to announce the Global Affairs funding of \$10m early in the New Year as they have recently completed their audit of our previous projects.
- **Convocation and X Ring:** We have had a very, very successful week of Convocation on Sunday and X Ring on Tuesday. A list of 213 students convocated and we gave an honorary degree to the educational philanthropist Madam Helen Vari. 903 students received X Rings.
- **Centre for Innovation in Rural Health:** An update was provided on fundraising efforts associated with this project. A foundational donation has been secured we are in the process of securing other donors for the project and we continue to appeal to the Province to provide a significant contribution. We will begin work on removing asbestos from Lane Hall utilizing some of the federal infrastructure money designated for the Xaverian Commons.

2019-20 Operating Results

Mr. Andrew Beckett, Vice President Finance & Administration noted that it was reported to the Board in October that current year financial projections, prepared on actual results to the end of September, were showing a projected deficit of \$700,000. An overview was provided of actions being taken to reduce the projected deficit.

2020-21 OPERATING BUDGET

Mr. Beckett noted that work was underway on developing the 2020-21 Operating Budget. Key assumptions associated with the budget were presented. Mr. Beckett advised that the draft 2020-21 operating budget would be presented to the Board at the February meeting.

ENROLMENT UPDATE

Dr. Tim Hynes, Acting Academic Vice President & Provost presented an update on student enrolment for the 2020-21 Academic Year. While still early in the process current indicators are very positive.

- Undergraduate applications are up 25% from previous year
- Applications for all major degree programs, with the exception of Nursing are up
- Applications for new programs (BA PGov, BAsC CLEN) are continuing to grow and the BAsC Health program continues to be popular
- Direct from High School applications are up 27% across all regions with NS applications up 15% and rest of Canada up 40%.
- International applications are up 39%
- Confirmation numbers are up significantly year-over-year and residence applications are also up over last year.

STUDENT SERVICES UPDATE

Mr. Andrew Beckett, Head of Student Services provided the Board with an update on a number of items related to Student Culture including:

- **Residence Damages** – damages are an early indicator of deeper cultural issues within residences. Damages have significantly declined over the past two years (down 34% in 18-19 Academic year). Damages have increased in 19-20 Academic year with particular concerns related to Cameron Hall. Actions being taken to engage the residents in improving the culture within the building were discussed.
- **Sexual Violence** – the new Sexual Violence Policy is nearing completion and will be implemented on February 1, 2020. There have been 8-10 reported cases of sexual violence so far this year ranging from inappropriate touching to non-consensual intercourse. This is up from previous year. New Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Advocate has been in place since early November and is already engaged with helping students. A group of student athletes have come forward expressing interest in working on changing culture within athletics towards sexual violence. President Wamsley is chairing an AUS Committee that has been formed to look at university sport culture.
- **Mental Health** – the Health & Counselling Centre is very busy with mental health issues being the most common area of concern. Current staffing levels of 1 counsellor for every 1,500 students are a challenge in terms of meeting demand for services.

Participation levels in Flourish@X programs and Mental Health First Aid programs have been very positive. The Accessible Learning Centre is very busy servicing the needs of approximately 14% of the student population.

- **Drugging** – There have been a few reports (on and off campus) of students being drugged. An advisory was sent to Campus and we are working with the RCMP.

COADY INSTITUTE UPDATE

Dr. Hynes provided an update on the Coady Institute's activities. He noted that Coady is making good progress on both the financial and programmatic front since the BOG meeting in late October

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH PROCESS

Mr. Boyd provided an update on the Presidential Selection Process. The Search Committee has identified a short list of potential candidates and will be conducting interviews in the next week. The Committee hopes to have a preferred candidate by early January, 2020.