Minutes of the OPEN Session of the Board of Governors
March 19 at 4:00 p.m.

**Present:**  L. Magnus, Chair  
               J. Leclerc, Secretary
J. Anderson  M. Benarroch  D. Brown  I. Fakankun  D. Finkbeiner  
L. Hyde  K. Lee  A. Mahon  S. Li  K. Osiowy  
S. Prentice  S. Puznak

**Via Teleconference:**  J. DeSouza-Huletey  D. Roussin  C. Yendt

**Regrets:**  D. Brothers  D. Hiebert-Murphy  T. Karuhogo  V. Koldingnes  
               L Pittman  A. Puchniak  B. Shearer

**Absent:**  A. Bell

**Assessors:**  R. Thalhammer  M. Shaw

**Officials:**  N. Andrew  A. Bruce  M. Pinto  M. Watson

**Others attending:**  J. Gerlach

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair acknowledged that the University of Manitoba is located on the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Ininewuk, Anisininewuk, Dakota and Denesuline, and on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis, recognizing the treaties made on these lands and committing to resolving harms and mistakes of the past and present.

The Chair shared her own personal commitment to listening and learning from Indigenous peoples and communities in moving forward in a spirit of reconciliation. She expressed her hope that the Board will use its diverse expertise and backgrounds to continue to work together in trust and collaboration to fulfill its fiduciary duties in the best interest of the University as a whole, always demonstrating the highest respect for each other, for students, faculty, and staff and the community the University serves.
FOR ACTION

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

It was moved by Ms. Lee and seconded by Mr. Osiowy:
THAT the agenda for the March 19, 2024 meeting be approved.

CARRIED

2. MINUTES (Open) Session

2.1 Approval of the Minutes of the December 5, 2023 Open Session and the Minutes of the February 27, 2024 Open Session Strategic Meeting as circulated or amended.

It was moved by Ms. Lee and seconded by Chancellor Mahon:
THAT the minutes of the December 5, 2023 Open session be approved as circulated, and
THAT the minutes of the February 27, 2024 Open Session Strategic Meeting be approved as amended.

CARRIED

2.2 Business Arising

There was no business arising from the minutes.

3. PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION

3.1 Strategic Research Plan

Dr. Pinto began his presentation by sharing his gratitude and appreciation for the dedication of members of the Strategic Research Planning Committee, in addition to those who have provided input and assisted with the continuous optimization of the plan.

He reminded Board members that the Strategic Research Plan was presented at a University of Manitoba town hall in October of 2023, and to Senate at their meeting this past January, noting that feedback received has been incorporated and further consultation with the planning committee has resulted in a balanced strategic research plan.

Dr. Pinto provided a high-level overview of the guiding principles of the Strategic Research Planning Committee:

1. The Committee will build on the strong foundation of fundamental inquiry and foundational knowledge.
2. Highlight existing strengths and build those existing strengths based on that foundation.
3. Combine those strengths in imaginative combinations to give themes of research.
4. To admit that these themes themselves can and will connect.
Dr. Pinto explained that this strategic plan is not intended to highlight all individual specialties, but rather serve as a high-level plan that captures the spirit of the University of Manitoba. In referring to the tag line of the plan “Change Through Research”, Dr. Pinto provided an overview of how this can be accomplished both internally and externally. He shared the vision and mission of the plan, and provided an overview of the seven intertwining research values that include:

1. Reconciliation
2. Responsiveness
3. Responsibility
4. Relationality
5. Relevance
6. Reciprocity
7. Respect

Dr. Pinto explained that these seven research values signify the importance of the seven sacred teachings of Indigenous culture, understanding that decisions made today must consider their impact seven generations from now.

He spoke about foundations, and the pursuit of fundamental knowledge being the cornerstone of research at the University of Manitoba. He shared with Board members; seven themes of research agreed upon by the planning committee:

1. Foundations
2. Social Justice and Human Rights
3. Research by, for, and with Indigenous Peoples
4. Water and Food Security
5. Health and Well-being
6. Climate Action and Sustainability
7. Manitoba, Hudson Bay, Arctic, and the World

Dr. Pinto explained that these seven themes are meant to interweave and interconnect, and not serve in isolation of one another. He spoke about the concepts of two-eyed and multi-eyed seeing in recognizing innovative thinking, and where innovation occurs. He presented a graphic image that that reflects the intention to build on disciplinary foundations to derive multi-disciplinary areas of research and explained that this strategic plan is intended to provide support to society.

In response to a question, Dr. Pinto explained that to implement and share the vision of this plan, discussions and connections need to occur. He spoke about several events that will be taking place, hosted by the VPRIO, including SET Day (high school students), undergraduate and graduate showcases, meet and greet sessions with faculty, students, staff and Canada
Research chairs as well as the IGNITE series. He noted the critical importance of student participation, and that reaching out to students will continue to ensure that this can be achieved.

He explained that these themes do not incorporate all areas of research, sharing that support will be provided to those areas that may take a different path, and will ensure this is emphasized moving forward.

Ms. Bruce spoke about the major intersections between Indigenous community and research at this institution, and the significant impact on these communities. She shared the importance of ensuring that the appropriate foundational pieces are in place to continue fostering community relationships, allowing the institution to move forward. She asked if this connection under the “People, Partnerships, Platforms and Processes” within the Strategic Research Plan could be strengthened.

Dr. Pinto spoke about social and economic reconciliation strategies in place, including three Tier 2 Indigenous Canada Research Chairs, securing of digital and archival storage within Indigenous communities, the IGNITE program “Just Waters”, Reimagining Food Systems for Climate Change Adaptation, and REACH (Reimagining Arctic and Central Canada Accessibility through Hudson Bay).

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

4.1 Report of the Board Executive Committee

The Chair noted that at its meeting on January 30th, the Committee reviewed and discussed items related to the work of the Board and its Committees and received an update on progress made to date in addressing the Board and committee annual priorities. She shared that the Committee was pleased with progress made, and plans for the remainder of the year.

4.2 Report of the Human Resource and Compensation Committee

The Chair explained that during its meetings on February 13th and March 7th, the Committee received an update on Board-approved HR policies in efforts by management to update, evaluate and reclassify policies, incorporating many into a new employee handbook. She shared that the Committee also considered two items for approval by the Board.

   a) Deans of Faculties, Directors of Schools of the University, and College Deans Policy and Appointment and Review Procedure

Dr. Benarroch explained that in working to streamline these governing documents, the recommendation is to bring together existing policy for Deans, Directors, and College Deans and procedures governing their appointment, reappointment, or renewal. He added that the language overall has been updated to incorporate EDI, adding that these policy and procedures
will now allow for a dean or director to be that of more than one unit at a time, and specifies procedures of how that can occur.

Dr. Benarroch informed Board members that this was previously considered by Senate, who offered suggested improvements relating to the consultation with, and reporting back to units, specific to budget matters. He noted that those suggestions have been incorporated within the documents, and that the updated policy and procedure are being recommended by Senate for approval by the Board.

It was moved by Mr. Finkbeiner and seconded by Ms. Hyde:

**THAT the Board of Governors:**

1. Approves effective immediately:
   a. Deans of Faculties, Directors of Schools of the University, and College Deans Policy;
   b. Deans of Faculties, Directors of Schools of the University, and College Deans: Appointment and Review Procedure;

2. Repeal effective immediately:
   a. Deans of Faculties Bylaw;
   b. Directors of Schools of the University Bylaw; and
   c. Deans of Faculties and Directors of Schools of the University: Appointment and Review Policy and Procedure.

   **CARRIED**

   b) Staff Benefit Plan Enhancements

[Mr. Gerlach joined the meeting]

Ms. Andrew spoke about collaboration that occurred throughout this process, sharing that the Staff Benefits Committee is made up members from all employee groups, as well as members appointed by the Board of Governors, and that this recommendation was unanimously approved by Committee.

In highlighting the enhancements to the Staff Benefit Plan, Ms. Andrew shared that these enhancements include the addition of vision coverage, enhancements to drug coverage as well as paramedical coverage, including the addition of a fifth paramedical coverage for mental health with an annual coverage of $1,000 for full-time and $750 for part-time employees. She shared that there will also be an expanded list of mental health practitioners covered by the plan. She explained that these enhancements are exciting, sharing the importance of financial sustainability in ensuring that the increase in premiums is manageable by the employee and the University.

Ms. Andrew shared that a review of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) was done, and within these plan enhancements, the University has transitioned to a new provider that will offer
more comprehensive and culturally sensitive counselling. She added that the new provider is lower cost, and those savings will be transferred and used to increase the employee Health Care Spending limits.

In response to a question, Mr. Gerlach explained that the Supplemental Health Plan is separate from Blue Cross, which provides dental coverage. He explained that the Blue Cross plan was revised two years ago, when annual cover maximums were revisited and increased accordingly, adding that few concerns have been received from employees regarding dental coverage.

Ms. Roussin spoke about Indigenous cultural aspects of health and healing that do not currently fit under health coverage, such as land-based activities and/or support by Elders. She asked if this will be a consideration of the University in offering these as a covered service within the plan. Mr. Gerlach shared that this was a focus of conversation with Canada Life and the University’s new EAP provider, sharing that from an EAP perspective, significant improvement has been made in providing culturally sensitive counselling from Indigenous, BIPOC and the LGBTQ communities. He explained that while there work yet to be done, the University will continue to ensure they remain inclusive and supportive for Indigenous people.

Ms. Andrew explained that in signaling the importance of this to Canada Life and the EAP provider, although it may take some time, these companies will begin to respond and build on those requests. She shared the importance that the University of Manitoba consider those current gaps, and what services can be offered to fill them.

Mr. Gerlach explained the removal of annual drug limits, sharing that this will bridge the gap between drug coverage at the University and an employee’s pharmacare deductible. Dr. Brown shared the huge step forward for the institution, noting that health coverage can change vastly from province to province. He added that this will also serve as a great benefit to the institution in terms of staff recruitment.

Chancellor Mahon declared a conflict of interest and did not vote on this item.

It was moved by Dr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Finkbeiner:

THAT the Board of Governors approves enhancements to the Staff Benefits Plan for active full-time and part-time employees effective April 1, 2024, as recommended by the Staff Benefits Committee.

CARRIED

The Chair thanked Mr. Gerlach for joining the meeting to speak to this matter.

[Mr. Gerlach left the meeting]
4.3 Report of the Governance and Board Development Committee

Mr. Osiowy shared that at its meeting on February 13th, the Committee discussed several items relating to the work of the Board and its Committees. He explained that the Committee reviewed the 2022-23 Board annual evaluation questionnaire from last year, and recommended revisions that will be incorporated into the survey and shared with Board members this spring.

He also shared that the Committee reviewed the current Board of Governors Code of Conduct, and suggested updates which will be brought to the Board for approval at a future meeting.

Mr. Leclerc shared that Committee members reviewed and considered revisions to the Board Submission template, with the intention to streamline information shared with the Board and/or its committees. He noted that this template provides a high-level overview of the key values and implications and an overview of key questions being asked of Board members in considering the submission. Mr. Leclerc shared that this revised template will be implemented in the coming months.

a) Open/Closed Session Framework for the Board

Mr. Osiowy explained that with the desire to foster transparency, a meeting agenda framework has been developed and will guide the development of Board agendas, adding that the intention is to include as many business items within the Open session as possible. He noted that the framework document includes examples of items that can and should fall within each of the three Board meeting sessions.

Dr. Shaw shared his appreciation of the work being done to develop this framework and looks forward to its implementation. The Chair shared that this framework aligns with the focus of the Board in continuing to consider the importance of transparency, adding that this also includes reporting on the work of Board committees.

4.4 Report of the Advancement Committee

Mr. Finkbeiner shared that at its meeting on January 30th, the Committee received a presentation on alumni engagement and programs, including the University’s alumni communication strategy, in addition engagement goals for Alumni Relations, an alumni engagement scorecard, and an overview of the University of Manitoba’s Alumni Association.

He shared that Committee members received an overview of philanthropy related policies, with many being reviewed in the upcoming year, and were advised that the Trust and Endowment Policy will be coming forward to the Board for approval later this year. The Committee also received an update on the draft Case for Support relating to the University of Manitoba’s next philanthropic campaign, understanding that it is currently undergoing revisions.
Mr. Finkbeiner noted that the Committee received an overview of the President’s Advisory Council, and an update on the progress and activities within Government Relations relating to the post-election engagement with government, initiatives relating to the Health Sciences expansion and UM’s presentation to the Treasury Board and pre-budget submission.

4.5 Report of the Audit and Risk Management Committee

The Chair shared that at its meeting on March 4th, the Committee approved the Office of the Auditor General Annual’s Audit Plan for the year ending March 31, 2024, which was provided to Board members for information within the Consent agenda.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 President’s Report

In highlighting several areas within his report, Dr. Benarroch shared that the University of Manitoba’s Strategic Plan has been approved and will be presented to the community in early April. He explained that work is already underway in developing the implementation working group and that faculties are now beginning to develop their own strategic plans, building on the University of Manitoba’s strategic plan.

He reminded Board members that Ms. Angie Bruce joined the University in February as Vice-President Indigenous, sharing that she emceed the 2024 Knight Lecture event recently held at the Fort Garry Campus and that this provided a fantastic opportunity for members of the University community to meet Ms. Bruce.

Dr. Benarroch provided an update on Government Relations at the University, sharing that a new Government and Community Relations Officer has been hired, providing a full team complement and allowing for greater focus on federal outreach. He explained that a considerable amount of work is underway within government relations, related to new international student study permit requirements. He shared that the University presented to Treasury Board on our budget needs.

Dr. Benarroch informed Board members that the work with Trustlab has stalled, however the University continues to work towards listening and responding to community, understanding this requires a multi-faceted approach.

He shared that the University is on track to reaching its annual fundraising goal of $61.4 million, with $51.47 million raised to date. He spoke about his recent “What’s the Big Idea” podcast with Dr. Julienne Strove, which was a fascinating opportunity to learn about sea ice and climate change.
Dr. Benarroch explained that the University continues its work on the budget model, reviewing capital planning and the development of a budget carryover policy. He spoke about emerging opportunities at the University, including S.E.T. Day, the Reputational Campaign, the launch “What Kind of Bison Are You? with the new bison images, and recent learning on Artificial Intelligence. He also provided an overview of some major institutional achievements such as the visit from The Honorable Jody Wilson-Raybould as the 2024 Knight Lecturer and fundraising successes with significant gifts to the University.

Dr. Benarroch explained that the University has received further information relating to international student caps and visas, understanding now that the University’s cap is specific to the number of acceptances offered to international students, rather than international visas. He shared that this is a three-step process, which first begins with the University accepting an international student. Then, the student must receive an attestation letter from the province, and then the student can apply for their visa. He noted that the University of Manitoba was given a cap of 5953 as the number of international student acceptances that can be issued. He explained that the University is re-examining its strategy, in that a fair amount of international student acceptances do not become registrations. He explained that one change being implemented is a new $2,000 deposit fee that would not be refundable unless the international student does not receive their visa. The purpose of this deposit fee is to ensure that internal student applications are from those who are serious about attending this institution, understanding the difficulties faced in now having a specific cap on the number of acceptances that the University of Manitoba can offer.

5.2 Request to Extend Temporary Suspension of Admissions to Post-baccalaureate Diploma in Agrology, Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences

Dr. Benarroch explained that this program has not been accepting students since 2015-16, sharing that the department would like to do a market analysis to determine if the program can and should be reinstated. He noted that implementing a further two-year extension would allow the unit to do so, ensuring that students cannot apply to the program during that time.

6. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by Dr. Anderson and seconded by Mr. Finkbeiner:

THAT the Board of Governors approve and/or receive for information the following:

THAT, the Board of Governors approve:
- Reports of the Senate Committee on Awards (dated November 19 and December 19, 2023)

The Board received for information the following:
- Reports from Senate (dated January 10, February 7 and March 6, 2024)
• Annual Report of the University Discipline Committee, September 1, 2022, to August 31, 2023
• Undergraduate Admission Targets, 2024 – 2025
• Extension of Suspensions of Admissions, President’s Approval: Bachelor of Science (Major) and Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biotechnology, Faculty of Science
• Implementation of Graduate Micro-Diploma in Applied Health Services Research, Department of Community Health Sciences

MOTION TO MOVE TO CLOSED AND CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

It was moved by Dr. Brown and seconded by Mr. Puznak:
THAT the meeting move into Closed and Confidential Session.

CARRIED

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Chair                           University Secretary