



Committee Chairs' Oral Reports to the Board of Governors

Written summaries of the committee Chairs' oral reports to the Board of Governors from the meeting of 6 October 2020 are provided below for the following committees:

- Academic Resources
- External Relations
- Finance and Audit
- Governance and Human Resources
- Investment
- Land and Property

Academic Resources Committee

Reference Notes for the 6 October 2020 Board meeting

We welcomed new members Professor Mazen Hamadeh and Joanie Cameron Pritchett to the committee.

Information Items

Markham Centre Campus

With the recent announcements of the Province's approval of the new campus and the ground-breaking for the new site, planning is in full swing to ensure its launch in 2023.

Planning and approval for Markham-based academic programs and establishing the full suite of student services on the campus are ongoing.

Detailed research planning is also underway for the new campus to build on the foundational work of YSpace and Innovation York, to intensify York's research and support the Experiential Education and community partnership goals for the new campus; a core set of multidisciplinary research themes have been mapped between York's research strengths and the critical new and emerging areas of demand for education/training in particularly in the Markham and York Regions.

Provost's Items

The Provost discussed three key topics:

1. academic continuity in the context of COVID-19

- summer 2020 enrolments were above target, and overall it was a very successful term that was delivered through online and remote learning;
- comprehensive teaching support is being provided both centrally and within Faculties to aid instructors' transition to online teaching
- course directors are adopting remarkably innovative approaches to delivery of courses, with examples illustrated for the committee and to be profiled for the Board at an upcoming meeting
- full selection of academic programs in progress for Fall session, online and remote, with a small number of in-person teaching occurring where required
- a full suite of student support services are being provided, including options for students in residences (approx. 2360) and international students abroad
- planning for winter term continuing, following same principles applied for Fall, with the pandemic developments and required actions being closely monitored
- critical to note is that the federal government has approved opening borders for international students, to which the University is responding with outreach to all international students abroad to learn whether they plan to travel to Canada and to plan their supports accordingly

2. Enrolments

- summer 2020 and preliminary fall 2020 enrolment data was reviewed, with the good messages that summer was over target by 30% and projections for fall at slightly above target overall, though mindful of ongoing uncertainty of pandemic-related risks – the Board will receive a comprehensive budget update today which will include this information

3. Provost's Objectives for 2020-21

- the new University Academic Plan, and the focus now on implementation of initiatives to advance its priorities and the SDGs – which we heard the President speak to in her remarks this afternoon
- the finalization of the SMA-3 with the Province this past August;
- the kick-off of the new Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change in September
- faculty complement authorizations for 2021-2022

Vice-President Research and Innovation Items

In a similar vein, Vice-President Asif also reported research continuity during the pandemic; current research; and VPRI objectives for 2020-21:

- 1. Research Continuity:** research activity among both faculty members and graduate students continues to remain high despite the challenges of the pandemic for researchers; 20 applications are in progress for large-scale research applications; several faculty have received high-profile honours and awards; the University is in Phase 2 of the plan for graduate return of researchers to campuses, which means over 650 researchers have been able to resume their on-campus work, with graduate students now a focus for graduate return.
- 2. Current Research:** a comprehensive briefing was provided covering initiatives to communicate York's research, facilitate commercial and social impacts of York's research through Innovation York, and the unfortunate interruption to activities at YSpace caused by the pandemic and its plans for a phased re-opening
- 3. VRPI Objectives for 2020-21:** priorities for the year include growing York's research income from all funding sources; furthering the research, innovation, entrepreneurship plans for the Markham campus and the Vaughan Health Precinct; advancing York's international leadership in the field of Disaster & Emergency Management; mid-point review of the 2018-2023 Strategic Research Plan; and intensify entrepreneurship and innovation through Innovation York

Discussion of progress towards the both the Provost's and Vice-President's objectives will feature in the committee's agendas over the course of the year.

Quality Assurance: Cyclical Program Reviews

The Committee received two reports from the Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance, transmitting the results of completed cyclical program reviews and related work.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Reference Notes for the 6 October 2020 Board Meeting

INFORMATION ITEMS

Welcome to New Members

The Committee welcomes new members, Professor Mazen Hamadeh, Senate nominee, and David Mochon Senado, student nominee (who sent regrets for yesterday's committee meeting).

2020-21 Priorities

- As we begin both a new academic year and University Academic Plan (UAP), Communications & Public Affairs, Advancement, and Government & Community Relations have charted their strategic areas of focus in support of [Building a Better Future: York University Academic Plan 2020-2025](#).
- The Committee heard how the work of each area's functions will support all areas of the UAP, and how in particular, within the PVP Integrated Resource Plan their strategies, actions and outcomes will primarily be reflected in:
 - **Priority 5:** Working in Partnership, which sets out: *York University understands that by partnering with other entities and sectors we gain vital insights and capacity to create positive impact for our students, our campuses, and our broader communities; and*
 - **Priority 6:** Living Well Together: *Making positive change requires that all members of the University's diverse community feel welcomed into a sense of belonging, common purpose, and shared responsibility to support and enrich each other's work.*

Communications & Public Affairs

a. 2020-21 Priorities

Last year, the Communications team completed and launched several Pan-University strategies, which are multi-year in nature.

In this context, a few of the key areas highlighted as being essential to building on the positive momentum created last year include:

- Launching the new brand advertising campaign, and all the associated communication & marketing activities, to bring the brand to life
 - This will include a consideration of the right approach to using the campaign in the international market.
- Continuing to profile York University's distinctive identity and vision as a progressive, inclusive University committed to driving positive change
- Supporting the full integration of the new brand into the fabric of University
- Implementing Phase II of the web optimization strategy
- Contributing to an expanded influencer and thought leadership strategy
- Supporting the University's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts

b. Points of Pride

The refreshed Points of Pride, which showcase York as a driving force of positive change and use the new digital design system (colour and emblems), are also in the materials:

1. York professor Steven Hoffman was tapped by the United Nations to lead global COVID-19 research recovery roadmap
2. York is moving forward with a bold plan to build the \$275.5 million Markham Centre Campus
3. For the eighth consecutive year, York was named one of Canada's Greenest Employers for 2020

Advancement

a. 2020-21 Priorities

Also in the context of the UAP, there are a number of key priorities for Advancement for the year, including:

1. A refresh and expansion of *Impact - The Campaign for York University*. It is expected that the initial goal of \$500 Million will be exceeded in 20-21 and there is an opportunity to continue with the momentum of the campaign to expand and extend it, as new fundraising priorities continue to emerge. A formal announcement will be forthcoming in early 2021.
2. One of these key fundraising priorities is the Markham Campus and this will be a central project for the Campaign, with a \$50 million goal.
3. Continued focus on expanding and deepening engagement with York's global alumni community across the lifespan and in support of all of the University's priorities.
4. A major focus on service excellence and capacity building to ensure Advancement is able to meet increasing demand and better support York's strategic priorities.

The Committee received an update on the COVID-19 Student Relief Fund. Close to \$475,000 has been raised, including special matching funds from the Pierre Lassonde Family Foundation and the Victor Dahdaleh Foundation. Many of our Governors have made donations, and hundreds of students have benefitted from the Fund. I would like to thank those Governors who donated to this Fund for their tremendous support of our students.

Government and Community Relations

The Committee heard about some successes in government and community relations that took place over the summer, including the announcement of the support of the provincial government for the new Markham Centre Campus as well as the designation of York University as one of only six Ontario universities designated to receive international students under the newly announced Federal restrictions during COVID.

a. 2020-21 Priorities

The Government and Community Relations team supports all aspects of the University Academic Plan.

This year, their work will mainly center on two key priorities in the UAP (Working in Partnership and Living Well Together). Strategic objectives and actions include:

- Implementation of a series of virtual Townhalls, continuing to promote open, transparent and collegial governance
- Continue to create opportunities to celebrate key milestones and successes of York community members
- Completing a Stakeholder Engagement strategy
- Continuing to enhance GR and CR relationships
- Supporting efforts to advance plans to establish the Vaughan healthcare precinct
- Continuing to support the work to create the Markham Centre campus especially pertaining to building stronger community relations in York Region and stewardship of key government stakeholders.

Lastly, the new UAP includes a challenge to elevate York's contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One concrete step to advancing the SDGs is through the establishment of **Canada's first CIFAL Centre** to be housed at York University. It will be called CIFAL-York and will be housed at the Markham Centre campus once it is opened in 2023. The central purpose of CIFAL's training programmes is to develop and strengthen human capacities to better respond to development challenges and to facilitate City to City (C2C) partnerships. The GCR Team has been the lead on working closely with UNITAR to set up the Centre. Work is underway to create a budget, identify a temporary location on the Keele campus, hiring of a Director and building a group of faculty champions.

FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Reference Notes for the 6 October 2020 Board Meeting

INFORMATION ITEMS

Cybersecurity Update

The committee received an update on cybersecurity noting increased attacks globally.

They were updated on the Cybersecurity Plan Roadmap, with a focus on the deployment of Endpoint Detection and Response and multi-factor identification for staff, faculty, and students.

Student Systems Renewal Program Update

The Committee received an update on the Student Systems Renewal Program.

- The project is on track and progressing well.
- A revised financial forecast is to be submitted at a future Committee meeting.

Report of the Internal Auditor

The Committee received the Internal Audit Status Report presented by Alex Matos, Director of Internal Audit.

- the overall results of Internal Audit activities completed during the period;
- key audits and initiatives currently in progress; and
- the status of management corrective actions to address previously reported audit findings.
- during the period, Internal Audit undertook eleven audit engagements, four of which have been completed, and continued with the development and implementation of the Enterprise Risk Management Initiative.
- the Chair stressed the need to continue to move forward on internal audit reviews to mitigate the risk of fraud. There have been many cases in the public sector because of lack of supervision and opportunities have increased.

GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Reference Notes for the October 6, 2020 Board meeting

Information Items

Human Resources

Labour Relations Update

- The Committee received a confidential update on labour relations.

Governance

Vacancy Planning

- Discussion of potential nominees for the Board continued; there are currently three vacancies with two additional as of January 1st.
- A special meeting of the committee will be convened to continue discussions with a goal to identify nominees for the December Board meeting.

The Selection Process and Timeline for the Selection of the Chancellor

- The Committee agreed to a process to be launched at the start of the Winter Term with the appointment of a new Chancellor in the Fall of 2021

Selection of the Vice-Chair/Chair Elect

- The Committee has agreed to a new timeline for the review of the Procedures and for the implementation of the renewal or selection process so that the renewal or selection may be resolved by July 1, 2021.

Annual Board Survey Results

- The Committee thoroughly reviewed the survey results, which were mainly positive. Specific actions were suggested wherever possible for those areas in which there was room for improvement.

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Reference Notes for the 6 October 2020 Board meeting

INFORMATION ITEMS

Discussion of Sustainable Investing Initiatives

- The focus on sustainable endowment fund investing actions has intensified over the past year
- Along with education sessions for the Investment committee, concrete steps have been taken in alignment with the *Statement of Beliefs for Sustainable Investing* articulated in the *Statement of Investment Policies and Procedures* (SIPP) including:
 - Publishing an Annual Report on Sustainable Investing
 - Allocating the 10% real asset allotment of the endowment fund portfolio to comprise a renewable energy focused infrastructure
 - Liaising with investment managers to ensure the University's sustainability priority is being implemented, and its exposure to fossil fuel companies is minimized (<0.18% of the total endowment fund now invested in fossil fuels)
 - Contracting new investment consultants better positioned to advise on different forms of sustainable investing
 - Following the principles in the June 2020 Canadian Climate Charter framework
- with the new University Academic Plan citing sustainability as a priority, further initiatives will be explored as implementations plans are defined.
- Consideration is being given to the value of a communication strategy for the University's ESG approach to highlight what York is doing differently and effectively to advance its sustainability goals, including in the investing context

Search for Investment Consulting Services

As reported to the Board last spring, the University issued an RFP for investment manager search advisory services for York's Endowment and Pension Funds to ensure best practices and accountability. With two joint members of the Investment Committee and Pension Fund Board participating with management, the search process unfolded over the summer months and concluded in September with the selection of two specialist consultants available to the University to provide advisory services according to the needs of the project. They are *Willis Towers Watson*, and *Proteus*, each with their own strengths that provides the ability for the Pension and Endowment Funds to have advisory services tailored to their needs.

University Budget Briefing

The President provided a budget update to the committee to apprise it of where the impact of the pandemic landed on a financial perspective. The Board will be receiving a full update on this topic.

LAND AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Reference Notes for the 6 October 2020 Board meeting

INFORMATION ITEMS

The discussion of our agenda items was grounded by introductory remarks from President Lenton about the connections between capital projects and the priorities articulated in the University Academic Plan 2020-2025, including its call to take up actions in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Capital Construction Report

- The Committee received a capital construction report dated to August 31, 2020.
- The continuation of restricted access to University buildings for students and staff has allowed for the extension of some project schedules into the fall and winter, such as the classroom renovation project.
- The Committee was briefed on the manner in which factors such as sustainability and social procurement are taken into account in the RFP and selection processes for construction projects.

Markham Centre Campus Update

- There has been a great deal of progress on Markham Centre Campus, with the groundbreaking event held last month marking an important milestone in the campus's development.
- The Committee received a comprehensive briefing about the activities that occurred over the summer months, including the provincial government announcement, construction preparations, building design, project schedule and costing, and planning for a student housing initiative.
- Immediately after the provincial government's July 24 announcement of support for the campus, the City of Markham issued a "permission to enter" agreement, enabling the construction manager, Stuart Olson, to prepare the site for construction.
- These preparations, comprising Tender Package 0 of the procurement strategy, include surveying the site boundary, fencing, placing office trailers, and erosion sediment control. All Tender Package 0 activities must be fully completed and inspected by Markham staff before any of the work associated with the subsequent Tender Packages can begin.
- Tender Package 1, which includes piling, shoring and excavation, was awarded last week. Tender Package 2 is anticipated to be issued in October.
- A building permit has been issued for the foundation and superstructure, and it is anticipated the full building permit will follow in the not-too-distant future

- The agreement with York Region to confirm \$25M of funding has recently been finalized.
- Based on the construction manager's current cost estimate, the capital budget cost summary remains unchanged from September 2019.
- Despite delays in the construction schedule related to the Provincial announcement, the September 2023 remains the target for the opening of the campus.
- As reported at the June meeting, the development of a purpose-built student residence near the campus in collaboration with the private sector is being explored.
 - o Following an RFP process, Ernst & Young was selected to serve as a transaction advisor to help identify a partner or third-party developer/landowner for the housing development.
 - o External market sounding and consultations with internal stakeholders currently are underway.
 - o This residence would comprise part of the University's overall housing ecosystem and, accordingly, would have a close connection to York's non-academic services and programming.

Lands for Learning Update

- As YUDC began efforts to develop of a vision for the *Lands for Learning*, its review of similar development by other universities revealed that several were guided by a vision statement and a real estate strategy.
- In view of this, the University has extended the work requested to be conducted by YUDC to encompass a real estate strategy and vision, with a team retained in early June, comprising the firms of DIALOG and Ernst & Young.
- Over the summer months, the scope of work was expanded to include the Harry W. Arthurs Common as part of the vision and strategy workplan due to its important historical role and prominent position at the heart of the Keele campus.
- DIALOG and E&Y representatives facilitated an initial consultation with the Committee at yesterday's meeting, delivering an introductory presentation and seeking input on a number of questions. The team will engage Committee members in discussion collectively and individually over the course of the academic year.