UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Board of Governors
Open Session Minutes

Mar 27, 2026
Council Chamber, 2-100 University Hall

ATTENDEES
Members: Nizar Somji (Chair), Pedro Almeida, Karina Banerji, Zarina Bhambhani, Ross Bricker, Darren Durstling, Bill Flanagan, Ryan Hastman, Ange Kadima, Kevin Kane, Aashish Kumar, Janice MacKinnon, Sett Policicchio, Ishaan Sachdeva, Miles Safranovich, Rob Seidel, Venkata Vemana, Dilini Vethanayagam, Christine Westerlund, Diane Wheatley, Paul Whittaker, Lillian Zenari

Internal Resources: David Bressler, Todd Gilchrist, John Lemieux, Elan MacDonald, Aminah Robinson Fayek, Verna Yiu

Presenters: Wayne Clark, Assistant Professor (Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry); Lise Gotell, Professor (Faculty of Arts); Jennifer Jennax, Director (Advancement Services)

University Governance Staff: Kate Peters, Juli Zinken, Ayzel Calder, Christian Fotang

REGRETS: Jason Wong

The Chair called the meeting to order and the secretary confirmed that attendance constituted a quorum.

***In Camera* Session**
Presenter(s): Nizar Somji

Voting members, including the President, met separately, *in camera*, at the start of the meeting.

Conflict of Interest: Opportunity for Declaration
Presenter(s): Nizar Somji

The Chair noted that the Board of Governors Bylaws and Code of Conduct require that members declare at each meeting whether they may have a conflict related to the agenda and, if necessary, absent themselves from the discussion and voting on that item. They invited members to declare conflicts of interest related to the open session meeting agenda, and, seeing none, declared the question asked and answered.

Open Session Agenda of March 27, 2026
Presenter(s): Nizar Somji

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the Board of Governors approve the open session agenda, as presented.	**CARRIED**

Opening Remarks
Presenter(s): Nizar Somji

The Chair delivered a land acknowledgement.

The Chair provided acknowledgements to the departing Governors (Aashish Kumar, Pedro Almeida, Karina Banerji, Paul Whittaker, and Janice McKinnon) and the incoming student Governors (Joseph Sesek and Saad Iqbal).

The Chair concluded by informing the Board of the CARDD-Tech tour that has been scheduled as requested.

Research Learning Moment: Rights Holders and Knowledge Holders: Rebuilding Health Systems Through Indigenous Governance
Presenter(s): Wayne Clark

At the request of the Chair, W Clark provided a learning moment on their research, speaking to how Inuit ways of knowing can be integrated into health research and research design to centre and balance power within health models, dynamics, and research.

W Clark shared data from trials and provided examples of the impact to the patient experience through the integration of Indigenous knowledge and spoke to the future goals of their research.

The Board questioned where the most critical gaps are to achieve data sovereignty.

Report of the President
Presenter(s): Bill Flanagan

Discussion:
B Flanagan gave an overview of the report presented to the Board and was pleased to inform Governors of the increase to the base operating grant for the university for the 2026/27 year, noting administration is still working to balance funding with costs that continue to rise.

B Flanagan highlighted recent successes, including the *Shape the Future* campaign, the newly implemented Winter convocation, implementation of the university's shared key values, active engagement with expanding international relationships, and the progress of the Universiade Pavillion (Butterdome) renewal.

Governors questioned if the university has considered a strategy to ensure the student experience is maintained during convocation while university enrollment continues to grow to meet the 60,000 student goal.

Recommendation from General Faculties Council: Opposition to the Elimination of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion from the Draft Recruitment Policy
Presenter(s): Lise Gotell

Discussion:
B Flanagan conveyed the motion brought forward from General Faculties Council (GFC).

L Gotell spoke to the university's definition of equity, the goals of the university of equity in recruitment, how the revisions to the policy do not address systemic inequality, and expressed the Recruitment Policy should reflect the broader definition of equity as described by Canadian law.

L Gotell emphasized the importance of diverse professorship and staff at the university, noting academic hiring shapes the core academic mission of the institution, and concluded by sharing the concern that the revisions will impact diversity in recruitment should the policy be approved.

Governors discussed how access, community and belonging broadens the lens of what is traditionally defined as equity, diversity and inclusion. The Governors thanked L Gotell and noted the importance of giving this conversation the time it deserves.

Report of the Human Resources and Compensation Committee
Presenter(s): Diane Wheatley

The Chair spoke to the work being done to align polices with Access, Community and Belonging, necessitating the revisions to the Recruitment Policy.

D Wheatley informed the Board that the Human Resources and Compensation Committee (BHRCC) recommends the policy to the Board for approval and that the changes to the policy intend to include diversity on a broader scale than just the defined scope of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Governors raised questions and comments, including
- The lack of alignment with term definitions and the impact it will have on departments reaching the diversity targets outlined by the tricouncil and will subsequently impact research opportunities;
- What the consequences would be if university recruitment does not align or comply with federal rules;
- That there may be worth restating why changes are being made specifically to the recruitment policy;
- How, without the procedures developed, there is a sense of distrust from students toward the university's commitment of diversity
- Agreement that having developed procedures accompanying the policy would create a sense of trust; and
- That the revisions to the policy intend to open recruitment to ensure more diverse access, not less.

V Yiu stated the changes to the policy will not put the university at risk of non-compliance with Canada Research Chairs and consultation has been done with subject matter experts, academic and administrative community, and executive university councils to ensure the changes keep the university complaint. A Robinson Fayek shared university recruitment continues to align with the tricouncil requirements and the university monitors and maintains reporting and compliance expectations.

P Almeida suggested (1) delaying the approval of the policy until procedures are developed to provide the trust the students are looking for; and (2) reporting to ensure diversity in recruitment continues following the approval of the policy. The Chair informed the Board that resolution of the motion will not be delayed.

Recruitment Policy - Draft Policy
Presenter(s): Todd Gilchrist, Verna Yiu

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the The Governors of The University of Alberta (the “**Board**”), on the recommendation of the Board Human Resources and Compensation Committee (the “**Committee**”) approve: a. the revised Recruitment Policy in the form disseminated to the Board (the “**Revised Recruitment Policy**”); b. the rescission of the *Employment Relationship Policy*, such rescission to take effect concurrently with the approval of the Revised Recruitment Policy.	**CARRIED**

P Almeida moved to pull the *University of Alberta Students' Union Report (Domestic Tuition Business Case)* from the Information Items for discussion.

University of Alberta Students' Union Report (Domestic Tuition Business Case)
Presenter(s): Pedro Almeida

Discussion:
P Almeida gave an overview of the business case submitted to the Board that makes the case for domestic tuition to remain flat for the 2026/27 year. P Almeida shared the case comes forward in light of the unexpected increase to the base operating grant from the province for the 2026/27 year.

P Almeida emphasized the positive impact that a tuition hold will have on students and that it will reinforce how public investment has a direct impact on students.

Governors raised questions and comments, including
- How many previous years in a row has tuition increased;
- If an increase to the base operational grant should equate to a hold in tuition if tuition was expected to increase to support an expected zero increase to the base operational grant;
- How the tuition comparison data presented in the report was developed;
- The importance of ensuring tuition increases do not appear as a moving goal post; and
- Differentiating between Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees (MNIF) and tuition; and
- How the university continues to endeavor to reduce areas of duplicity to reduce costs.

P Almeida provided closing comments by noting the difference between MNIFs and tuition is more of a nuanced conversation, that overall cost for students is important to consider, and the benefit of holding tuition following a year of consultation with the students will show investment in those conversations.

Report of the Finance and Property Committee
Presenter(s): Darren Durstling

D Durstling informed the Board of the robust discussion of tuition and budget that occurred at the Finance and Property Committee (BFPC) and the support of the motions by BFPC.

Presentation on the University of Alberta's 2026-2027 Consolidated Budget
Presenter(s): Bill Flanagan, Verna Yiu, Todd Gilchrist

B Flanagan thanked P Almeida for the work of the business case and conversation during the *University of Alberta Students' Union Report (Domestic Tuition Business Case)* item. B Flanagan expressed P Almeida is a great support for students.

B Flanagan reminded the Board of the acute financial pressures and noted the 3% increase to the base operating grant from the province, while helps the budget in light of the growing financial pressures, only makes a small difference. B Flanagan noted the importance of supporting students that require financial need and how the proposed budget will ensure the continuation of these supports. B Flanagan concluded by providing support to the proposed motions.

V Yiu and T Gilchrist introduced the proposed tuition increases and 2026/27 budget, speaking to major points of the report shared with the Board. T Gilchrist emphasized the impact to the university from the original cut to the base operating grant and the years it was held flat, sharing that even in light of reductions and optimization, the university is still working toward financial stability. T Gilchrist shared that through these efforts a balanced budget is being presented and a balanced budget is anticipated for the next two years.

V Yiu spoke to the proposed increases to tuition detailed in the report and provided the Board with a verbal overview of the percentage increases that are being sought for domestic and international tuition.

T Gilchrist concluded by informing the Board that if approved the budget and the Capital Plan (see Open Session Consent Agenda) will be submitted to the province in May.

Governors raised questions and comments, including
- How the 2026/27 provincial budget saw an increase in funding across the province and the importance of maintaining provincial expectations of the university budget and tuition increases despite an increase in its base operating grant;
- The importance of values, shared accountability, and impact that increasing or holding tuition for the 2026/27 year would have on the university community;
- Why the key budget drivers did not change in light of the increase of funding from the province;
- If there is a reliance on the investment income to maintain financial stability for the university;
- Appreciation for the decrease in thesis-based student tuition and a hope that it becomes harmonized in coming years;
- An overview of the findings found in the Graduate Student Association (GSA) student satisfaction survey, including data regarding student financial insecurity and the impact it has

on student success;
- The decisions that have been made over the years following the original cut to the base operating grant from the province and how the increases to tuition and the budget will support the institution's financial stability;
- The importance of staying the course with the budget;
- Recognition that the tuition increase will impact students, so too would a tuition hold impact the university;
- Importance to recognize the pressures of international students that make attending and succeeding at the university a challenge, including geopolitical pressures and financial impacts; and
- That a hold to tuition will offer a direct invisible affordability measure, support university community and student impact through excellence, provide alignment with student support, and show evidence of the impact of consultation.

Tuition Proposals
Presenter(s): Verna Yiu

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT The Governors of The University of Alberta (the "**Board**"), on the recommendation of the Board Finance and Property Committee, approve a 2% increase to domestic tuition for undergraduate and graduate students for Fall 2026.	**CARRIED**

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT The Governors of The University of Alberta (the "**Board**"), on the recommendation of the Board Finance and Property Committee, approve tuition fees for new international students for all programs to take effect for the Fall 2027 intake, in the form disseminated to the committee.	**CARRIED**

University of Alberta Consolidated Budget 2026-27
Presenter(s): Todd Gilchrist, Verna Yiu

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT The Governors of the University of Alberta (the "**Board**"), on the recommendation of the Board Finance and Property Committee and the General Faculties Council Academic Planning Committee, approve the University of Alberta 2026-27 Consolidated Budget, in the form disseminated to the Board.	**CARRIED**

The Chair thanked administration for the work done on the budget and the feedback that was provided from the Board.

Report of the Reputation and Public Affairs Committee
Presenter(s): Paul Whittaker

P Whittaker reminded the Board of the reasons why the policy is being revised and welcomed the presenters of the item.

Revisions to the Naming Policy and Donation Acceptance Policy
Presenter(s): Elan MacDonald, Jennifer Jennax

E MacDonald informed the Board the changes to the policies will insure consistency, alignment of donations with university values, implementation of fixed names, and the ability to revoke names.

J Jennax noted the revisions are a direct response to the review by the general auditor and key governance and executive committees. J Jennax expanded on the revisions to the policies presented to the Board, sharing they will ensure alignment with university values and university reputation.

J Jennax expressed the polices have been revised to be high-level and operational details have been transitioned into the procedures which are currently undergoing revision.

The motion was moved and seconded.

THAT the Governors of the University of Alberta (the "Board"), on the recommendation of the Board Reputation and Public Affairs Committee, approve the revised Naming Policy and revised Gift Acceptance Policy, in the forms disseminated to the Board, to take effect upon final approval.	**CARRIED**

Report of the Governance Committee
Presenter(s): Rob Seidel

R Seidel introduced the item, sharing the first three years of the Implementation Plan is coming to its end and welcomed V Yiu to present on the plan for the next three years.

Renewal of the Three-Year Implementation Plan for Shape: A Strategic Plan of Impact
Presenter(s): Verna Yiu

Supporting the materials shared with the Board, V Yiu shared the first three years of Shape's implementation were successful and targets were met, noting a final impact report will be shared with the Board in June. V Yiu shared the goals of the 2026-29 Plan will be supported by the core foundations created by the 2023-26 Plan and will enable the university to be nimble and adaptive to the changing environment. V Yiu concluded by providing the Board with goals of the 2026-29 Plan.

Governors questioned where the University of Alberta stands in comparison to the other U15s regarding student retention and compilation rates.

Consent Agenda
Presenter(s): Nizar Somji

The motion to approve items on the consent agenda was moved and seconded.

THAT the Board of Governors hereby approves the consent agenda, as presented and as detailed in the meeting materials distributed to members, and that the actions and recommendations contained therein are hereby adopted.	**CARRIED**

Open Session Minutes of December 12, 2025

THAT the Board of Governors approve the open session minutes of its December 12, 2025 meeting.	**CARRIED**

University of Alberta Capital Plan 2026-27 to 2028-29

THAT The Governors of the University of Alberta (the "**Board**"), on the recommendation of the Board Finance and Property Committee, approve the institution's Capital Plan 2026-27 - 2028-29, in the form disseminated to the Board.	**CARRIED**

South Campus Modular Data Centre

WHEREAS: A. Information Services and Technology ("IST") has requested capital funding in the amount of $12.54 million for the purposes of financing the construction and delivery of a modular data centre to be situated on the university's South Campus (the "Purpose"). B. The Internal Loan Policy requires that The Governors of The University of Alberta (the "Board") approve internal credit allocations exceeding $7 million. C. The Investment and Treasury group within Finance, Procurement and Planning ("FPP - Investments and Treasury") and the Vice-President (University Services, Operations and Finance) recommends that the allocation proceed. IT IS RESOLVED THAT: 1. The Governors of the University of Alberta (the "Board"), on the recommendation of the Board Finance and Property Committee, hereby approve an internal capital allocation (the "Internal Loan") in the amount of $12.54 million to be drawn from the university's non-endowed investment pool. 2. The Internal Loan shall be advanced only for the Purpose and shall be subject to the following financial terms: (a) a repayment term not to exceed 10 years; (b) an interest rate of not more than 3.62%, calculated annually in accordance with the Internal Loan Policy; and	**CARRIED**

(c) repayment shall be made in accordance with the Internal Loan Repayment / Amortization Schedule as presented to and reviewed by the Board. 3. The university's Associate Vice-President (Finance, Procurement and Planning) and Chief Financial Officer is directed to execute all internal accounting entries, "due to / due from" records, and internal memoranda necessary to formalize this allocation within the university's financial systems. 4. It is confirmed that In accordance with the Internal Loan Procedure, FPP - Investments and Treasury will manage the allocation of the Internal Loan funds and monitor the repayment of the Internal Loan, ensuring compliance with the Internal Loan Repayment / Amortization Schedule.	

Non-Union Employee Handbook - Draft Handbook

THAT The Governors of The University of Alberta (the "Board"), on the recommendation of the Board Human Resources and Compensation Committee: a. approve the revised Handbook of Terms and Conditions of Employment for Non-Union Employees ("the Non-Union Employee Handbook") as disseminated to the Committee. b. rescind the Handbook of Terms and Conditions of Employment for Management and Professional Staff (Excluded). c. delegate authority to approve changes to the Handbook of Terms and Conditions of Employment for Non-Union Employees to the Board Human Resources and Compensation Committee.	**CARRIED**

Information Items

There were no requests from members to discuss an information item.

2026 - 27 Board of Governors Meeting Schedule

Archives Policy

Report of the Audit and Risk Committee

Report of the Finance and Property Committee

Fiscal Update FY 2025-26

Report of the Governance Committee

Report of the Human Resources & Compensation Committee

Report of the Investment Committee

Report of the Learning, Research and Student Experience Committee

Report of the Reputation and Public Affairs Committee

Chancellor's Report

Alumni Association

Graduate Students' Association (+ Annual Financial Statements)

Association of Academic Staff

Non-Academic Staff Association

General Faculties Council

University of Alberta Students' Union Report (Domestic Tuition Business Case)

Adjournment of Open Session
The Chair concluded the open session and the committee moved into closed session.