



SENATE MINUTES

Hybrid Meeting, Senate & Board Chamber, Waterloo and Brantford
Thursday May 11, 2023, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Present: D. MacLatchy (Chair), M. Abu-Rshaid, A. Acharya, G. Ashoughian, A. Beek, M. Brolley, P. Bryden, R. Buehler, M.L. Byrne, M. Cantalini-Williams, J. Casey, A. Clarke, J. Coolman, M. Coulter, A. Domurath, P. Elliott, A. Essaji, A. Herman, C. Hoang, P. Ironstone, C. Johnston Turner, I. Joseph, L. King, S. Lachapelle, D. Law, J. Leung, L. Luccisano, E. Maier, R. Makarov, B. McKay, T. McLaren, K. Menon, J. Mueller, J. Newman, L. Noronha, H. Northwood, V. Oliver, F. Perez, J. Popham, S. Ramsay, H. Richards, K. Schnarr, J. Schwieter, D. Smith, T. Snoddon, R. Sterne, D. Thomas, D. Treleaven, C. VanEvery-Albert, M. Walton-Roberts, K. Werbin, B. Wolfe, J. Zhan

Regrets: M. Baldwin, S. Chamberlain, L. Chu, A. Diebold, T. Dowling, A. Jorgenson, E. Mercier, A. Ngo, A. Parker, K. Shankardass, C. Smith

Absent: N. Amanullah, D. Antonowicz, E. Cameron, S. Cameron, E. Fox Tree, M. Khan, V. Kitaev, K. Lund, R. McGowan, J. Reid, D. Wheatley, D. Yerichuk, G. Yun, K. Zhu

Secretariat: A. Juhik, A. Kornobis, A. Lukin, P. Nicholls, P. Marfisi

1. Open Session

- a. **Call to Order & Approval of the Agenda**, D. MacLatchy
Motion (J. Newman/J. Mueller): that Senate approve the agenda as presented. Carried.
- b. **Milton Campus Background and Revised Academic and Business Plan**, D. MacLatchy / H. Northwood / L. Noronha / J. Newman
An overview of recent action items pertaining to the Milton campus was presented. By expanding into Milton, the University would be able to increase its corridor funding and give Laurier the ability to access more government grant funding to build and grow in-demand programs to better support its increasing domestic student enrolment. It was noted that Milton is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada and is a high growth area which is promising for enrolment numbers.

The long-term focus for the Milton campus will be planetary health and sustainability and responsible STEAM in academic and research programs. This focus will help give students the skills to address and respond to significant and complex societal issues with opportunities for experiential learning. Milton planning contained a combination of short, medium and long-term planning.

Planning for research was underway, noting the development of the Laurier Hub for Community Solutions to develop community-based research opportunities with local municipalities, IGOs and NGOs. Plans were being developed to create the Centre for Urban Watershed Research which included the formation of a partnership with Conservation Halton, and researchers from various other post-secondary institutions. The University submitted a funding proposal to the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) for this initiative; the Board would make its decision in June 2023. Laurier will also be part of the Milton Innovation Collective which will be a partnership between Laurier, the Town of Milton, Conestoga College, Halton Region and Haltech and eventually will be housed in Milton One.

Short-term plans were being put in place to focus on programs that do not require specialized facilities. The University intended to bring its existing Computer Science and Psychology programs to the Milton campus in fall 2024. In fall 2025, the intention was to introduce the software engineering program. Over this time period, Laurier will focus on commuter students while ensuring that students have an engaged experience with a strong community. All academic programming will be designed with commuter students in mind (i.e. alignment with GO schedules, online elective offerings, plan events and activities in alignment with class schedules). Classes will be held in the Milton Education Village Innovation Centre which is owned by the Town of Milton until Milton One is built. This space is already being used for the Master of Education program.

An analysis of the financial impacts of launching this space was brought forward. Laurier planned to continue utilizing the leased space for an 8-year period. Assumptions in the budget noted a 2% tuition increase for domestic tuition for Fall 2024, pending the results of the Blue-Ribbon Panel recommendation. The tuition anomaly program had not yet been incorporated, however would be positive if approved. International student tuition had been estimated at a 5% increase; it was noted that the focus will be on domestic students. Enrollment projections were brought forward with computer science as the largest program. At the outset, there would be a more passive focus on international students. Marketing will primarily focus on grade 12 students to focus on the 2024 start year.

Forecasts were brought forward with projected breakeven by year 3 (2026/2027), and the entrance of a cumulative surplus by year 6 (2029/30). MEVIC would be funded through existing debt structure with the debt repurposed from recent real-estate transactions. Both principal and interest debt were incorporated into the business plan and were amortized over the nine year period. A plan was brought forward for fundraising noting short, medium and long term priorities to build the campus. 132 funders had been identified to approach for Milton fundraising initiatives.

With the opening of Milton One a larger number of programs would be brought forward. Programs will take an interdisciplinary approach to enable students to formulate answers to big questions. At the outset of the campus, the focus will

be on undergraduate programs and graduate programs will be added as appropriate.

Moving forward, the next phases of business planning will focus on the re-activation of Milton One which will be brought back through the governing bodies in Fall 2023/Winter 2024 with the primary goal to analyze capital investment risk mitigation and in particular debt-services capacity and impacts to Laurier's financial health. Re-activation will be done in alignment with debt servicing capacity while considering internal and external factors as appropriate.

The Senate discussed: The University's plans to enhance the Greenbelt area the campus resides on, and plans to hire Indigenous researchers and faculty members to be part of these efforts; concerns on how targeting commuter students will impact the Brantford campus; how much the University had invested in the land and timing surrounding the land transfer; the cost of recuperating losses should there not be enough demand for the space; the increasing value of the land and the significant partnerships in the Milton area which are counting on Laurier's campus in the space; the building sold by the University and how this increases the University's capacity to take on debt; that Milton is a promising area for expansion; major risks being marketing, the need for capital campaigns to maintain a good debt ratio and ongoing construction risks and the need for strong mitigation plans; how increasing program costs based on growth are incorporated in the projections; concerns surrounding the role capital expansion played in the Laurentian situation; concerns surrounding the austerity measures placed in Laurier's budget and how the development of the Milton campus plays into this; how to maintain stability and reduce leadership turnover; concerns that Laurier campuses will be competing for students given overlapping programs; concerns surrounding lack of overall information, particularly surrounding cost and revenue projections; concerns surrounding MEVIC's proximity to amenities and how to provide student services; concerns surrounding reduced focus on Laurier's existing campuses; the needs for more information and ongoing planning updates; concerns surrounding the disparities between the Waterloo and Brantford campuses and that this will grow as the focus shifts to the Milton campus; concerns surrounding morale of existing faculty on the Brantford campus and how this will transfer to a new smaller campus; how Laurier will differentiate between institutions with similar offerings; the need for further market research on what campus experience should look like; how the Brantford campus will continue to be developed simultaneously with Milton, and how to ensure the student experience is up to par with the Brantford and Waterloo campuses.

2. Other Business

None.

3. Adjournment

Note: If you need assistance or have a question about this agenda or the Senate, please contact the University Secretariat office, by email to skelly@wlu.ca.