

ACTION PLAN
FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE REPORT
BY HARRIET LEWIS ENTITLED:
“Review of Governance Culture and Practices: Memorial University”

Last reviewed: February 9, 2018

Recommendation	Assigned To	Status
III. Background and Context		
2. The Memorial University Act, Page 6		
1.	Further changes to the Act should not be made piecemeal. Change should be made only after a careful review of the legislation as a whole. Consideration should be given to re-writing and modernizing the legislation to reflect the maturity and recognized quality of the institution, its governing bodies and its administration, and to stating more clearly the distribution of authority: where it is granted to the institution (i.e. autonomy) and where it is reserved to the government. 1(A) Further changes to the Act should not be made piecemeal. Change should be made only after a careful review of the legislation as a whole. 1(B) Consideration should be given to re-writing and modernizing the legislation to reflect the maturity and recognized quality of the institution, its governing bodies and its administration, and to stating more clearly the distribution of authority: where it is granted to the institution (i.e. autonomy) and where it is reserved to the government.	Executive Committee
		Divided into Recommendations 1(A) and 1(B) by the Steering Committee
1(A)	Further changes to the Act should not be made piecemeal. Change should be made only after a careful review of the legislation as a whole.	Not accepted
1(B)	Consideration should be given to re-writing and modernizing the legislation to reflect the maturity and recognized quality of the institution, its governing bodies and its administration, and to stating more clearly the distribution of authority: where it is granted to the institution (i.e. autonomy) and where it is reserved to the government.	Executive Committee
		Referred to the Executive Committee for consideration in the context of amendments to the University Act
2.	A formal/routine channel should be established for the University and the government to communicate on a regular basis to address ongoing business issues.	Executive Committee
		Accepted and ongoing
VI. Memorial Governance and Potential for Change		
1. Appointment of Regents, Pages 13 – 14		
Recommendations 3 – 5: “I suggest that the government be asked to”		
3.	Stagger the appointments to the remaining vacancies	Executive Committee
		Referred to the Executive Committee for consideration in the context of amendments to the University Act, as outlined in 1(B)
4.	Re-appoint the current government appointees for another term, and	Governance Committee
		Accepted and in progress

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5.	Consider other alternatives for addressing transitional issues which have arisen as a result of their implementation of the new process.	Executive Committee	Referred to the Executive Committee for consideration in the context of amendments to the University Act as outlined in 1(B)
6.	a. hold elections yearly or every two years on a staggered basis to ensure that the terms of elected Regents do not all expire at the same time; b. consider alternatives for addressing the transitional issues e.g. having half of the next elected Regents agree to run for an initial shorter term.	Executive Committee	Referred to the Executive Committee for consideration in the context of amendments to the University Act as outlined in 1(B)
7.	The alumni election rules and procedures should be reviewed by the Executive and/or Governance Committee. In keeping with the now current practice of delivering the Board’s skill matrix to the government, the Board may wish to consider establishing some desirable skills and qualities for elected Regents in relation to the skills matrix and the specific needs of the Board. The nominations may then be more likely to attract individuals with those needed skills, and encourage the voting alumni to consider the Board’s needs when casting their ballots. Current best practice would also dictate that the call for nominations include a statement about equality and diversity.	Executive Committee	Referred to the Executive Committee for consideration in the context of amendments to the University Act as outlined in 1(B)
2. Representative or Fiduciary: Conflicts of commitment, Page 15			
8.	Since all Regents have equal status and fiduciary responsibility, they should not be grouped, listed or referred to in written materials or otherwise, in terms of the origin of their appointment, unless in connection with their appointment or election.	Governance Committee	Accepted and in progress
Recommendations 9 – 12: “In terms of establishing best practice and with the intention of avoiding, if not resolving, conflicts of commitment, I recommend that”			
9.	the Board, through the appropriate committees and working with the administration and affected parties, consider how to address the issues above;	Governance Committee	Accepted and added to the Governance Committee workplan
10.	the Conflict of Interest Policy be amended to define and include Conflicts of Commitment;	Governance Committee	Accepted and added to the Governance Committee workplan
11.	the Board exercise its authority to develop some criteria or qualifications for students seeking to serve on the Board. (For an example, see the Student Senator Caucus Policy and Procedures: Composition, Criteria and Responsibilities of Student Nominees to the York University Board of Governors which was drafted under the leadership of the student governors and adopted by the Board of Governors);	Executive Committee	Referred to the Executive Committee for consideration in the context of amendments to the University Act as outlined in 1(B)

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12. this issue be taken up by the ad hoc subcommittee of the Governance Committee considering the opening of the Act to determine how best to avoid conflicts of commitment in the future if it decides to provide for faculty and staff members to serve as Regents. (Exempting faculty members from their union while serving on the Board, and providing that staff not serve as officers or officials of their unions while on the Board are both solutions in place at York University.)	Executive Committee	Referred to the Executive Committee for consideration in the context of amendments to the University Act as outlined in 1(B)
3. A culture of Inclusion, Page 19		
Recommendations 13 – 16: “Attention should be given to the creation and vetting of Board materials. I recommend that”		
13. all those currently responsible for generating the board package meet to review how best to create a more focussed, shorter and accessible package. I suggest that they look at other universities’ agendas, some of which are publically available, to consider alternative ways in which resolutions and background material are presented for decision.	Vice-Presidents Council, Office of the Board of Regents, Office of the President (to develop recommendations for consideration by the Executive Committee)	Accepted and implemented
14. before difficult and/or complicated items come forward for decision, (e.g. the budget or the financial framework of a large capital project), the Administration be proactive in ensuring that those Regents who will have special competency or interest in the issues be given the opportunity to review, question and discuss the proposed items. This could be done informally, by a special session, or through encouraging attendance of non-committee members at the committee meeting where the item will be on the agenda.	Vice-Presidents Council, Office of the Board of Regents, Office of the President (to develop recommendations for consideration by the Executive Committee)	Accepted and implemented
15. student Regents be given the opportunity for a special briefing on complicated matters in an atmosphere where they feel comfortable asking for clarification and raising issues of particular concern to them.	Vice-Presidents Council, Office of the Board of Regents, Office of the President (to develop recommendations for consideration by the Executive Committee)	Accepted and added to the Governance Committee workplan
16. consideration be given to altering the schedule of meetings to separate Committee meetings from Board meetings for sufficient time to give an opportunity for a full Board package to be prepared and reviewed by the Executive Committee.	Vice-Presidents Council, Office of the Board of Regents, Office of the President (to develop recommendations for consideration by the Executive Committee)	Accepted and implemented (Combined with #13)
4. Orientation and Ongoing Education, Page 22		
17. In-depth seminars on the structure of the university budget and financial statements	Governance Committee	Accepted and implemented
18. Given the number of land and building issues which appear to be pressing, a “real estate and infrastructure” tour of the campus and physical plant	Governance Committee	Accepted and implemented

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19.	Separate sessions for students joining the Board on topics of their particular interest such as how the budget is constructed	Governance Committee	Accepted and added to the Governance Committee workplan
20.	Regent visits to laboratories to hear from lead researchers about their work	Governance Committee	Accepted and added to the Governance Committee workplan
21.	Media training for designated spokespersons	Governance Committee	Accepted and in progress
22.	Training on “the culture of respect”	Governance Committee	Accepted and in progress
Recommendation 23: “Although formal mentorship plans for new university board members are difficult to implement, I recommend that on a volunteer basis”			
23.	experienced Regents volunteer to be informal mentors to new Regents, and particularly to students.	Governance Committee	Accepted and added to the Governance Committee workplan
Recommendations 24-25: I observe that Memorial board governance is not well understood by the University community at large, including students, faculty members and administrators who do not have involvement with the Board. I recommend that”			
24.	as part of the on-boarding of new staff, and at appropriate meetings of current staff, faculty members and students, presentations be given on the University’s governance system; including the roles of the Board, Senate and Administration; how and from where business comes to the committees and the Board; and how decisions are made.	Vice-Presidents Counsel	Accepted and added to the Governance Committee workplan
25.	materials already prepared for Board orientation could be adapted for wider educational purposes and posted on a university website.	Office of the Board of Regents	Accepted and in progress
5. Knowing and Being Known, Page 24			
26.	that there be a Board networking opportunity at least once per term;	Governance Committee	Accepted and implemented
27.	that Regents continue to be invited to, and introduced at, events on the campuses.	Executive Committee	Accepted and implemented
6. Confidentiality, Openness and Communication, Page 25			
28.	that the Board move toward more items being dealt with in open session;	Executive Committee	Accepted and implemented
29.	that the Executive Committee consider which items on an agenda could be dealt with in open session;	Executive Committee	Accepted and implemented
30.	that the Executive Committee and the Governance Committee consider protocols around the conduct of visitors including the press, during the open session of the Board;	Executive Committee and Governance Committee	Accepted and implemented
31.	that the Board Agenda be mounted on the University’s web site when it is mounted on the Board portal; appropriately drafted to show items of business but mindful of confidentiality issues.	Executive Committee	Accepted and in progress
7. Enhancing Communications from and about the Board, Page 27			

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32. that a brief synopsis of information and action items be prepared after each Board meeting, and that it be provided for publication in the Gazette and posted on the Board of Regents web page. (As a precedent, see the Board Synopsis prepared after each board meeting at York. It is posted in the York online equivalent of the Gazette (called Y-file) and also appended to the next Senate agenda for information.)	Governance Committee	Accepted and added to the Governance Committee workplan
<i>VIII. Board Self-Assessment, Page 30</i>		
33. As Regents become comfortable with the self-assessment tool, it would be helpful to extend the evaluations to the committees, a step that would assist the Governance Committee to review and establish committee assignments and give committee chairs valuable feedback.	Governance Committee	Accepted and added to the Governance Committee workplan