



## **Durham College of Applied Arts and Technology Public Meeting of the Governance Review Committee**

When making decisions, the Board is encouraged to consider the College's values of collaboration, diversity and inclusion, excellence, innovation, integrity, respect, and social responsibility.

**Date: Monday, September 15, 2025**

**Time: 7:00 p.m.**

**Location: Virtual Meeting, MS Teams**

### **Minutes**

#### Members Present

Kwende Thomas, Committee Chair

Alison Burgess

John Ecker

Jerry Ouellette

Lisa Allen, Chair of the Board

Elaine Popp, President

#### Members Absent

Kelly Doyle, Committee Vice Chair

#### Staff Present

Melissa Pringle, Manager, Board Governance and Privacy

### **1. Call to Order**

With quorum present, the Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

### **2. Conflict of Interest Declarations**

The Committee Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest to declare.  
None noted.

### **3. Presentations**

#### **3.1 Review of Committee Terms of Reference**

As it was the first meeting of the 2025-2026 Board year, the Committee reviewed its terms of reference and key responsibilities. The Committee was reminded that its meetings were open to the public, with agendas and minutes posted online. Additionally, a brief discussion ensued about the Committee's role in policy development. In response to questions, the Board Secretary advised that, in the context of new policy development, it would be preferred to seek the Board's support for developing a new policy first, versus the Committee doing the work and then seeking support from the Board.

### **4. Approval of the Agenda**

There was a request to add a discussion about a potential new policy to the agenda.

Moved by Governor Ecker

Seconded by Governor Burgess

"That the agenda for the September 15, 2025, meeting of the Governance Review Committee be approved as amended." CARRIED

### **5. Approval of Previous Minutes**

The Committee reviewed and approved its minutes from the May 12, 2025 Governance Review Committee meeting.

Moved by Governor Burgess

Seconded by Governor Allen

"That the minutes from the May 12, 2025, meeting of the Governance Review Committee be approved as presented." CARRIED

### **6. Decision Items**

There were no decision items.

### **7. Discussion Items**

#### **7.1 Results of the 2024-2025 Board Evaluation Survey (for potential action)**

The Committee reviewed the results of the 2024-2025 Board evaluation survey and shared initial reflections and impressions regarding the survey results. A discussion ensued about how to best interpret the results and areas of potential

focus. Initial conversations focused on some of the results from the self-assessment section (e.g., adhering to the code of conduct), specific asks for enhanced education (e.g., governance versus operations), and ways to link and connect the work the Board does to questions asked in the survey (e.g., awareness of the Board work plan). Further, the Committee remarked that the results were positive and suggested the Board is already operating at a high level of effectiveness.

The Committee Chair advised that this item would come back to the Committee at its November meeting, and members were asked to prioritize their top 3-4 items for potential action.

## 7.2 Preliminary Planning for Board Retreat (February 2026)

The Committee received an update from the President regarding considerations for the February 2026 Board retreat, such as location (e.g., on-site), format (e.g., one day or two), and potential agenda topics. A brief discussion ensued about the potential format, location, and agenda topics and activities that could address the feedback received in the evaluation survey and link to the strategic vision.

The Committee Chair advised that this item would come back to the Committee at its November meeting for further discussion.

## 7.3 Handling of Board Meeting Evaluation Feedback

The Committee discussed the recent changes to the Board meeting evaluation process, whereby a new optional survey was created for distribution following each Board meeting. When the survey was implemented in February 2025, how the feedback would be shared back to the full Board wasn't explicitly established and it was the practice that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board would receive the feedback and share it as appropriate at the next Board meeting. Since implementation, concerns were brought forward about the transparency of the feedback and whether it could be made accessible in a raw format to the entire Board by posting it to the portal. A discussion ensued about the structure of the survey, how it's currently being administered and if the survey results should be shared more broadly, including the potential risks of posting feedback received in a raw format to the portal and whether there should be a review process for redacting inappropriate comments.

Following the discussion, the Committee decided that no changes were needed to the current survey tool except for an enhanced instructions section which advises contributors that their feedback will be posted publicly on the Board portal with their name associated and all feedback should be submitted in a manner that is consistent with the Board's code of conduct and established norms. It was

decided that the Board Chair would apprise the Board of the new practice at the October 8, 2025, Board meeting. Further, the Committee decided that feedback received prior to the implementation of this new process would not be posted on the portal, as it was not explicitly communicated to Governors that this would occur.

#### 7.4 Governance Review Presentation at the October 8, 2025 Board Meeting

The Committee Chair apprised the Committee of plans for Borden Ladner Gervais (BLG) to deliver the annual governance refresher at the October 8, 2025, Board meeting and reminded the Committee that the meeting will start at 5:15 p.m. to accommodate this presentation. Further, the President advised that during the Ministry's governance review consultation with presidents, several other colleges indicated that they bring in an external facilitator to deliver governance training to the Board on an annual basis, which was seen as a best practice. Additionally, as the Higher Education Summit is not proceeding this year, the annual good governance training typically provided to new Governors has pivoted to a virtual format.

The Committee questioned the cost of the training, which was reported at \$2K + HST.

#### 7.5 New Policy Development

A discussion ensued about the possibility of developing a new policy related to Governor engagement in College events, to encourage a higher level of participation in College life and to ensure that Governors are strategically invited to key events on campus that enable them to act in the role of ambassador. Following the discussion, the Committee Chair suggested that the Committee look at the Board's existing policies and practices to determine if they need to be enhanced or refined to address the concerns brought forward and to defer a more fulsome discussion of the topic to the next meeting to give members time to reflect on the suggestion.

### 8. Information Items

There were no information items.

### 9. Meeting Assessment

The Committee engaged in a roundtable meeting assessment and commended the Chair for facilitating his first meeting.

## 10. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting ended at 8:49 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kwende Thomas".

---

Kwende Thomas  
Committee Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "mpingle".

---

Melissa Pringle  
Board Secretary