

**Brandon University Board of Governors
(Open Session)**

Saturday, January 24, 2026

Louis Riel Room & Zoom

8:30 a.m.

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- Present:** Christine Bovis-Crossen; Ravikiran Dwivedula; Sunday Frangi (Zoom); Dean Hammond; Bryan Hill; Katheryne Lumgair; Molly MacPherson-Blair; Chukwuanugo Okudo (Zoom); Quintin Pearce; Emmanuelle Shakotko; Charles Adamu; Joseph Pelletier; Kevan Sumner (Chair); Steven Soder; Michelle Williams-Joel
- Resources:** Bernadette Ardelli; Elder Barb Blind; Greg Gatien; Peter Hickey; Meghan Lamontagne (Recorder)
- Regrets:** Mary Jane McCallum
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- 1. OPENING PRAYER & SMUDGE**
- 2. CALL TO ORDER & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:47 a.m.

The meeting began with a land acknowledgement, recognizing that Brandon University has campuses on both Treaty 1 and Treaty 2 lands and is a gathering place for people from many backgrounds around the world. In this way, we carry on the Indigenous customs of our home in Brandon. It was further acknowledged that Brandon is on shared territory between the Dakota Oyate, the Anishinaabeg, and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. Today, many other Indigenous people call Brandon their home, including the Ininew, Anisininewuk, Denesuline, and Inuit.

- 3. AGENDA & MINUTES**

- 3.1 Approval of Agenda of January 24, 2026

Motion: Moved and seconded (K. Lumgair/C. Bovis-Crossen)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda of the January 24, 2026, Board of Governors meeting (Open Session) be approved.

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CARRIED3.2 Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion: Moved and seconded (S. Soder/Q. Pearce)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the consent agenda of the January 24, 2026, Board of Governors (Open Session) meeting be approved as follows:

- 3.2.1 Minutes of November 22, 2025 (Open Session)**
- 3.2.2 Report from the Vice-President (Research & Graduate Studies)**
- 3.2.3 Report from the Acting Provost & Vice-President (Academic)**
- 3.2.4 Report – Transactions of \$100,000 or More – November 1 to December 30, 2025**
- 3.2.5 Reports from Representatives on Committees Reporting to the Board**
 - 3.2.5.1 BU Foundation**
 - 3.2.5.2 BU Retirement Plan Board of Trustees**
 - 3.2.5.3 BU Senate**

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CARRIED**4. PRESENTATIONS**

4.1 Indigenous Peoples' Centre Expansion Concept

The Chair invited Chris Lagimodiere, Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Initiatives, to present the Indigenous Peoples' Centre (IPC) Expansion Concept.

C. Lagimodiere provided an overview of the concept, noting the continued growth of Indigenous student enrollment, now representing approximately 17% of the student body. He emphasized the IPC's role as a cultural, holistic support centre offering counselling, meals, academic support, and community connection. The current 1,800 sq. ft. space and expanded staffing levels have created a need for a significantly larger facility.

He presented conceptual plans to repurpose the Evans Theatre into an approximately 6,000 sq. ft. expanded IPC. Key design elements include smudge-friendly space, a community kitchen, cultural and gathering areas, study and tutoring spaces, private offices, and an expanded computer lab. The project is currently estimated at approximately \$4M, and active fundraising efforts are underway. The project will advance to detailed design once sufficient funds are secured.

The Board engaged in questions and discussion.

Members asked about future use of the Evans Theatre function. It was noted that film and performance activities may be accommodated in future Brodie Building renovations or through arrangements with external venues, and opportunities to honour the Evans name will be explored.

Questions were raised regarding outdoor areas, wellness and acoustic considerations, and accessibility. The conceptual design includes internal accessibility features and allows for potential future vertical expansion, although this is not within the current project scope. Engagement with students and community has informed the concept to date.

The Board discussed how the centre will welcome the broader BU community while maintaining cultural purpose and safety. It was noted that the IPC is open to students, faculty, Elders, and community members, and that food programs are intended to support relationship building. It was suggested that clear communication of expectations may help maintain this intention. Security considerations have been incorporated into the conceptual design, and discussions continue regarding culturally sensitive approaches.

Discussion also addressed Indigenous student retention. Retention rates have improved in recent years and are currently approximately 56%, with higher success among participants in the dedicated Indigenous student retention program. The President noted ongoing work on university-wide recruitment and retention strategies, noting the recent hire of a new Director of Recruitment and Retention.

Additional ideas were shared regarding future opportunities for the centre. It was noted that donor feedback has been positive and that contributions to the project are welcome. Board members were encouraged to share potential connections to support fundraising efforts.

5. REPORTS

5.1 Report from the President – Dr. Christine Bovis-Crossen

A written report was included in the meeting package. President Bovis-Crossen provided brief highlights, noting the success of recent institutional events, including the December President's Circle gathering and activities connected to the Co-operative Education program. She also reported on efforts to strengthen capacity and reduce risk within the Finance team through recent staffing additions.

The BU Holiday Brunch raised approximately \$2,700 for Brandon-Westman Christmas Cheer, contributing to more than \$35,000 raised over the past decade.

The President highlighted a new gift of nearly \$1.1M from the Chernoff family to expand entrance scholarship opportunities and provided an update on ongoing research activity related to intimate partner violence. She noted the recent Long Service Awards event recognizing significant staff service milestones, including one individual marking 50 years of service, and reported an increase of approximately \$150,000 in annual donations. The release of the University's animated holiday video was also highlighted.

The Board recessed at 10:01 a.m. and reconvened at 10:19 a.m.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Motion: Revisions to the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Policy

Motion: Moved and seconded (K. Lumgair/J. Pelletier)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors approve the revisions to the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) policy, as recommended by the Governance and Nominating Committee.

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A motion sheet outlining the background and rationale, along with both a tracked-changes version and a clean copy of the policy, was provided in advance in the meeting package.

P. Hickey introduced the motion and reported that the Governance and Nominating Committee had met the previous day to review the proposed policy revisions. He noted that the Manitoba Ombudsman conducted a sector-wide review of this policy last fall and provided extensive feedback and recommendations. P. Hickey worked closely with the Ombudsman's office to ensure the revised policy aligns with applicable legislation, strengthens clarity, and includes more explicit processes and defined roles and responsibilities. He confirmed that the intent of the policy remains unchanged and that the revisions primarily enhance structure and compliance. On November 24, the Ombudsman confirmed that the review was complete and that the policy met expectations and compliance requirements.

The Chair invited questions or discussion, and none were raised.

CARRIED

6.2 Motion: Tuition and Course Fee Waiver for Indigenous Language Courses for Self-Declared Students

Motion: Moved and seconded (C. Bovis-Crossen/Q. Pearce)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Governors approve that tuition and course fees for Indigenous Language courses be waived for self-declared Indigenous students.

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President Bovis-Crossen spoke to the motion as an important reconciliation initiative to support Indigenous language revitalization. She noted an estimated annual cost of approximately \$25,000, with a recent donor contribution available to support language initiatives.

The Board engaged in discussion, and there was consideration and discussion around verification and timing, noting that an Indigenous substantiation policy is under development through consultation and expected later this year. It was noted that while a small risk of misrepresentation under self-declaration was acknowledged, proceeding now was viewed as aligned with institutional commitments, with the upcoming policy to provide a verification framework once approved. The scope of the waiver was clarified as applying only to BU for-credit courses.

Discussion ensued regarding the scale and financial impact of the proposal, including that the annual estimated cost of waiving tuition and course fees is variable and dependent on enrollment. It was also noted that the increased participation in language courses could potentially strengthen overall enrollment, which would be a worthy investment. Consideration was given to delivery capacity, as most offerings remain at the introductory and intermediate levels, and staffing constraints have occasionally affected course availability. It was further noted that addressing this is an academic priority.

There was further discussion, and suggestions made regarding access to Indigenous language courses for rural and remote learners and the potential for hybrid delivery. It was noted that there are provisions in the BUFA Collective Agreement recognizing Indigenous knowledge and credential equivalency, which could support engaging fluent speakers and Elders in teaching or co-teaching roles.

CARRIED

6.3 Appointment (Order-in-Council) to Governance & Nominating Committee

The Chair noted the need to appoint a new Order-in-Council (OIC) member to the committee, as the current OIC has other board-committee commitments.

The Chair called for nominations or volunteers three times. S. Soder volunteered and was the sole individual to come forward.

As no further nominations were received, the Chair declared Steven Soder elected to serve on the Governance & Nominating Committee by acclamation.

7. MOVE TO CLOSED SESSION

Motion: Moved and seconded (J. Pelletier/B. Hill)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the meeting move to Closed Session.

CARRIED

8. RAISE MOTION(S) FROM CLOSED SESSION

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Moved and seconded (S. Soder/Q. Pearce)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the meeting adjourn at 12:44 p.m.

CARRIED

Chair, Board of Governors

Board Secretariat