Annual General Meeting 2026
DRAFT Minutes

Wednesday, May 6, 2026
8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. (Atlantic) Virtual Meeting
Paul Black, Presiding

1. **Welcome and Land Acknowledgement** – P. Black

The 2026 AGM was called to order by Associated Alumni of Acadia University ('the Association') Vice-President, Paul Black ('00), who introduced himself and indicated that he was appointed meeting chair in the absence of the Association President, Christine Luckasavitch, who was unable to attend. He announced there was a quorum with 30 members present and provided a land acknowledgement.

P. Black noted that joining the Annual General Meeting from Acadia University are President and Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Jeff Hennessy ('99), Vice-President of External Relations, Nancy Handrigan ('92), Executive Director of Alumni Relations, Oonagh Proudfoot ('93, '06), Senior Alumni Officer, Melanie Jackson ('99, '01), former Alumni Association President, Matthew Rios ('14) and past members of the Association's Board of Directors and current Directors.

Registrants were provided with an electronic copy of the Associated Alumni of Acadia University Annual Report, inclusive of the agenda, minutes of the 2025 AGM, and relevant reports. P. Black informed participants that the meeting was being recorded and will be uploaded to the alumni website. He encouraged participants to keep their cameras on during the meeting unless speaking, and indicated that when voting on motions, silence is considered affirmative. A virtual or actual raised hand should be used when voting 'no' or abstaining. P. Black provided details on opportunities for meeting participation online and shared that the meeting is guided by Robert's Rules of Order, which was briefly reviewed. Paul expressed his gratitude to the Board of the Acadia Alumni Association for their contributions over the past year and recognized the invaluable support provided by the External Relations staff in facilitating the Board's work.

2. **Approval of Agenda** – P. Black
<u>**Motion:**</u> Moved by Moira MacLean and seconded by Barb Anderson that the agenda be approved as circulated. MOTION CARRIED

3. **Approval of Minutes of May 7, 2025 AGM** – P. Black
<u>**Motion:**</u> Moved by Rebecca Earle and seconded by Olivia Shive that the minutes of the May 7th, 2025 Annual General Meeting be approved as circulated. MOTION CARRIED

4. **Greetings from the Acadia University President** – Dr. Jeff Hennessy
P. Black thanked Dr. Hennessy for joining the meeting and invited him to address the AGM.

Dr. Hennessy informed us that there would be three spring convocations the following week. In addition to the graduating class, four honorary degree recipients will be honoured. The academic year concluded the previous week, and it was a resounding success. Numerous positive media accounts about Acadia have been well-received and deliberate.

Dr. Hennessy shared that Acadia is currently engaged in active discussions regarding the conceptualization of a structural reorganization. This reorganization is a necessary step to address the current global change, meet the evolving needs of students for the future, and ensure financial sustainability. The latter has been threatened by the loss of international student revenue, frozen domestic tuition, marginal increases in the provincial government grant, and potential government legislation.

Acadia boasts a strong leadership team, an active Board of Governors, exceptional faculty, dedicated staff, and an unparalleled alumni community. Consequently, Dr. Hennessy indicated that Acadia is proactively addressing this moment by entering a planning phase immediately following the convocation to assess potential solutions.

Dr. Hennessy suggested that Acadia will increasingly rely on alumni in the coming days and years. He expressed hope that the stories of alumni can be utilized to showcase Acadia's value to the world. Dr. Hennessy emphasized the need for champions and advocates, and he acknowledged that alumni can effectively articulate their experiences at Acadia. He expressed his gratitude to the alumni and highlighted the significant impact of the strong connection between the Alumni Association and Acadia alumni.

5. **2025-2026 Annual Report** – P. Black/O. Proudfoot

P. Black, Vice-President of the Association, outlined several key priorities. He acknowledged that this year has been dynamic, and the Association has endeavored to be flexible in its support for the university, both strategically and financially. The policy and governance environment for higher education in Nova Scotia is undergoing rapid transformation, and the Association is adapting its support accordingly. This includes direct support where necessary and indirect support where beneficial, ensuring that the University can effectively achieve the mission set forth by the Board of Trustees and the University leadership. The Alumni Association has partially filled gaps in programming and service support, and further initiatives are anticipated.

Oonagh Proudfoot, Executive Director of Alumni Relations, identified that her formal report is contained in the Alumni Association Annual Report, and she highlighted several key priorities from it. One notable event was the convocation for the graduates of 2020 and 2021. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a convocation was not held in 2020, and the one held in 2021 was virtual. The decision to hold the ceremony five years after graduation was based on a survey conducted among the Class of 2020, which recommended this approach. She expressed her gratitude to both Class Presidents, Taylor Wilson ('20) a previous Board member and Olivia Shive ('21), who currently sits on the Alumni Association Board, for their leadership in ensuring the successful convocation.

O. Proudfoot acknowledged that we are currently experiencing a period of transformation, as emphasized by both Dr. Hennessy and Paul Black. She extended her appreciation to the alumni community for its engagement and support of the University. She also thanked the Alumni Association Board for its diverse perspectives and contributions to discussions. Next week, over 1,000 graduates will be welcomed to the ranks of more than 46,000 alumni; this is a cause for celebration.

6. **Treasurer's Report** – M. Saunders

Matthew Saunders identified the highlight of his year as the Junkanoo held in Wolfville during Homecoming 2025. This vibrant street parade celebrated the culture of Acadia students and alumni from the Bahamas, Bermuda, and other Caribbean islands.

M. Saunders reviewed the Treasurer's Report, which highlighted key points from the "Unaudited Receipts and Disbursements" and indicated that the Association concluded the 2025-26 fiscal year in a strong position. The primary drivers were the affinity partner revenue and a one-time receipt of funds from previous years' Alumni Awards Dinner revenue that had not been deposited. The overspend on the disbursement side was distributed across several categories where the funds were available but undeployed during the year.

M. Saunders explained that the year-over-year difference between the previous year and this year was attributed to a one-time matching contribution of $250,000 provided to support the Acadia Student Centre in 2025-26. This contribution was over and above the $200,000 annual contributions we have committed for a total of five years.

M. Saunders drew our attention to the uncommitted funds. Last year, the amount was approximately $900,000, while this year, it has increased to $1.1 million. This correlation is linked to the drawdown on the Student Centre commitment, which represents a significant portion of the total committed funds. Last year, the amount was $800,000, and this year, it decreased to $600,000 because the commitment for the Student Centre for this year has been paid. Next year, the amount will be $400,000, and so on. As we progress towards the Student Centre commitment, that obligation will decrease, freeing up more uncommitted funds that can be allocated to new initiatives as they arise.

The floor was opened for questions, and one related to the affinity partnership with TD Insurance, specifically whether there has been an increase in participation of the new products available to the Alumni Association membership. M. Saunders indicated that there has been a gradual interest in obtaining these offerings. In response to a question regarding the amount of money the Association has accrued, and whether there are any legal issues with a nonprofit having too much uncommitted money, the Treasurer responded that this is a matter being investigated. The Board has been actively implementing measures to ensure compliance and avoid any potential issues. Entering this upcoming fiscal year and understanding the available opportunities emerging to support the University, will require further drawing down of these financial resources. We plan to draw down these funds annually. P. Black added that under the Societies Act in Nova Scotia and other relevant legislation, there is no identified limit for nonprofits to hold. It is, however, recommended that nonprofits have at least one year's capacity to mitigate any financial challenges that might arise.

<u>Motion</u>: Moved by Quincy Cochrane, seconded by Barb Anderson that the 2025-26 Treasurer's Report for the period ending March 31, 2025, be approved as circulated. MOTION CARRIED

7. **Nominating Committee Report** – M. Rios

Matthew Rios shared the Committee's process used in selecting Directors for the Association Board and presented the Nominating Committee Report:

<u>Slate of Officers for the 2026-2028 term</u>

Paul Black ’00, President
Payton Wood ’18, Vice-President
Matthew Saunders ’09, Treasurer
Eric Levy ’05, ’07, Secretary
Christine Luckasavitch ’11, Past-President

<u>Renewing Board Directors (finishing their current term and renewing terms for 2026–2028)</u>
Barb Anderson ’77
Ron Malcolm ’82, ’83
Olivia Shive ’21
Emily Wooder MacLeod ’17

<u>Recommended Appointees for 2026-2028, whose full biographies are presented in the Annual Report</u>
Kelli Armstrong ’12
Keelan Green ’98
Randall Koops ’93
Kaining Wang ’16

M. Rios also welcomed Emma Pinsent ’27 to the Board for 2026-2028. She assumes an ex-officio role as Graduating Class President for the current academic year. Three calls for nominations were solicited from the floor, but no further candidates emerged. Consequently, M. Rios asked for a motion to close the nomination process.

<u>Motion</u>: Moved by Jim Diamond and seconded by Quincy Cochrane that nominations for the election of Directors to the Associated Alumni of Acadia University Board be closed. MOTION CARRIED

<u>Motion</u>: Moved by Jim Diamond and seconded by Heather Hemphill that the slate of Officers and Directors proposed by the Nominating Committee be appointed to the Associated Alumni of Acadia University Board of Directors. MOTION CARRIED

P. Black welcomed all new and returning Directors to the Associated Alumni of Acadia University Board.

8. **Acknowledgement of Retiring Board Members** – P. Wood
Payton Wood thanked those whose Board terms are finishing as of this AGM and provided a brief synopsis of each of their contributions.

Natalie Irwin ’01
Véronique Russell ’16
Kelton Thomason ’07, ’10
Rachel MacMillan ’25

Paul Black acknowledged the leadership role of outgoing President Christine Luckasavitch ’11 and identified her as the first President of the Alumni Association Board of Indigenous descent. We are grateful for her role as President and look forward to her continued involvement on the Board as Past President.

9. **New Business** – P. Black

No new business

10. **Closing Remarks** – P. Black

P. Black provided brief closing remarks and indicated that feedback on the meeting would be appreciated.

11. Adjournment

Motion: Moved by Ron Malcolm and seconded by Payton Wood that the 2026 Acadia Alumni Association Annual General Meeting be adjourned. MOTION CARRIED.