

THE TRENT UNIVERSITY BOARD OF GOVERNORS

An Introduction

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The Role of the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is responsible for oversight of the government, conduct, management and control of the University and its property, revenues, expenditures, business and affairs. The Board is also responsible for the appointment of the President and has authority over all areas of University governance, not specifically assigned to the Senate, by the Trent University Act.

Governance isn't just about making the "right" decision; rather, it is about the process for decision-making.



The Difference between the Board of Governors and Senate

Trent University operates within a bicameral governance structure, meaning that there are two senior governing bodies - the Board of Governors and Senate. The Board of Governors has senior oversight of the institution and concerns itself with long-range planning and business affairs. Senate is responsible for the academic affairs of the University. Put simply, the Board of Governors is responsible for the financial well-being of the University and the Senate is responsible for the academic well-being of the University.

Composition of the Board of Governors

In addition to the Chancellor and President, the Board of Governors has between 18 and 24 members in any given year. Membership is broken down as follows:

- The Board of Governors has between 12 and 18 members, appointed from the external community (including at least 4 Trent alumni).
- Six seats on the Board of governors are reserved for faculty, staff and students:
 - Two seats for faculty;
 - Two seats for staff; and
 - Two seats for students (rotating annually between the Peterborough and Durham campuses).These members are appointed through a nominations and elections process (refer to nominations and election process – page 8).



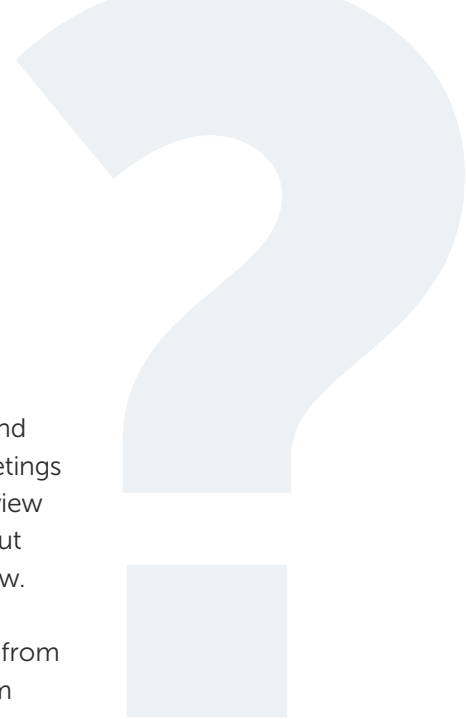
Board Member Duties

The duties of a Board member include:

- supporting the mission of the University;
- helping to enhance the public image of the University and the Board;
- supporting and strengthening the President and the senior administration of the University;
- exercising diligence, critical powers and independent judgement in the oversight of the University as an active, energetic and probing member of the Board of Governors;
- maintaining a proper distinction between the Board's role in setting direction and overseeing policy, and the role of the administration in the implementation of policy and management of the institution;
- placing loyalty to the entire University above loyalty to any part of it or constituency within it;
- maintaining confidentiality with respect to confidential Board discussions and documents;
- recognizing that the Board Chair is the official spokesperson for the Board, and no individual Board member can speak on behalf of the Board other than through the Board Chair or designate;
- seeking to be fully informed about the University and its role in the province and in higher education and to help the University to be responsive to the changing environments which affect it;
- fostering openness and trust among the members of the Board, the administration, the faculty, the staff, the students, all levels of government, and the public;
- understanding the ethical responsibilities incumbent upon a member of the Board, and to declare a conflict of interest whenever such conflict arises.

Board members are responsible for attending Board meetings and assigned Committee meetings. Members are also responsible for reading Board materials to be prepared to discuss and debate the issues with other Board members at the meetings.





Details of Your Board Commitment

What time commitment is required of a Board member?

The Board generally holds an orientation session and planning session over two days in late August. Board meetings are held in October, December, February, March, May and June. Board members should expect to dedicate the day for each Board meeting. Individual Board members may also be assigned to a Board committee and/or ad hoc committees as may be established from time to time for special projects. The Board and committee meeting schedule is set in the spring of each year. Committee/ad hoc meetings typically run for two hours with some exceptions. Board members are expected to review Board/Committee materials in advance of each meeting. Meeting materials are sent out one week in advance of meetings and can take three to six hours per meeting to review.

Board members start their term in office as of July 1. Governors who are appointed from the external community (including alumni) are appointed for up to a three-year term (renewable), and faculty, staff and student governors are appointed for two-year terms.

Do Board members get paid?

There are many benefits to being a Board member at Trent. While Board members are not paid for their service on the Trent University Board of Governors, governors are reimbursed for out of pocket expenses (i.e., travel to meetings or special events).

There are many benefits. Board members are invited to numerous Trent and Board events and have opportunities to network and collaborate with Board colleagues who come to the Board with diverse skillsets and perspectives. As a member of the Board, you increase your knowledge of Trent University as well as the Ontario post-secondary system.

When and where are the Board meetings held?

Board and Committee meetings are normally held throughout the academic year, commencing in September through to June. The meeting location is primarily the AJM Smith Room in the Bata Library (Trent University Peterborough Symons Campus), but the Board does meet annually in the spring at its Durham Greater Toronto Area campus, and may at times choose to meet at a different location for special gatherings or events.



Meeting Attendance

Board members are very busy and may find that they have to be absent from one or two meetings. However, members may be asked to step down if they attend less than 50% of the regular meetings.

Acting in the Best Interests of the University

All governors, including those governors in seats designated for faculty, staff and students, are covered by the expectation of independent thinking in the “best interests of the institution.” In simple terms, governors are appointed in their own right as individuals and not as representatives of a particular constituency, and therefore should draw upon their own knowledge and experience as members of the University community in order to exercise good judgement and make decisions.

Conflicts of Interest or Conflicts of Duty

A conflict of interest arises when a member of the Board has or could be perceived to have the opportunity use the authority, knowledge or influence derived from their position for their own benefit, the benefit of a family member, or where the interests of the Board member may be, or be perceived to be, incompatible with the interests of the University.

Examples of conflicts of interest:

External members: The Board member is a partner in a business tendering for a contract with the University – conflict of interest.

Faculty and Staff members: The Board is considering a recommendation to ratify a collective agreement with the employee group of which the governor is a member – conflict of interest.

Student members: The Board is considering a legal agreement to partner with the local student association for the construction of a jointly owned building on campus. The student governor is a member of the student association executive – conflict of duty.

Membership Requirements

While Canadian citizenship or permanent residence status is not required to be a member of the Board, members are required to be a minimum of 18 years of age and have no undischarged bankruptcy. Additionally, as per the Ontario Not for Profit Corporations Act, any person who has been found under the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 or Mental Health Act to be incapable of managing property or who has been found to be incapable by any court are disqualified from serving.



How does someone get appointed to the Board of Governors?

Members of the External Community (including Alumni)

In the early winter (January), the Board publishes a public call for applications and nominations (on the University's website and through targeted outreach to the Alumni Association, etc.). The Nominating & Governance Committee of the Board reviews applications and nominations received against the skillsets identified in the Board position profile (that is updated annually). Confidential interviews are conducted and the Board of Governors approves external appointments (based on identified vacancies) on or about May of each year.

Faculty, Staff and Students

The Nominations Process

Call for Nominations

In the early spring of each year, the Board issues a call for nominations for faculty, staff and student seats on the Board. The call for nominations is published broadly on the campuses, using direct e-mail, posting on MyTrent and electronic media boards.

In the case of student seats, additional outreach may include a notice in Trent's student newspaper (*The Arthur*), poster in common areas and within departments, as well as targeted outreach with the formal student associations on the Trent campuses.



Common Questions about the Nominations Process

What is the difference between a nominee and nominator?

A nominee is the potential candidate who wants to run in the election to be elected as a member of the Board of Governors. A nominator is a person who wishes to support the nominee's nomination. Faculty and staff nominees each require supporting nominations from three nominators. Student nominees require supporting nominations from fifteen nominators. Nominee and nominators must be from the same constituency:

- For faculty elections, nominees and nominators must be members of Faculty Council. Nominees must be actively employed by Trent, with employment in good standing. (Officers of the University are excluded from this process).
- For staff elections, nominees and nominators must all be from OPSEU and non-academic employees of the Exempt group. Nominees must be actively employed at Trent, with employment in good standing. (Officers of the University are excluded from this process).
- For student elections, nominee and nominators must all be students registered in a program or course of study (one or more courses) at Trent University, but they are not required to be in the same program or course of study.

Where do I get a nomination form?

Links to the electronic self-nomination and supporting nomination forms can be found at trentu.ca/boardelections once the call for nominations is announced.

Can I get an extension to the nomination period if I am late or sick?

No. The nomination deadline is non-negotiable. Late nominations will not be accepted.

Can I withdraw my nomination form?

Nominees may withdraw their nomination form by writing to boardelections@trentu.ca before the end of the nomination period.

When do I need to hand in my candidate statement and photo?

Submit your candidate statement and photo as soon as possible for the University Secretariat to prepare the voting survey and the MyTrent candidate announcement. Email the statements and photos to boardelections@trentu.ca.

“A genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus.”

- Martin Luther King Jr.



Am I required to use my legal name to run as a candidate?

Your nomination form and all campaign materials must have your legal name. You may add a nickname in brackets.

What if my constituency status changes?

Board members must maintain the eligibility status of the constituency from which they are elected throughout their term in office as a Board member. If you expect your constituency status to change after the nomination period closes, you should not run in the election.

Faculty and Staff: Board Policy (Special Resolution III.1 – Sec. 3.1) states “where [the faculty or staff governor is] no longer in active service [at Trent] or their employment is not in good standing with the University, seat of the member becomes vacant.”

Students: Board Policy (Special Resolution III.1 – Sec. 3.1) states “where [the student governor is] no longer enrolled in at least one course at Trent, the seat of the member becomes vacant.”

Can I run if I am suspended or on academic probation?

No. Board Policy (Special Resolution III.1 – Sec. 3b) states that “[students] must be in good academic standing.”

Can I speak to a Board member about their experience before I decide to run?

Yes. Please email boardelections@trentu.ca to have that office assist with those arrangements.



Election Process

Acclamation

When the nomination period has closed, and if the number of candidates nominated is equal to or less than the Board positions available in a particular constituency, the candidate(s) shall be acclaimed.

Election Confirmed

If the number of candidates nominated is more than the Board positions available in a particular constituency, an election is confirmed.

The Voting Process

Who is eligible to vote for what position?

- Only members of Faculty Council can vote in the faculty seat election (Officers of the University are ineligible to vote).
- Only staff members (members of OPSEU and non-academic exempt group) can vote in the staff seat election (Officers of the University are ineligible to vote).
- Only students (registered in one or more courses at Trent) can vote in the student seat election.
- The appropriate voting website will be sent to eligible voters by direct email.

How do I vote?

The voting website link will be sent directly to eligible voters' TrentU email addresses.

Where do I vote?

You can vote anywhere you have access to the Internet. Be conscious of the space and do not leave your computer unattended while in the voting website.



CONTACT US

Learn more about the Trent University Board of Governors:

Contact the University Secretariat at **705-748-1223** or secretariat@trentu.ca

You are also encouraged to attend a Board meeting – they are open to the public and the schedule is posted on the website trentu.ca/governance/board-governors/meetings

