

# Southern Alberta Institute of Technology Board of Governors Mandate and Roles Document

## Preamble

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This Mandate and Roles Document for the Board of Governors of Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (Board) has been developed collaboratively between the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology and the Board to reflect a common understanding of respective roles and responsibilities.

## 1. Mandate

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### Mandate

Established under the *Post-secondary Learning Act* (PSLA), the Board manages and operates the post-secondary institution within its approved mandate [PSLA Section 60(1)(a)].

Please note that the following Mandate Statement is currently under review, at the request of the Ministry of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology.

## MANDATE STATEMENT

### Mandate

The Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) is a public, board-governed polytechnic institute operating as a technical institution in accordance with the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*.

SAIT offers upgrading, apprenticeship, certificate, diploma, applied degree and baccalaureate degree programs that may provide career laddering opportunities or lead directly to career employment.

SAIT is committed to building and nurturing strong business and industry partnerships and to serving the employment needs of key industry sectors: energy, business, communication, construction, health, information technologies, manufacturing & automation, media, public service and safety, tourism and transportation. SAIT also advances academic excellence by working in partnership with industry on applied research. As a global educator, SAIT is best known for excellence in energy training.

SAIT primarily serves the Southern Alberta region and attracts students from across the province, nationally, and internationally. By advancing the highest quality of learning and teaching, SAIT attracts a diverse group of students seeking practical, skills-oriented

education and training, with immediate employment prospects upon graduation and continued opportunities for lifelong learning.

SAIT offers credit and non-credit courses and programs in all industry sectors, including customized training for domestic and international corporate clients. The philosophical and practical emphasis at SAIT is to provide a quality student experience, focused on academic excellence and student support. This is supported by key success factors: learner success, teaching excellence, curriculum effectiveness, market responsiveness, resource management and stakeholder engagement. Programs are designed to facilitate learning through face-to-face, on-line and blended delivery methodologies to meet the needs of learners. SAIT uses technology to enhance the learning experience and has a long history as a leader in computer-mediated distance education delivery.

Alberta's knowledge-based economy requires innovative, well-educated, skilled and adaptable citizens. As a nationally recognized polytechnic, SAIT is a leader in workforce development that contributes to enhancing Alberta's economic growth and prosperity. SAIT graduates have the knowledge and skills to function in a global, interconnected world while contributing to the economic, social, environmental health and sustainability of the communities in which they live.

### **Vision and Mission**

The vision and mission of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology is:

#### **Vision**

SAIT's vision is sharply focused – *to be recognized as Canada's premier polytechnic, one of the world's finest, setting the standard in education, training and innovation.*

#### **Mission**

SAIT shall be an innovative organization equipping people to compete successfully in the changing world of work by providing relevant, skill-oriented education.

### **Applicable Legislation and Regulations**

The Board has responsibilities under, and is subject to, a number of statutes and regulations including the:

- *Post-secondary Learning Act;*
- *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act;*
- *Financial Administration Act;*
- *Government Accountability Act;*
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; and*
- *Lobbyist Act.*

The *Post-secondary Learning Act* provides the primary legislation for public post-secondary institutions in the province of Alberta. Regulations enacted under the PSLA include:

- Alternative Academic Council Regulation;
- Campus Alberta Sector Regulation;
- Model Provisions Regulation;
- Pension Validation Regulation;
- Programs of Study Regulation; and
- Public Post-secondary Institutions' Tuition Fee Regulation.

## **2. Duties and Responsibilities**

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### **Lieutenant Governor in Council**

The *Post-secondary Learning Act* outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Lieutenant Governor in Council specific to the Board. These include the establishment of the public post-secondary institution [PSLA Section 40] and its Board [PSLA Section 43(1)].

In addition, the Lieutenant Governor in Council:

- Appoints Board members [PSLA Section 44(1)(c)];
- May by order disestablish the public post-secondary institution and its Board [PSLA Section 102(1)];
- May order that the assets and liabilities of a dissolved Board be transferred to government or to another post-secondary institution [PSLA Section 102(2)];
- Approves debenture borrowing [PSLA Section 73(1)];
- Approves an incorporation, and the establishment, acquisition and dissolution of a subsidiary by the Board [PSLA Section 77];
- Approves the Board's establishment of a registered pension plans as an alternative to a designated pension plan [PSLA Section 69(2)(b)]; and
- Approves the Board's disposition of land [PSLA Section 67(1.1)].

### **Auditor General**

The Auditor General is the auditor of the Board as outlined in Section 71 of the *Post-secondary Learning Act*.

### **Minister of Advanced Education and Technology**

The *Post-secondary Learning Act* outlines a variety of duties and responsibilities for the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology (Minister) including the appointment of Board members from nominees of constituent groups [PSLA Section 44(1)(b)], and approval of the institution's mandate statement [PSLA Section 103(1)].

In addition, the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology:

- Monitors the institution's operation and performance through the Board's business plan, access plan, and annual report submissions [PSLA Sections 78(1), 78.1 and 79(1)];
- Approves the Board's establishment of supplementary pension plans [PSLA Section 69(2)(c)];
- Chairs the Campus Alberta Strategic Directions Committee [PSLA Section 107.1(2)]; and
- Informs the Board of government policies and direction impacting the work of the Board.

Under the *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act* (APAGA), the Minister also conducts regular reviews (at least every seven years) of the Board's mandate and purpose [APAGA Section 19(1)].

### **Deputy Minister of Advanced Education and Technology**

The Deputy Minister supports and acts under the general direction of the Minister, and is responsible for activities which have been delegated by the Minister.

### **Department of Advanced Education and Technology**

The Department of Advanced Education and Technology (Department) supports the Minister and Board in meeting their legislated responsibilities. Examples of Department support for Board related functions include:

- The provision of orientation materials and training support for new Board members;
- Establishment of workflow procedures for the recruitment and appointment of Board members;
- Ensuring that the Board's Mandate and Roles Document is affirmed annually and renewed or revised every three years; and
- Coordinating the Board's mandate and purpose review, at a minimum, every seven years.

### **Board of Governors of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology**

The Board shall manage and operate the institution in accordance with its mandate [PSLA Section 60(1)(a)].

The Board has the authority through the *Post-secondary Learning Act* to establish admission requirements and publish rules with respect to enrolment and programs [PSLA Section 60(1)(c) and (d)], determine tuition fees to be paid by students in accordance with the regulations [PSLA Section 61], and delegate in writing powers, duties or functions set out in the PSLA, with the exception of bylaws [PSLA Section 62]. Other Board specific functions include:

- The settlement of questions [PSLA Section 63];
- Student discipline [PSLA Section 64];
- The acquisition of land [PSLA Section 66(1)];

- The disposition of land with approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council [PSLA Section 67(1.1)(a) and (b)];
- Debenture borrowing, subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council [PLSA Section 72];
- Banking and investment [PLSA Section 75]; and
- The appointment of the president and vice-presidents [PSLA Sections 81(1) and 82(1)].

In terms of accountability and reporting:

- The Board must prepare a statement setting out the mandate for the institution and this must be submitted to the Minister for approval [PSLA Section 103(1)].
- The Board must also submit a business plan, access plan and annual report to the Minister on an annual basis [PSLA Sections 78(1), 78.1 and 79(1)].
- The Board may be required to collect information (such as enrolment data and Key Performance Indicators) and submit to the Minister any information and reports the Minister considers necessary [PSLA Section 118(1)].
- The Board is accountable for ensuring that the public funds appropriated for the support of institutions are used effectively and appropriately. The Board approves annual operating and capital budgets and regularly review expenditures, investments and borrowings.
- The Board is responsible for the appointment of a President as the Chief Executive Officer of the institution [PSLA Section 81(1)] and the remuneration to be paid to the President [PSLA Section 81(2)]. The Board is ultimately responsible for the quality and performance of its administrations, and therefore is required to evaluate the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the President and the administration.

The Board may establish committees as it deems necessary to carry out its duties and ensures that a written mandate of each committee is reviewed and approved annually. Committees for the Board include:

Audit Committee

Executive Committee of the Board

Governance Committee

Investment Committee

SERP, Pensions and Savings Plan Advisory Committee

The Board acts as an intermediary between the institution and the public that it is intended to serve. The Board is responsible for ensuring that the institution is responsive to changing educational and societal needs. The Board ensures that the institution maintains appropriate liaisons with prospective employers and other stakeholders throughout Campus Alberta.

### **Board Chair**

With direction from the Board, the Chair represents the Board and its interests in dealing with the Minister, the Department, the President, stakeholders and the community. The

Chair is responsible for providing leadership for the Board and for effectively facilitating the work of the Board.

Additional responsibilities of the Chair include:

- Planning and managing Board meetings;
- Providing the Minister with regular updates on the Board's operations and informing the Minister regarding emergent issues;
- Ensuring that the Board, and its committees, have opportunities to meet independent of management; and
- Administering the Code of Conduct and ensuring that conflict of interest matters are addressed by the Board.

### **Board Members**

Board members will act in the best interest of the institute [PSLA Section 44(4)].

The individual responsibilities of Board members include:

- Attending all general and special board meetings;
- Sitting on committees and attending committee meetings as required;
- Securing sources of funds or other resources in addition to government grants for the support of the institution;
- Keeping informed and abreast of relevant provincial, national and international issues, as well as developments within the institution;
- Acting in an ethical manner and complying with the board's bylaws and policies;
- Participating in assessing the board's performance and contribution to the institution and assessing ways in which the board could improve in fulfilling its responsibilities; and
- Participating in campus activities and providing input where appropriate.

### **President and CEO**

The President and CEO has general supervision over and direction of the operation of the institution and has those powers, duties and function that are assigned by the Board [PSLA Section 81(3)].

## **3. Recruitment and Appointment of Board Members**

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### **Membership**

As outlined in the *Post-secondary Learning Act* [Section 44(1)], the Board of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology consists of 10 persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, one of whom shall be designated as Chair, and the President and CEO of the technical institution. In addition, the Board consists of the following members appointed by the Minister:

- Two academic staff member nominated by the academic staff association;
- Two students nominated by the council of the students association; and
- One member of the non-academic staff who is not engaged in the administration of the technical institute nominated by the non-academic staff association.

## **Recruitment**

The recruitment of public members is competency based and led by the Department in consultation with the Board. The Board and the Department will develop a competency matrix for the Board as a whole as well as competencies required for individual members.

The steps that are taken or intended to be taken in the recruitment process and any identified skills, knowledge, experience or attributes required of a member to be appointed will be made public either before or after the member is appointed [APAGA Section 13(2)].

A public posting of all vacancies is the responsibility of the Department's Human Resources (HR) area.

Recruitment is based on the competencies approved by the Minister.

## **Process**

When a vacancy occurs:

- The Board identifies competencies that need to be replaced and provides that profile to the Department's HR area who facilitates the recruitment process.
- Applications are reviewed by HR and assessed on the basis of the applicable competencies and values identified through the development of a screening report.
- A Board sub-committee reviews the screening report and forwards their recommendation to the Minister.
- Based on the screening report and the Board sub-committee recommendation, the Minister recommends to Cabinet the name of the candidate for appointment.
- Once Cabinet approves the Minister's recommendation, the Department will coordinate the appointment process by *Order in Council*.

## **Appointment**

Prior to the appointment of a Board member, appropriate screening will include determining potential conflicts of interest.

Appointment is for a fixed term of up to 3 years, with the potential for reappointment [PSLA Sections 56(1) and 56(2)].

## **Remuneration**

The Board prescribes the remuneration that members are paid for their duties as members of the Board [PSLA Section 55].

## **4. Interaction between Board and Department**

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The Board serves as the intermediary between the government and the institution. The Board may become involved in the development of provincial policies by:

- Providing advice on issues and trends;
- Reacting to proposals and statements put forward by the Minister;
- Recommending policy changes to the Minister; and
- Keeping the Minister informed about the development of the institution and plans for the future.

As described under Duties and Responsibilities, the Board provides the Department with regular reports on the institution's performance and future plans.

In addition, Board Chairs of post-secondary institutions serve on the Campus Alberta Strategic Directions Committee. The Campus Alberta Strategic Directions Committee is chaired by the Minister and provides advice to the Minister respecting issues related to Campus Alberta [PSLA Section 107.1].

## **5. Administration**

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### **Annual Affirmation**

The Mandate and Roles Document must be affirmed annually by the Minister and the Board Chair, or on a change in either the Minister or Board Chair.

### **Three Year Renewal or Revision**

The Mandate and Roles document shall be in effect for not more than three years. It must be renewed or revised by the expiry date [APAGA Section 4].

### **Transparency**

Copies of the Mandate and Roles Document will be filed with the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology and the Agency Governance Secretariat. In support of the principle of transparency [APAGA Section 5], this document will also be made available on the Board's website and the Government of Alberta's website.

**Original Signed by Michael D. Begin**  
 Chair, Board of Governors, Southern Alberta Institute  
 of Technology  
 January 26, 2010

**Original Signed by The Hon. Doug Horner**  
 Minister, Alberta Advanced Education and Technology  
 February 16, 2010