

Minutes of Open Session

Wednesday, March 23, 2016 15-16 BR:04

Minutes of a special meeting of the Board of Governors held on Wednesday, March 23, 2016 at 11:00 am in room 301 of the James Administration Building, 845 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal.

PRESENT:

Chisholm, Victor	Ibrahim, Kareem	<i>Resource Persons</i>
Cobbett, Stuart (Chair)	Minzberg, Samuel	Aberman, Susan
Coughlin, Peter	Nystrom, Derek	Di Grappa, Michael
Critchley, Ronald	Panda, Ram	Goldstein, Rose
Fazel, Kathy	Price, Cynthia (by phone)	Manfredi, Christopher
Fortier, Suzanne	Shrier, Alvin	Marcil, Olivier
Halperin, Stephen (by phone)	Toccalino, Danielle	Weinstein, Marc
Harpp, David Noble	Zorychta, Edith	Strople, Stephen (Secretary-General)
Haynes, Bryan (by phone)		Edyta Rogowska (Associate Director)
Hobday, Tina		

Regrets: Nathalie Bourque, Michael Boychuk, Claude Généreux, Michael A. Meighen, Sean Murphy, Martine Turcotte, Thierry Vandal, Josefina Zalba.

4. Chair's Remarks and Announcements

The Chair reconvened the meeting in Open session. He reminded visitors that tape, video or other means of recording sound or images were not permitted prior to, during or after a Board meeting.

5. Principal's Remarks

The Principal spoke about the provincial and federal budgets, which were tabled last week. With respect to the provincial budget, she noted three key aspects. First, she noted that there are no cuts in funding to universities. Second, modest funding increases were announced for each year over the next three years. Third, a number of targeted investments were made, several of which will benefit McGill. These investments include investments for infrastructure, the McGill Agrifood Innovation Network, and support for a number of initiatives in which McGill is a partner, such as the creation of the *Institut nordique du Québec*, and maintenance of the Coriolis II oceanography research vessel. The Principal also noted that the provincial government announced additional investments to accelerate the growth of the digital economy, aerospace industry and life sciences sector, with the expectation that university communities would participate with those sectors to advance science and innovation.

The Principal then shared key aspects of the federal budget. She noted that up to \$2 billion over three years, starting in 2016-17, will be allocated to the new Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund. Eligible projects include conversion of under-utilized space into new research labs, and the retrofit of existing buildings for research and

development. She then noted that the budget contained investments for investigator-driven research funding. She explained that starting in 2016-17, an additional \$95 million per year has been allocated on an ongoing basis to the granting councils, on top of the \$46 million per year in additional funding beginning in 2016-17 that was allocated in last year's federal budget. She also mentioned that the budget provided for two additional Canada Excellence Research Chairs in fields related to clean and sustainable technology (in addition to the anticipated twenty new Chairs) and for up to \$800 million over four 4 years, starting in 2017-18, to support innovation networks and clusters as part of the Government's upcoming Innovation Agenda. Finally, the Principal noted that the budget put forward a series of student-related measures in order to make post-secondary education more affordable for low income students and families. Overall, the Principal stated that the budget was well-received by McGill.

In response to a question about the analysis of likely transfer payments and the impact on funding universities in Quebec, members were informed that this would be considered in time for the Board's consideration of the budget in April.

6. Discussion of CAMSR Report and Recommendations

The Chair provided a summary of the Closed session during which members of the Board discussed the Report of the Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility (CAMSR) that was issued following the Committee's consideration of a submission concerning fossil fuels from Divest McGill. He explained that CAMSR reviewed the request for divestment extensively and obtained input from a variety of members of the McGill community. He reported that CAMSR found that social injury as defined in its terms of reference has not been established. He stated that CAMSR concluded that there was no basis to recommend divestment, and that divestment would not be an effective action to address climate change.

The Chair explained that the Report recognizes that fossil fuels at this time are essential to daily life throughout the world. It also acknowledges that climate change is an important issue for the world and McGill, and that the University needs to do more to address climate change and sustainability. Accordingly, in line with its mandate to advise the Board, it has made recommendations at the end of its report on actions to be taken by the Investment Committee and by the senior administration of McGill.

The Chair reported that the Board had a fulsome discussion of the CAMSR Report and voted on the recommendations concerning the actions to be taken by the Investment Committee and the senior administration. He stated that following a rich exchange and debate that showed varying points of view, the Board endorsed the recommendations of the report.

During the course of the discussion that ensued, members spoke about the current dependence on fossil fuels and the price that society would need to pay in order to achieve

a level of simplicity that would be characteristic of a fossil fuel free society. Members also noted that the work of Divest McGill has advanced McGill's green initiatives and acknowledged that the Board will now receive regular reports on how McGill is working to reduce its carbon footprint. Other members stated that the recommendations provided an opportunity for dialogue and discussion of future actions with the McGill community. It was also pointed out that prior to the issue having reached the Board of Governors, various groups on campus voted in favour of divestment.

In line with the recommendations of the CAMSR Report, the Chair confirmed that the Board will receive a preliminary overview of the University's activities related to sustainability, noting that the overview will provide the basis for integrating and expanding initiatives to create a comprehensive climate action plan. The Principal also confirmed that she will be sharing with the McGill community a summary of the Board's meeting.

Representatives of Divest McGill expressed their dissatisfaction with the Board's decision not to divest, and with not being informed of the Board meeting in advance.

7. Other Business

There was none.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:36 pm.

SUMMARY OF MATTERS CONSIDERED IN CLOSED SESSION OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS HELD ON MARCH 23, 2016

1. CAMSR Report and Recommendations on Divest McGill Submission Concerning Fossil Fuels

The Chair introduced the Report of the Committee to Advise on matters of Social Responsibility (CAMSR) dealing with the Divest McGill submission concerning fossil fuel companies, which had been approved at the March 17 meeting of CAMSR. He reminded the Board that CAMSR has a mandate to reach a decision on the Divest McGill submission and to report to the Board with any recommendations. In summary, CAMSR found that social injury as defined in its terms of reference has not been established, and that the injurious impact of climate change is due to the end use of fossil fuels and not particularly the result of the activities of the top 200 fossil fuel producers and companies. CAMSR concluded that there was no basis to recommend divestment, and that divestment would not be an effective action to address climate change. The Chair invited discussion on the Report.

Governor Derek Nystrom moved that the Board of Governors postpone the vote on the CAMSR Report recommendations to the Board's April 21st meeting. The motion was discussed and subsequently defeated.

Governor Nystrom moved that the Board continue its deliberations of the CAMSR Report and recommendations in Open session. The motion was discussed and subsequently defeated.

Governor Nystrom stated that he intended to vote against the approval of the CAMSR Report and encouraged fellow Board members to join him. He explained that he based his decision to vote against the CAMSR Report on many reasons, the primary one being his disagreement with respect to the report's findings concerning social injury. He then provided the Board with examples of "faulty reasoning" in the Report.

Governor Nystrom brought to the attention of the Board two other factors. First, he noted that other McGill organization that have considered the issue of divestment have voted to say that they want McGill to divest from fossil fuels. Second, he asked Board members to reflect upon the choice to continue investing in companies with a business model that depends on impeding the transition to sustainable and renewable energy sources and then urged members to consider the long-term implication of that choice.

Following discussion, the Chair prepared a resolution to endorse the recommendations listed on page 15 of the CAMSR Report.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the Board of Governors, on the recommendation of CAMSR, endorsed the recommendations contained on

page 15 of the CAMSR Report on the Divest McGill Submission of February 2015.

The motion carried, with three members voting against.

3. Other Business

There was none.

END