



Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Governors held on Monday February 9, 2009 at 4:00 p.m., in the Ballroom, Faculty Club, 3450 McTavish Street, Montreal.

PRESENT:

Burgoyne, John Ashley
Cobbett, Stuart (*Vice-Chair*)
de Grandpré, Lili
Fazel, Kathy
Flood Consedine, Morna
Garland, Trevor
GowriSankaran, Kohur
Guitton, Daniel
Harpp, David Noble

Maldoff, Eric
Meighen, Michael
Munroe-Blum, Heather
Peeters, Jan
Pekeles, Gary
Pound, Richard W.
Rabinovitch, Robert (*Chair*)
Richards, Michael
Turner, Kay
Vroom, Ann
Youster, Allan

Resource Persons

Giguère, Marie

Dowie, Vaughan
Levin, Richard I.
Masi, Anthony C.
Mendelson, Morton J.
Roy, François R.
Thérien, Denis
Weinstein, Marc

Nicell, Jim
Gervais, Lynne

Pelletier, Johanne (*Secretary*)

REGRETS: Roshi Chadha, Darren Entwistle, Hana Goto, Gerald Sheff, Thierry Vandal.

The meeting began in open session.

Chair's Remarks

The Chair welcomed all to the third meeting of the Board of Governors for the 2008-2009 academic year. He also welcomed new members to their first meeting since their appointments: Ms. Ann Vroom, Professor David Noble Harpp and Mr. Allan Youster. The Chair reminded all Board members of their obligations as per the Board's Code of Ethics and Conduct of each member's responsibility to act in the best interests of the University.

1. Approval of the Agenda

On motion duly proposed and seconded, the agenda was approved.

2. Approval of the Minutes (open session), meeting of November 17, 2008 [08-09 BR:02]

On motion duly proposed and seconded, the minutes of the open session of the meeting of November 17, 2008 were approved.

3. Principal's Remarks

The Principal opened her remarks by welcoming new Board members Ann Vroom, Professor David Harpp and Mr. Allan Youster, and thanked all members for their continuing commitment to the University.

The Principal reminded Board members that the provincial government agreed to the de-regulation of international tuition fees in select disciplines to be phased in over a six year period. The University maintains its commitment to set aside \$.30 for every dollar of net revenues derived from such increases for student financial support. She noted that McGill would adopt a cohort-sensitive approach, committing to an implementation that would allow students to understand McGill's fee structure and be able to plan several years in advance for their tuition costs.

The Principal noted that copies of the two communiqués sent on her behalf today via email were available in hard copy at the meeting.

On the recently publicized matter of a severance package offered to a former Vice-Principal, the Principal invited questions but noted that the agreement was confidential. The Principal informed Board members that severance packages were not issued in all circumstances. She noted that salaries in the area of development tended to be higher, and that searches for senior executive officers were wide in order to recruit top talent. As for the media reports regarding Dr. Levin's compensation, the Principal noted the institution's pride in having recruited him.

The Principal addressed the economic situation. She recalled the effects on McGill's endowment and on Campaign pledges and informed the Board that the Campaign had raised \$475 million to date, with increases in donorship in the annual fund.

The Principal highlighted some of McGill's achievements while managing and growing its limited resources, such as the Strategic Academic Plan, the Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning, attracting exceptional academic and administrative and support staff, the Master Plan, awards such as one of Canada's top 100 employers, and she thanked her senior staff and their teams for attaining these achievements. In dealing with these difficult economic times, McGill will improve the management of its programs, activities and expenditures, will work smarter and will realize efficiencies wherever possible without hurting the quality of its academic programs.

The Principal noted that she and the Provost would conduct consultations across campuses on how best to achieve this. She stated that the administration would work closely with Senate and the Board, most notably the Board Committees most closely related to fiscal oversight, as well as employee and student groups.

The Principal informed Board members that two task forces were being launched: the Provost's task force will examine the best ways to cut costs and increase revenue while preserving the quality that is at the heart of McGill. The Principal's Task Force will examine how our learning community at McGill values excellence, access and diversity.

The Principal briefly spoke about the federal budget, stating that \$1.4 billion had been set aside for university infrastructure, with a priority on "shovel-ready" research-focused projects. Some bad news included the fact that the three federal granting councils did not receive additional funding.

In response to a question from Governor GowriSankaran, the Principal informed for the Board that there were no new developments to report.

On the matter of university governance, the Principal reminded Board members of McGill's opposition to legislation both in principle and in substance, but that if legislation was to be imposed, it should be of high level only. She noted that some universities were not opposed to the bill, and that McGill's different constituencies would need to work together to demonstrate their opposition to this bill.

Board members discussed the effects of governance legislation. Governor Maldoff spoke to the serious threat to McGill that this legislation would impose, notably to academic freedom and excellence. The Board discussed drafting a letter signed by the Chair, the Chancellor and the Principal on behalf of the Board of Governors, demonstrating the Board's opposition to any type of governance legislation. The student governors were asked if they would support such a letter, to which Governor Burgoyne noted that he would consult with his constituency but in principle would support signing the letter, and Governor Turner responded that the SSMU council had passed a motion opposing the legislation.

After a lengthy discussion, Board members decided to adopt a motion supporting the draft of this letter on behalf of the Board.

On motion duly proposed and seconded, it was resolved that the Board of Governors instruct the Chancellor, the Chair and the Principal to sign a letter on behalf of the Board of Governors opposing the principles and contents of the proposed legislation regarding university governance and the compromise of the ability of the University to maintain and grow its international status of excellence.

4. Terms of Reference for Ombudsperson for Students [GD08-18]

The Chair informed the Committee that this item would be referred to the Nominating and Governance Committee prior to presentation to the Board of Governors for approval.

5. Report Card on Student Life and Learning [GD08-19]

The Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) presented this item for information. He noted that this presentation represented the first annual report on advances made in student life and learning.

The Deputy Provost provided Board members with the link to the website on student life, noting that McGill's assessments were available to the public. Some initiatives underlined by the Deputy Provost included Service Excellence, Integrated Services, Improving the Online Experience and the Cut the Red Tape Contest. A theme for 2009 would be "navigating our way around McGill" and there would be discussions on blogs on how McGill can improve student life.

There was discussion on student isolation, decreasing class sizes to enhance the student experience and the impact of having many commuter students at McGill. The Board briefly discussed plans for staff development in 2009 and how students often had many instructors, leading to a weaker personal relationship with faculty members.

The Board of Governors thanked the Deputy Provost for his presentation.

6. Board of Governors and Committee meeting dates: 2009-2010 [GD08-20]

The Chair noted this item for information.

The Board of Governors moved into Closed Session to consider the following matters:

7. Approval of Minutes (closed session), meeting of November 17, 2008 [08-09 CR:02]

8. Report from the Human Resources Committee, Annual Safety Report [GD08-21]

9. Report from the Building and Property Committee [GD08-22]

10. Report from the Nominating and Governance Committee [GD08-23]

11. Report on Appointments with Tenure [GD08-24]

12. Report from the Executive Committee [GD08-25]

END