

Minutes of Open Session

February 6, 2025 24-25 BR:03

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Governors held on February 6, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in Room 301 of 845 Sherbrooke St. W., Montreal, and via the Zoom Conferencing Application.

Present:

Arezki, Amine	Headon, Fred	Prando, Diletta
Bajaj, Arun	Jabalpurwala, Inez	Reckziegel, David
Bertrand, Maryse (Chair)	Kaspi, Victoria	Rohrbach, Petra
Bierbrier, Charles	Malo, Kit	Saini, Deep (President)
Cesvet, Bertrand	Matuszewski, Pierre	Sakhia, Samira
Chong, Katie	(Vice-Chair)	Sigler, Jonathan
David, Gregory	Paul, Maarika (Vice-Chair)	Taylor, Dymetri
Deckelbaum, Ariel	Piggott, Adrienne	Tumulu, Satish Kumar
Desnoyers, Alan		Zorychta, Edith

Regrets: Pierre Boivin (Chancellor), Lucy Gilbert.

Secretary-General: Edyta Rogowska, supported by Pietro Mastromatteo (Associate Director) and Emily Barriere (Governance Officer), Secretariat.

Resource Persons: Professor Fabrice Labeau, Vice-President (Administration and Finance); Professor Christopher Manfredi, Provost and Vice-President (Academic).

Guests: Professor Viviane Yargeau, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, attended for agenda item 14.

9. Chair's Remarks

Governor Maryse Bertrand, Chair of the Board of Governors, welcomed members to the third regular meeting of the Board of Governors for the 2024-2025 governance year.

10. Consent Items

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, the Board of Governors approved the following as consent items:

10.1 Minutes (Open Session) of December 12, 2024	Approval
10.2 Report of the Nominating, Governance and Ethics Committee	[GD24-34]

The Board of Governors received the following as consent items, for information:

10.3 Report of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee	[GD24-35]
--	-----------

11. Business Arising from Open Session Minutes

There was none.

12. President's Remarks

Professor Deep Saini, President and Vice-Chancellor, began his remarks with an update on government relations. He noted that Bill 74, which aimed to regulate international student admissions in Quebec, had been adopted into law despite significant lobbying efforts. The legislation granted the government full discretion to set admission limits for universities. The University was now awaiting Minister Pascale Dery's announcement on caps and related details. Based on current indications that the government will use end-of-2024 figures, McGill is not expected to be significantly affected in the short term, though potential future impacts remain a concern.

The President reminded members that Quebec's Health Minister had recently tabled Bill 83, which would require Quebec-trained doctors to work in the public health-care system for the first five years of their careers, with significant penalties for non-compliance. The bill further proposed that medical students and residents sign a formal undertaking to this effect. The President highlighted widespread concerns that the proposed legislation could deter students, residents, and physicians from studying and working in Quebec. Although universities were not invited to participate in the public consultations held by the National Assembly's *Commission de la santé et des services sociaux* in February, McGill, along with Laval, Université de Montréal, and Université de Sherbrooke, would submit a written statement to the parliamentary committee.

The President also reported that Moody's had reaffirmed McGill's Aa2 credit rating with a negative outlook, unchanged from the previous confirmation on March 15, 2024.

Regarding external relations, the President shared that he attended the 55th edition of the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos in January. He noted that Artificial Intelligence (AI) was a key focus of discussion, adding that Canada continued to demonstrate strength in AI research, it is losing ground in the application of AI technologies. He informed members that the United Arab Emirates, India, and Saudi Arabia had the strongest presence at the annual event. McGill had received enthusiastic support from alumni and friends in attendance, reflecting the strength of McGill's global brand.

The President further informed members that he would be travelling to Asia with a small McGill delegation at the end of the month to advance the University's global engagement and alumni relations. As part of the trip, he would confer a Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, on Professor Anna Pao Sohmen (MSW '69) at a special ceremony in Ningbo City, China, in recognition of her remarkable life and career.

In terms of community relations, the President highlighted several meaningful events held on campus in the previous weeks, notably McGill's third annual International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration, a commemoration marking the eighth anniversary of the Quebec City Mosque Attack, and an ongoing lineup of events for Black History Month.

The President concluded his remarks with selected kudos. he noted that 19 members of the McGill community had recently been awarded the King Charles III Coronation medals, an honor conferred on individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Canada or achieved notable success abroad. He also reported that McGill had been ranked among the global top 50 in six subject areas in the *Times Higher Education* rankings and placed in the top five in Canada across all 11 subjects assessed. Finally, the President offered congratulations to Robert Leckey, Dean of the Faculty of Law, on his appointment as a judge of the Superior Court of Quebec and thanked him for his outstanding leadership and years of service to McGill.

13. Board Committee Reports: Part II

13.1 Report of the Committee on Sustainability and Social Responsibility [GD24-36]

Governor Alan Desnoyers, Chair, Committee on Sustainability and Social Responsibility, presented the Report of the Committee on Sustainability and Social Responsibility arising from the Committee meeting of January 29, 2025 and e-vote of January 31, 2025.

Governor Desnoyers presented the report regarding the mandate approved by the Board in July 2024, requesting the CSSR to evaluate the question of divestment from direct investments in companies that derive a dominant portion of their direct revenues from the production of military weapons, regardless of the countries in which they operate. He reported that, following consultations with subject-matter experts and members of the McGill community, the Committee concluded that the University's investment approach remained aligned with its social and ethical norms. As a result, the CSSR did not recommend any action with respect to divestment.

Governor Desnoyers expressed gratitude for the CSSR's diligent work and the meaningful participation of the university community in this process.

13.2 Report of the Audit and Risk Committee [GD24-37]

Governor Maarika Paul, Chair, Audit and Risk Committee, presented the report of the Committee on Sustainability and Social Responsibility arising from Committee meeting of January 30, 2025.

Governor Paul noted that the Committee had approved the External Audit Plan for the year ending April 30, 2025, as presented by representatives of the external auditors,

Deloitte LLP (Deloitte). She added that the Committee had also approved amendments to the Internal Audit Plan for FY2025, including three new engagements.

Governor Paul then noted that the Committee had been updated on the implementation of recommendations from the Internal Audit investigation into the events surrounding the asbestos-related closure of buildings on Macdonald Campus in Winter 2023, and that all action items had been completed. Furthermore, she explained that the Committee received the Risk Advisory and Insurance Services Annual Report, which confirmed a 4% decrease in insurance premiums, indicating a positive market shift.

14. Presentation: Faculty of Engineering [GD24-38]

Professor Viviane Yargeau, Dean, Faculty of Engineering delivered a presentation on the Faculty of Engineering.

Dean Yargeau highlighted the faculty's commitment to educating globally minded professionals and driving socially responsible innovations. She emphasized recent program innovations such as the Bachelor of Global Engineering and various non-thesis master's programs, and highlighted the faculty's diverse support units, research centers, and institutes. In addition, Dean Yargeau spoke to the importance of female representation in the faculty and informed members of new opportunities being pursued, with particular emphasis on the New Vic project as a chance for global innovation and improved research support.

Members thanked Dean Yargeau for the presentation and acknowledged the faculty of Engineering's successes, notably the significant portion of female students, comprising 36% of the faculty overall.

15. Overview of Student Society of McGill University (SSMU) [GD24-39]

Mr. Dymetri Taylor, President, SSMU, delivered, for information, a presentation on the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU), highlighting its structure, departments, and financial operations. He pointed to key issues faced by the SSMU, notably increasing polarization in student government, faltering participation in referendums, and first-year isolation.

Members discussed how the Board and SSMU could increase interest in student elections in the face of voter apathy, citing better engagement of first year students and collaboration with faculties as possible ideas. The Board expressed interest in exploring the broader framework governing the University's relationship with the SSMU and other student associations at a future meeting.

The meeting ended at 7:09 p.m. and was followed by an in-camera session.

END.

**SUMMARY OF MATTERS CONSIDERED IN CLOSED SESSION OF THE BOARD
OF GOVERNORS HELD ON FEBRUARY 6, 2025**

1. Update on University Financial Situation

The Board received an update on the University's financial situation, including an overview of budget correction measures being implemented by the University under the Horizon McGill program.