

**From:** [Marc Richard](#)  
**Cc:** [Marc Richard](#)  
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Senate Meeting Report, 2013-12-04

Colleagues,

The following is a summary of the Senate meeting which took place on Wednesday, December 4, 2013.

The meeting began with Dean Manfredi presenting a memorial tribute for Professor Hereward Senior. Senate then adopted the minutes of the last Senate meeting ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/final\\_november\\_20\\_2013\\_senate\\_minutes\\_0.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/final_november_20_2013_senate_minutes_0.pdf)), the report of the Steering Committee ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/report\\_of\\_the\\_senate\\_steering\\_committee\\_11.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/report_of_the_senate_steering_committee_11.pdf)) and the agenda ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/agenda\\_senate\\_-\\_december\\_4\\_2013.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/agenda_senate_-_december_4_2013.pdf)).

In her remarks from the Chair, Principal Fortier reported on McGill's presentation on the previous day to the *Commission de l'éducation et de la culture*. The topics covered included: McGill's contributions to Quebec society; the financial challenges faced by McGill; the need for flexibility; and the need to revise the formula which is used to determine the funding allocated to universities. On this last topic, McGill's representatives argued for a formula that is simpler, fairer and more transparent, and which pays attention to performance. Principal Fortier noted that only two Quebec universities -- McGill and Concordia -- lack a *mission particulière* and thus receive no mission-related funding. During the presentation at the *Commission*, the Administration also reiterated McGill's position on the proposed Charter of Quebec Values; it did so on the basis of principles as well as on practical grounds, notably the possibility that people of talent who are in a position to make choices might decide to go to other provinces. The entire presentation can be viewed on the National Assembly's website. At the conclusion of her remarks, the Principal turned to the subject of municipal engagement and indicated that she has accepted to serve on the boards of two organizations: the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal, and Montreal International.

In the period for questions which followed, Senator Richard asked if Quebec City has ever acknowledged any particular explanation for the fact that McGill and Concordia lack a *mission particulière*. Principal Fortier responded that she has never heard any reason given for this state of affairs. Senator Lu thanked the Principal for the prompt and principled position which McGill had taken on the Charter of Quebec Values and asked if any further measures would be announced on this matter. Principal Fortier noted that the Board of Governors had recently adopted the same resolution on the Charter which Senate had approved in November, and added that the Administration will be presenting a brief on the subject in January 2014 when the National Assembly holds public hearings on the proposed bill. The deadline for the advance submission of the text of the brief is December 20.

Beginning at today's Senate meeting, a new format was instituted for the agenda item dealing with formal questions. From now on, answers to written questions will be provided to Senators in writing as part of their documentation packages, so that the time allocated in Senate for this item can focus on any follow-up questions that may arise.

The first question, from Senators Shea and Mooney, concerned deregulated tuition fees; it was answered by Provost Masi ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/1\\_response\\_provost\\_-\\_deregulated\\_tuition\\_fees.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/1_response_provost_-_deregulated_tuition_fees.pdf)). Senator Mooney posed a supplemental question, asking how the Administration justifies to students the existence of differential fees. Provost Masi responded that the way to make the fees fair would be to raise them for everyone; he added that this was not going to happen. The second question, from Senator Sheridan, was on the topic of Library security ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/2\\_question\\_regarding\\_library\\_security\\_senator\\_sheridan\\_-\\_revised.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/2_question_regarding_library_security_senator_sheridan_-_revised.pdf)). The answer was provided by V.-P. Di Grappa ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/2\\_response\\_mdg.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/2_response_mdg.pdf)). The final question, from Senators Shea and Mooney, concerned the Student Services Contingency ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/3\\_senate\\_question\\_regarding\\_the\\_student\\_services\\_contingency\\_senators\\_shea\\_and\\_mooney.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/3_senate_question_regarding_the_student_services_contingency_senators_shea_and_mooney.pdf)). It was answered by Deputy Provost Dyens ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/3\\_response\\_dpsll\\_-\\_student\\_services\\_contingency.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/3_response_dpsll_-_student_services_contingency.pdf)).

The next agenda item was the annual report on the financial state of the University, presented by V.-P. Di Grappa ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-28\\_annual\\_report\\_on\\_financial\\_state.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-28_annual_report_on_financial_state.pdf)). Senator Lu asked in the 23% figure categorized as "Other Expenses" on page 28 could be broken down; V.-P. Di Grappa responded that this could be done in the form of footnotes and presented at a future Senate meeting.

Provost Masi gave the first of this academic year's three scheduled presentations to Senate on the budget planning process for 2014-2015 ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-29\\_budget\\_report\\_1\\_with\\_appendix.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-29_budget_report_1_with_appendix.pdf)). Following the presentation, Senator Richard noted Provost Masi's statement that growing the University is not something that can keep being done, saying that "doing more with less" is unsustainable because it generally translates into overloading staff and overloading classrooms. Senator Ferrie suggested that McGill should perhaps review its funding model. Provost Masi responded that, as recently as yesterday, the Administration has made the point to the Quebec government that the funding formula needs to be revised.

Senator Saroyan proposed that academic units be asked what deleterious effects budget cuts have had upon them. Provost Masi agreed that measurements need to be taken at the local level. Senator Cooke remarked that processes are becoming more convoluted; more and more time is being spent handling documents for processes that used to be simple and quick. The Provost concurred that Ottawa and Quebec have been increasing their compliance reporting requirements, and that this has resulted in the downloading of work from the government to the University, and from the University down to the deans and the departments. It is expected that some of these issues will be addressed through workforce redeployments.

Dean Kreiswirth next gave a PowerPoint presentation (not yet posted) on Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-30\\_gps\\_-\\_continuity\\_and\\_growth\\_for\\_21c\\_with\\_appendix.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-30_gps_-_continuity_and_growth_for_21c_with_appendix.pdf)). Senator Saroyan asked whether the new process for identifying external examiners could be revisited to determine whether it has created conflicts of interest, whether it has taken inordinate amounts of time and whether it has generated reciprocal demands from outside examiners. Dean Kreiswirth referred to the footnote in his report which states that "Since the introduction of new thesis examination process 70% of these were sent to the examiners within 5 days of receipt of the nomination form; previously only 40% had a 5 day turnaround (and more than 40% took over 16 days)." He commented that the new process has accomplished its goal of increasing rapidity. Senator Saroyan responded that there have been costs to staff members, and noted that it is difficult to convince external examiners to come to McGill because we do not provide them with honoraria as compensation. Dean Kreiswirth responded that McGill is not unique in this regard.

Senate approved a set of proposed revisions to the Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited by Law ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-31\\_revisions\\_to\\_harassment\\_policy\\_with\\_appendices.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-31_revisions_to_harassment_policy_with_appendices.pdf)). Senate also approved the creation of a new subcommittee of the Joint Board Senate Committee on Equity, to be known as the Subcommittee on Family Care ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-32\\_family\\_care\\_cover\\_memo\\_with\\_appendices\\_0.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-32_family_care_cover_memo_with_appendices_0.pdf)). Both items will now be sent to the Board of Governors for final approval.

Senate received for information the annual report of the Academic Policy Committee ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-33\\_2013\\_apc\\_annual\\_report\\_to\\_senate.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-33_2013_apc_annual_report_to_senate.pdf)). Provost Masi noted the large number of subcommittees which report to APC (listed on the first page of the report) and encouraged anyone who is interested in serving on these subcommittees to make their interest known to the members of the Senate Nominating Committee. Provost Masi also presented for information the 451st Report of the Academic Policy Committee ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-34\\_451st\\_apc\\_report\\_2013-12-04.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-34_451st_apc_report_2013-12-04.pdf)), drawing particular attention to the two sustainability-related programs it describes.

Senate approved the report of the Senate Nominating Committee ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-35\\_report\\_of\\_the\\_nominating\\_committee.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-35_report_of_the_nominating_committee.pdf)), which included the nomination of Senator Richard to the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Livestreaming of Senate Meetings. It then received for information the annual report of the Senate Committee on Libraries ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-36\\_scl\\_annual\\_report\\_2012-2013\\_with\\_appendix.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/sites/mcgill.ca.senate/files/d13-36_scl_annual_report_2012-2013_with_appendix.pdf)), which was presented by Associate Provost McClure, who currently chairs the SCL. Senator Bell asked Professor McClure to comment on the move of the Life Sciences Library from the McIntyre Building; she responded that she was not Chair of the SCL at that time. Senator Bernard raised concerns about McGill theses containing pre-publication papers being made available online too quickly. Professor McClure proposed raising this issue with the SCL. Dean Kreiswirth addressed Senator Bernard's question by noting that McGill theses are public documents: this is something which is agreed upon by both supervisors and graduate students, who have the option of withholding the release of a thesis for one year.

As its final order of business, Senate moved into closed session to consider the Report of the Honorary Degrees and Convocations Committee.

The next Senate meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 22, 2014. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us.

Regards,  
Your librarian Senate reps,  
Daniel Boyer  
Maya Kucij  
Marc Richard