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**Subject:** Senate Meeting Report, 2014-01-21  
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## Senate Meeting Report, 2014-01-21

Colleagues,

The following is a summary of the Senate meeting which took place on Wednesday, January 21, 2015.

The meeting was chaired by Dean Grant, Principal Fortier being away today on University business. Senate adopted the minutes of the last Senate meeting ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/senate\\_minutes\\_final\\_december\\_3\\_2014.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/senate_minutes_final_december_3_2014.pdf)), the report of the Steering Committee ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/report\\_of\\_the\\_senate\\_steering\\_committee\\_23.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/report_of_the_senate_steering_committee_23.pdf)) and the agenda ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/agenda\\_-\\_senate\\_-\\_january\\_21\\_2015\\_1.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/agenda_-_senate_-_january_21_2015_1.pdf)).

In business arising from the December meeting of Senate, Provost Masi provided a verbal update regarding interdisciplinary program funding. This funding was on the order of \$800,000 in previous years, but was reduced to \$650,000 in FY2014. Associate Vice-Principal Stroud then presented a follow-up to the November 4, 2014 Joint Board-Senate Meeting ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/agenda\\_item\\_4.2\\_joint\\_board-senate\\_follow-up\\_actions\\_0.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/agenda_item_4.2_joint_board-senate_follow-up_actions_0.pdf)).

The remarks from the Principal, which were distributed to Senators ahead of the meeting, mentioned that she is in Quebec City today with the other university rectors to meet Deputy Minister Lise Verreault to discuss the final report of the university funding policy *Chantier* co-authored by H el ene Tremblay and Pierre Roy, which was issued in late December. The report deals with a range of issues, including the funding formula for operating grants, tuition fees for non-Quebec students, and ancillary fees. It is a dense and complex report, and the potential impact of its 25 recommendations is still being analyzed. Thus far, there is no indication of how the government views the report and whether it intends to implement any of its recommendations. However, the report has a number of recommendations that, if implemented, would offer some flexibility, something McGill has advocated for. The Principal's remarks also noted that we are expecting the feasibility study for the RVH site to proceed in the near future. Principal Fortier, Vice-Principals Di Grappa and Marcil and Associate Vice-Principal Couvrette are meeting with the Deputy Minister and others in the government this week in order to reach agreement on the conditions under which McGill could undertake this feasibility study.

In the period for formal questions, Senators Rourke, Greenspon and Stewart-Kanigan posed a question regarding University support for out-of-the-classroom learning and increasing campus accessibility through student-run campus businesses, with the response being provided by Deputy Provost Dyens ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/1.\\_question\\_regarding\\_university\\_support\\_for\\_out-of-the-classroom\\_learning\\_with\\_response.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/1._question_regarding_university_support_for_out-of-the-classroom_learning_with_response.pdf)). Senators Greenspon, Ibrahim, Stewart-Kanigan and Ayukawa also posed a question regarding McGill's stance on the deregulation of international tuition fees, with the response being provided by Provost Masi ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/2.\\_question\\_regarding\\_international\\_tuition\\_with\\_response.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/2._question_regarding_international_tuition_with_response.pdf)).

Provost Masi presented for information the 461st report of the Academic Policy Committee ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-29\\_461st\\_report\\_of\\_apc.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-29_461st_report_of_apc.pdf)). Senate then debated the proposed revisions to the Policy on Late Withdrawals, which were presented by Associate Provost White (Appendix B of: [https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-25\\_-\\_460th\\_report\\_of\\_apc\\_to\\_senate\\_with\\_appendices\\_3.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-25_-_460th_report_of_apc_to_senate_with_appendices_3.pdf)). This item was carried over from the December meeting of Senate. As noted in the official minutes of that meeting, the motion had been disposed of without being put to a vote and therefore, as set out in Robert's Rules of Order, the motion was renewed at the January session without need of a motion of reconsideration. Professor White moved the adoption of the proposed revisions.

Senator Saroyan expressed concerns that the revisions would compromise the fundamental principle that the transcript should provide accurate information. She argued that the presence of Ws in a transcript does not necessarily have negative consequences because there is always the opportunity for students to elaborate on their transcripts when they submit an application. Senator Mucci concurred on the importance of the integrity of the transcript. Senator Lu regarded the proposal as well-intentioned but ill-advised and poorly conceived; she argued that if the rationale of altering the transcript to prevent mental distress was accepted, then similar adjustments would need to be made to other documents for the same reason.

Deputy Provost Dyens spoke in favour of the proposed revisions, noting that they were intended for use only in narrow, exceptional cases and that they had been approved by APC. Senator Stewart-Kanigan likewise expressed her support for the revisions, and suggested that the text be amended to provide for a mandatory review after a certain period of time. Professor White accepted the suggestion as a friendly amendment and proposed that the review take place in three years.

Senator Murray expressed a worry that the proposed revisions might have the opposite effect of what they are intended to accomplish, and argued that Ws are widely accepted. Senator Nystrom disagreed, saying that multiple Ws tend to attract attention when applications are being triaged and that explanatory notes do not always get noticed. Senator Oxhorn spoke in favour of the proposed revisions, stating that it would be perfectly clear from the transcript that the student had been absent for a semester. Senator Hooton concurred that the revisions would be beneficial, since they would provide one more option with which Associate Deans could work. Deputy Provost Dyens stated his full confidence in the ability of Associate Deans to make the call in the extreme cases that the revised policy is intended to address. The motion to adopt the revisions was put to the vote and approved.

Provost Masi presented the report of the Senate Nominating Committee, which was approved ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-30\\_report\\_of\\_the\\_nominating\\_committee.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-30_report_of_the_nominating_committee.pdf)). Associate Vice-Principal Stroud presented for information the annual report on research performance and innovation ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-31\\_annual\\_report\\_on\\_research\\_and\\_innovation\\_2014\\_with\\_appendix.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-31_annual_report_on_research_and_innovation_2014_with_appendix.pdf)), and a progress report on the Quartier de l'Innovation ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-33\\_qi\\_2014\\_progress\\_report\\_with\\_appendices\\_0.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-33_qi_2014_progress_report_with_appendices_0.pdf)). Senator Dudek asked Professor Stroud to elaborate on the sources of funding for the QI. She indicated that the QI operates at arm's length from McGill, but noted that McGill does invest in the project in the sense that there are some McGill people who are working on it.

As the final items of business, Senate received for information the annual report on Student Life and Learning, which was presented by Deputy Provost Dyens ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-32\\_annual\\_report\\_on\\_student\\_life\\_and\\_learning\\_with\\_appendix\\_1.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-32_annual_report_on_student_life_and_learning_with_appendix_1.pdf)), the annual report on University Advancement, presented by V.-P. Weinstein ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-34\\_ua\\_annual\\_report\\_with\\_appendices.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-34_ua_annual_report_with_appendices.pdf)), and the latest report from the Board of Governors to Senate, presented by Mr. Ram Panda ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-35\\_report\\_from\\_bog\\_to\\_senate\\_jan\\_2015\\_2.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-35_report_from_bog_to_senate_jan_2015_2.pdf)). As Dean of Students Costopoulos could not attend today's meeting, the verbal update he had been scheduled to present on the development of a Sexual Assault Policy has been deferred to the February meeting of Senate.

The next Senate meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 18, 2015. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us.

Regards,  
Your librarian Senate reps,  
Maya Kucij  
Marc Richard  
Natalie Waters