

Senate Meeting Report, 2015-03-18

Colleagues,

The following is a summary of the Senate meeting which took place on Wednesday, March 18, 2015.

Principal Fortier opened the meeting by thanking Mr. Shaun Cavaliere for his service as Governance Officer for Senate and wishing him well in his new position at University of British Columbia. This was followed by Senator Robaire's presentation of a memorial tribute for Professor Emeritus Theodore Sourkes.

Senate adopted the report of the Steering Committee ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/report\\_of\\_the\\_senate\\_steering\\_committee\\_28.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/report_of_the_senate_steering_committee_28.pdf)) and the agenda ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/agenda\\_-\\_senate\\_-\\_march\\_18\\_2015.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/agenda_-_senate_-_march_18_2015.pdf)). A number of issues were raised regarding the draft minutes of the February meeting. Senator Hastings pointed out that the draft minutes give the impression that there had been a general consensus on both the proposed revisions to the current phrasing of McGill's mission statement and on the proposed addition of a statement of values; there had in fact been considerable differences of opinion on the latter point, as Provost Masi himself had noted at the end of the February open discussion. The draft minutes, moreover, do not record some of the phrasing and punctuation alternatives which had been proposed to address some of the concerns raised by Senators. On the separate subject of the adoption at the February meeting of the *Regulations on Appeals of Tenure Decisions*, Senator Saroyan noted that the draft minutes did not capture accurately Associate Provost White's statement that it has been the practice for many years for retired academic staff to serve as advisors and that she did not see why this would change. Principal Fortier regarded these points as friendly amendments, and Senate adopted the minutes on the understanding that the necessary revisions would be done to the final text ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/final\\_senate\\_minutes\\_february\\_18\\_2015.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/final_senate_minutes_february_18_2015.pdf)).

In her remarks from the Chair, Principal Fortier indicated that the rectors and principals of Quebec's universities are making arrangements to meet the new Minister of Education, Higher Education and Research, François Blais. Quebec has announced that the next provincial budget will be tabled on March 26. At a recent meeting of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal, Principal Fortier and other McGill officers described the proposal to develop the soon-to-be-vacant Royal Victoria Hospital into an academic and research space, and Minister Robert Poëti announced that the government will be working with McGill to study this concept; costs for the study will be split half-and-half between McGill and Quebec. Chancellor Emeritus Steinberg will be chairing an advisory committee on McGill's upcoming 2021 bicentennial; the celebration will span one-and-a-half years, from January 2020 to June 2021.

In the period for follow-up questions to the Principal's remarks, Senator Robaire noted that that Education and Higher Education remain joint portfolios of a single minister, and he expressed concern about the amount of time Minister Blais might be able to devote to the higher education component. The Principal responded that it is too early to tell what the minister's priorities will be, and that at this point McGill is trying to assess the minister's commitment to developing a new funding formula for universities. Senator Richard asked the Principal whether she could expand on yesterday's announcement by the provincial government that it had granted approximately \$9M to McGill to support green chemistry. Principal Fortier indicated that these funds had been requested by McGill in connection with the recent establishment of a Canada Excellence Research Chair in Green Chemistry and Green Chemicals, and V.-P. Goldstein added that the funds would be used to pay for infrastructure.

Under the agenda item for formal questions, Senators Rourke, Greenspon and Benrimoh posed a question regarding the allocation of government funding for students with disabilities

([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/1\\_question\\_regarding\\_the\\_allocation\\_of\\_government\\_funding\\_for\\_students\\_with\\_disabilities.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/1_question_regarding_the_allocation_of_government_funding_for_students_with_disabilities.pdf)). The response was provided by Provost Masi and Deputy Provost Dyens

([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/response\\_allocation\\_of\\_funding\\_for\\_students\\_with\\_disabilities.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/response_allocation_of_funding_for_students_with_disabilities.pdf)). A second question, from Senator Greenspon, concerned disparities in ratios of faculty advisors to students

([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/2\\_question\\_regarding\\_disparities\\_in\\_ratios\\_of\\_faculty\\_advisors\\_to\\_students\\_0.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/2_question_regarding_disparities_in_ratios_of_faculty_advisors_to_students_0.pdf)). This question was also answered by Provost Masi and Deputy Provost Dyens ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/response\\_disparities\\_in\\_ratios\\_of\\_advisors\\_to\\_students.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/response_disparities_in_ratios_of_advisors_to_students.pdf)).

The next agenda item was the report from Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, which was presented by Dean Kreiswirth ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-42\\_gps\\_senate\\_report\\_with\\_appendix\\_1.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-42_gps_senate_report_with_appendix_1.pdf)). In the discussion which followed, Senator Zorychta drew attention to the space issues affecting the students who have moved to the MUHC Research Institute at the Glen site. Dean Kreiswirth responded that space issues are very critical in some portions of the University, and that the question to consider is whether we can make sure that space problems are reported and dealt with. He indicated that McGill is working on the problem. Senator Murray stated that PGSS has received many complaints about the move to the Glen site, and that information and resources on this issue -- which was already raised in Senate last fall -- are still lacking. She proposed that a working group be set up to look into how students and faculty at the Glen site are managing, and that this group present a preliminary report to Senate in May. Dean Kreiswirth indicated that he would consult with the Dean of Medicine and get back to Senate on this matter.

Senate adopted the 463rd report of the Academic Policy Committee ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-43\\_463rd\\_report\\_of\\_apc\\_to\\_senate\\_with\\_appendices\\_0.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-43_463rd_report_of_apc_to_senate_with_appendices_0.pdf)) and considered the report of the Nominating Committee ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-44\\_nominating\\_report\\_1.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-44_nominating_report_1.pdf)). On the subject of the proposed revisions to the terms of reference of the Senate Steering Committee, Senator Greenspon asked whether a point could be added specifying that Steering should provide an explanation to the person submitting a formal question when the Committee rejects the question. Provost Masi answered that it is already the practice of Steering to provide such explanations.

Senator Lu noted that the terms of reference cover questions submitted by Senators but not motions submitted by Senators; she asked that this element be added to the text. This was taken as a friendly amendment by the Provost. Associate Provost White suggested to have the subsidiary bullet point on page 6 ("To help guide the discussion at Senate, the APC should include questions for Senate's consideration when an item is referred to Senate for preliminary review") replace the main bullet point (which describes a process to refer major academic policy decisions and other important approval items to Senate twice), arguing that the approval path for such matters is already slow. Provost Masi accepted this suggestion, and the Nominating Committee report was adopted.

Provost Masi and V.-P. DiGrappa presented the McGill University staffing report for 2014 ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-45\\_staffing\\_report\\_2014\\_with\\_appendix\\_1.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-45_staffing_report_2014_with_appendix_1.pdf)). Senator Cooke asked whether the figures for administrative and support staff could be broken down into categories for permanent and non-permanent staff; she noted that this would be helpful in view of the risks of McGill losing non-permanent staff, whose valuable training is lost when they leave the University. V.-P. DiGrappa responded that this could be done in a later report; he added that staff departures from McGill are not limited to non-permanent staff.

Senator Lu expressed a wish to see staffing reports provide more information on contract academic staff and sessional lecturers, in view of the fact that some universities rely on such appointments year after year

to handle much of their undergraduate teaching. Provost Masi responded that these numbers are not easy to sort out, but noted that lecturers at McGill include people in many different situations for whom teaching is not a full-time job -- for example, graduate students who teach during the summers, individuals employed outside McGill who teach one or two courses at one of the University's professional schools, and hospital staff members who teach medical courses without being full-time academics. McGill's practice is to try to have undergraduate teaching handled by tenure-track academic staff, except in those cases where it is necessary to do otherwise.

Deputy-Provost Dyens and University Registrar Massey presented the annual report on Enrolment and Strategic Enrolment Management ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-46\\_enrolment\\_management\\_report\\_with\\_appendices\\_1.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-46_enrolment_management_report_with_appendices_1.pdf)). Principal Fortier presented the report from the Board of Governors to Senate and congratulated Dean Cook on her reappointment as Trenholme Dean of Libraries, as noted on page 1 of the report ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-47\\_report\\_from\\_bog\\_to\\_senate\\_march\\_2015\\_0.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-47_report_from_bog_to_senate_march_2015_0.pdf)). The final item of business was the presentation by Provost Masi of a non-confidential report to Senate from the Honorary Degrees and Convocations Committee for information purposes ([https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-48\\_hdcc\\_report\\_to\\_senate\\_0.pdf](https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-48_hdcc_report_to_senate_0.pdf))

The next Senate meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 22, 2015. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us.

Regards,  
Your librarian Senate reps,

Maya Kucij  
Marc Richard  
Natalie Waters