

Senate Meeting Report, 2015-04-22

Colleagues,

The following is a summary of the Senate meeting which took place on Wednesday, April 22, 2015.

The meeting began with the approval of the Steering Committee's recommendation to have Dean Manfredi serve as Chair for the meeting, since Principal Fortier is currently in France to participate in an international jury supporting a higher education investment program. Memorial tributes were presented by Dean Eidelman for Professor Emeritus Daya Varma and by Dean Grant for Professor Emeritus Tommy Mark.

Senate adopted the minutes of the last Senate meeting (not yet posted), the report of the Steering Committee (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/report_of_the_senate_steering_committee_30.pdf) and the agenda (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/agenda_-_senate_-_april_22_2015_1.pdf).

Under the agenda point for formal questions, Senators Stewart-Kanigan, Ayukawa, Rourke and Greenspon posed a question regarding Student Services funding sustainability (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/1_question_-_student_services.pdf). Deputy Provost Dyens provided an answer (not yet posted).

Provost Masi gave a presentation on the McGill budget for FY2016 (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-49_mcgill_university_budget_fy2016_0.pdf). In the subsequent period for discussion, Senator Cooke asked how the anticipated increase in student numbers will make it possible to maintain service as administrative and support staff positions are being cut. Provost Masi acknowledged that this is a difficult issue with which McGill will have to grapple; we need to think creatively about what we do and how we do it. Senator Robaire asked for additional details on the anticipated pay equity expenses. The Provost noted that pay equity (which pertains to categories of staff, and is distinct from the concept of employment equity, which pertains to individual employees) is defined by government legislation, and that pay equity issues will need to be addressed on an ongoing basis unless the law changes.

Provost Masi presented the first part of the 464rd report of the Academic Policy Committee (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-50_464th_apc_report.pdf), which was approved. Associate Provost White presented the second part of the APC report, which consisted of a revised version of the updated McGill mission statement (including a statement of principles) which had been discussed at Senate in February. Senator Richard commented that the revised text addresses satisfactorily the serious concerns which had been raised about the previous draft, and he thanked the members of APC for having given careful consideration to the feedback they had received from Senate on these issues. Senator Lu concurred that the revision was excellent, but proposed deleting the words "and values" from the phrase "the principles and values". Senate approved this amendment by vote. Senator Galaty wondered whether "inclusiveness" should be changed to "inclusivity." Associate Provost White promised to reflect on this suggestion after the meeting; for the moment, the word "inclusiveness" will be retained. Senate voted on the main motion, and the document was adopted.

Provost Masi presented the first part of the Senate Nominating report (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-51_nominating_report.pdf), which was approved. Among the recommendations approved were the nominations of Ms. Mary Lourenço as a representative of the administrative and support staff from the University Libraries to the Senate Committee on Libraries, of Ms. Andrea Miller-Nesbitt as a representative of Senate to the Senate Committee on Physical Development, and of Ms. Valerie Mayman as an alternate chair for the Library UTC.

Dean Eidelman presented the second part of the Nominating report (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-52_faculty_council.pdf), which proposed the establishment of a Faculty Council in the Faculty of Medicine. He noted that the Faculty of Medicine has not had a Faculty Council for over twenty years, and that such a body is an accreditation standard for several of the Faculty's schools. In response to a question from Senator Richard about how these schools were able to obtain reaccreditation during the past twenty years, Dean Eidelman responded that this was accomplished by finessing the fact that the Faculty did have other types of governance bodies in place. Associate Provost White drew attention to an error in the distributed text of the proposal, saying that research associates should be separate from the various student groups. Dean Manfredi said that Secretary-General Strople has informed him that this error has already been corrected.

Senator Galaty noted that the proposed Faculty Council would be advisory, in contrast with other such councils which have decision-making power, and thus that it would have a weaker status. Dean Eidelman responded that not all Faculty Councils are decision-making bodies. He also noted that much of the Faculty of Medicine's business concerns its professional schools, which operate under the strict jurisdiction of various Canadian or international accrediting bodies, and that it would be inappropriate for a Faculty Council to decide (for example) what courses the School of Nursing should teach, given that its members would include individuals who are not from the nursing field. Secretary-General Strople added that the proposed Faculty Council would have a mixture of advisory and decision-making responsibilities, depending on the nature of the matters being considered, and that this mixed model exists in other Faculty Councils at McGill. Dean Eidelman further noted that, in accordance with the text of the proposal, the new Faculty Council will be reviewed in two years. The proposal to create the Faculty Council was voted on and adopted.

The next agenda item was a verbal progress report given by V.-P. Goldstein on the review of the Regulation on the Conduct of Research. The working group which conducted this review has submitted its recommendations to V.-P. Goldstein; these recommendations include requiring researchers to declare whether they have considered the consequences of their research and to describe the balance between its potential benefits and its potentially harmful applications. V.-P. Goldstein will consider the working group's recommendations over the next few months, and will consult members of her leadership team as well as McGill's deans about these recommendations. She will eventually bring to Senate for approval (most likely this fall) a set of proposed revisions to the Regulation, as well as implementation procedures for them.

Senator Robaire asked whether the revised Regulation would define what is harmful. He noted that it's possible for something to be harmful in one way but beneficial in other ways. V.-P. Goldstein said that she had no simple answers to this question, with which the working group grappled extensively, but that the concept of a declaration on the harm-benefit balance of a proposed research project might be one way to address the problem. Senator Hastings asked who would be reading these declarations; V.-P. Goldstein responded that this still needs to be determined. Senator Stewart-Kanigan asked why the working group's recommendations had not been presented to Senate. V.-P. Goldstein explained that it was a matter of process; her leadership team and the deans need to have a chance to comment on the recommendations before they are brought forward.

As the final items of business, Senate received for information a report on scholarship and student aid, which was presented by Deputy Provost Dyens (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-53_ssao_annual_report.pdf); the annual report on the Policy on Safe Disclosure, which was presented by Secretary-General Strople (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-54_safe_disclosure_policy.pdf); and the report of the Joint Senate Steering and Board Executive Committees, which was presented by

Secretary-General Stroppe (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-55_joint_exec-steering_report.pdf).

The last Senate meeting of the 2014-2015 academic year will be held on Tuesday, May 12, 2015. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us.

Regards,
Your librarian Senate reps,

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