

Senate Meeting Report, 2015-05-12

Colleagues,

The following is a summary of the Senate meeting which took place on Tuesday, May 12, 2015.

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_31.pdf) and the agenda (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/agenda_senate_may_12.pdf).

As a point of business arising from the previous minutes, Senator Lu noted that there have been instances this year of Senate requesting information from a speaker and being promised that the information would be presented at the next meeting, then having to request the information again when it did not prove to be forthcoming. Secretary-General Strople assured Senate that the Secretariat would henceforth take on an enhanced role in following up on information which had been promised.

In her remarks from the Chair, Principal Fortier stated that the University has reached out to the nine McGill students who come from Nepal to support them in the aftermath of the recent natural disaster in that country. On the provincial scene, Administration representatives have met with the Minister of Finance, to whom they outlined their vision of the higher education sector and its role in the social and economic development of Quebec, and with the Minister of Education, with whom various subjects (including the development of a new funding formula) were discussed. The Minister indicated that certain priorities of the previous government are no longer priorities of the current one; these include the *Loi cadre* review and the proposed *Conseil des universités*. The Minister gave details on the budget cuts which universities will have to absorb; these will be on the order of \$73M system-wide, of which McGill's share will be about \$11M. On the federal scene, AUCC and the U15 group are preparing for the next election, and for the file transitions which are certain to follow it regardless of its results in view of the fact that many individuals are not running for re-election.

At Principal Fortier's invitation, Provost Masi spoke about the recent appointment of two new Deans who will be arriving in the coming months: Professor Anja Geitmann, the incoming Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and Associate Vice-Principal (Macdonald Campus), whose term of office will start in September 2015; and Professor Isabelle Bajeux-Besnainou, the incoming Dean of the Desautels Faculty of Management, whose term will begin either in September 2015 or in January 2016.

In the period for formal questions, Senators Hébert and Bernard posed a question regarding McGill's response to the federal budget (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/1-question_regarding_mcgills_response_to_the_federal_budget.pdf), for which an answer (not yet posted) was provided by Provost Masi. Following up on points raised by Senators Lu and Hébert during the subsequent discussion, Principal Fortier agreed to hold a Senate discussion next year on the subject of what position the Administration should take when it speaks with the federal government about Tri-Council funding.

The second and final question was posed by Senator Arezki concerning access to student services for Continuing Studies students (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/2-question_regarding_access_to_student_services_for_continuing_studies_students.pdf). The answer (not yet posted) was provided by Deputy-Provost Dyens.

The next agenda item, presented by Provost Masi, was the 465th report of the Academic Policy Committee (<https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14->

[56 465th report of apc to senate may 2015.pdf](#)). Regarding the proposal to create a faculty-level entity to allow students in the interfaculty M.Eng and Ph.D. Biological and Biomedical Engineering graduate programs to be properly documented in the student records system, Senator Richard noted that the second bullet point in Appendix A (not yet posted) does not make it clear whether the department-level units being created under this notional entity would be real departments or whether they too would exist purely for purposes of paperwork. Provost Masi responded that he would be happy to amend the document to make it clear that these units would exist only for record-keeping purposes. Regarding the first bullet point in Appendix A, Senator Hébert suggested changing "but it a Faculty only for the purpose of recording and record keeping" to "but it takes the form of a faculty only for the purpose of recording and record keeping." Provost Masi agreed to make this wording change.

Provost Masi presented the report of the Senate Nominating Committee (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-57_nominating_report.pdf). He mentioned several last-minute nominations of students, which will be added to the document. Senate adopted the report, which included the nomination of several student representatives to the Senate Committee on Libraries and of Ms. Sharon Rankin as a representative of the academic staff to the Advisory Council on the Charter of Students' Rights.

Associate Provost White presented the Report on Employment Equity (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-58_report_on_employment_equity.pdf). In the discussion which followed, Professor White was asked whether the salary differential problems identified in the report are being caused by women being hired at lower salaries. She responded that she did not have any figures for starting salaries, but that she would try to obtain these numbers; she does not know whether there are any salary differentials by gender at the time of entry, nor what the reasons for them might be if they do exist. Principal Fortier commented that the question of whether systemic salary discrimination exists at McGill could be the topic of an open discussion at Senate next year.

The next agenda item was a verbal progress report on the work of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Charter of Students' Rights, presented for information by Dean Costopoulos. He reported that there has not been much progress made in this review because of urgent solicitations by student groups this year for his office to focus on other files (such as the proposed Sexual Assault Policy). At this point, there exists a fully annotated version of the Charter which identifies inconsistencies and other problems. Dean Costopoulos hopes to report in the fall on additional progress.

Associate Provost White provided an update on the review of the Policy on Safe Disclosure (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-59_update_policy_on_safe_disclosure.pdf). A working group is handling the review, and Professor White anticipates that some revisions to the Policy will be ready for presentation to Senate in the fall. The working group aims to make the document easier to read and more transparent, and to improve the disclosure mechanisms. One contemplated change would be to use the term "whistle-blowing" rather than "safe disclosure" to make the subject of the document more evident.

Senate received for information the latest report of the Board of Governors to Senate (https://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d14-60_report_of_the_board_of_governors_to_senate.pdf), presented by Mr. Ram Panda, and a verbal update from Secretary-General Strople on the Senate calendar of dates for 2015-2016. Work has nearly been completed on expanding the partial Senate calendar of dates (which was distributed to Senators in early March, and which covers the fall 2015 semester) to cover the full 2015-2016 academic year. It will be distributed in the next few days.

Two topics were raised under the agenda item for other business. First, Senator Ibrahim proposed that an Ad Hoc Committee be established to review the Employment Equity Policy. Senator White noted that

various policies at McGill have built-in review dates; she did not believe that this was the case with the Employment Equity Policy, but added that the Policy could be reviewed on a similar basis without striking an Ad Hoc Committee of Senate. Secretary-General Strople suggested that the matter be referred to the Senate Nominating Committee. Second, Principal Fortier and Secretary-General Strople recognized and thanked Professor Masi for his many years of service on Senate in various capacities, most recently as Provost. Senate likewise expressed its appreciation to Provost Masi.

The next Senate meeting will be held on Thursday, September 24, 2015. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us.

Regards,
Your librarian Senate reps,

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