

Senate Meeting Report, 2015-09-24

Colleagues,

The following is a summary of the Senate meeting which took place on Thursday, September 24, 2015.

The meeting began with memorial tributes being presented by Dean Nicell for Professor Gerald W. Farnell, by Senator Ismail for Professor William Marshall, and by Dean Eidelman for Professors Anthony Dobell and Wendy MacDonald.

Senate adopted the minutes of the last Senate meeting (not yet posted), the report of the Steering Committee (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/2_report_of_the_senate_steering_committee_6.pdf) and the agenda (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/1_agenda_-_senate_-_september_24_2015.pdf).

As a point of business arising from the last Senate meeting, it was announced that in the winter 2016 session of Senate there will be an open discussion on the subject of employment equity.

In the section of the agenda allocated to remarks from the Chair, Principal Fortier indicated that the Faculty of Medicine has been re-accredited but has been put on probation by the accrediting body. At her invitation, Dean Eidelman provided an update on the situation. Dean Eidelman noted that the visitors to the Faculty had praised it for its curriculum, but that much homework remains to be done on dealing in a proper way with several administrative issues, notably as pertains to the Curriculum Committee. A working group has been meeting every two weeks to address these issues, and the accrediting body said last week that McGill is on track to fixing them. The Faculty needs to submit, by December 1, 2016, a plan to address the issues, and the Faculty hopes to be off probation in the spring of 2017.

Principal Fortier reported that the Administration has been continuing discussions with the Quebec government on the future of the site currently occupied by the Royal Victoria Hospital. McGill and the government will be funding studies on the feasibility of converting the site for use by McGill; a call for tenders will be issued shortly. The government will retain control of the RVH site in the interim, and will take care of its maintenance and security.

Under the agenda point for formal questions, Senators Hébert and Bernard posed a question regarding planning for the future of biomedical research in Canada, which was answered by Principal Fortier (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/4_question_and_response_biomedical_r.pdf). Senators Rourke and Sobat posed a question regarding McGill's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Report, which was answered by Deputy Provost Dyens and Dean Costopoulos (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/5_question_regarding_mcgills_response_to_the_truth_and_reconciliation_report_and_response.pdf). Senators Benrimoh, Sobat, Kpeglo-Hennessy and Rourke posed a question regarding McGill's alleged violation of Bill 100, to which an answer was provided by V.-P. Di Grappa (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/6a_q3_response_bill_100.pdf). Senator Rourke posed a question regarding physical accessibility on campus, to which an answer was provided by V.-P. Di Grappa (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/7_question_regarding_physical_accessibility_on_campus_and_response_0.pdf).

Provost Manfredi presented the 466th report of the Academic Policy Committee (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/8_d15-01_466th_academic_policy_committee_report_apc_r.pdf). Senate voted on and approved the proposals in the APC report to create a Professional Development Certificate in Business Valuation, to rename the McGill Centre for the Study of Reproduction to the McGill Centre for Research in Reproduction and Development, and to create the McGill Cystic Fibrosis Translational Research Centre.

Regarding the proposal in the APC report to create the McGill Space Institute, Senator Richard drew attention to the fact that parts of the documentation are written as if the Institute already exists, that the Institute already has a well-developed website which is similarly written, and that this website is advertising an October 28 lecture which is being billed as a "launch event" for the McGill Space Institute. Senator Richard expressed concern that the Institute either seemed to think that its creation had already been approved or seemed to be taking it for granted that its creation would be approved by Senate at today's meeting. Provost Manfredi indicated that these points had not been raised at APC; his sense was that this situation was the result of enthusiasm for the creation for the Institute rather than arising from any lack of recognition of Senate's role. Senator Saroyan felt that this situation was another example of Senate being made to feel useless, despite Principal Fortier's stated wish to see Senate more engaged. Another Senator suggested that the documentation pertaining to the creation of the Institute should make note of the fact that the procedure which was followed is not the normal one; Provost Manfredi undertook to see to this in his capacity as Chair of APC. The motion to create the McGill Space Institute was voted on and approved. Senator McCulloch noted that the McGill Cystic Fibrosis Translational Research Centre likewise seems to have gotten ahead of the Senate approval process because it too is already operating a website under the name that was submitted to Senate for approval in today's APC report.

Senate approved the nominations for various committee seats proposed in the report of the Senate Nominating Committee (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/d15-02_report_of_the_nominating_committee_revised.pdf). These included the appointment of two student members to the Senate Committee on Libraries, the appointment of Ms. Carole Urbain as a tenured member from the University Libraries to serve on the University Tenure Committee for Recruitment, and the appointment of Ms. Genevieve Gore (Libraries) as a member of the Advisory Committee for the Selection of a Dean of Music.

Associate Provost Campbell presented the annual report on the Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited by Law (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/10_d15-03_annual_report_policy_on_harrassment.pdf). In response to a question from Senator Rourke about the recruitment of assessors, Professor Campbell noted that the recruitment of the assessors drawn from the non-academic staff (who constitute 50% of the assessors) can be more of a challenge than the recruitment of the assessors drawn from academic staff because academic staff members can obtain service credit from this activity. She hopes to find ways to improve this situation.

As the last two agenda items, Associate Provost Campbell presented the annual report of the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/11_d15-04_annual_report_jbsce.pdf), and Deputy-Provost Dyens presented the annual report of the Committee on Student Services (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/12_d15-05_annual_report_committee_student_services_.pdf).

The next Senate meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 21, 2015. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us.

Regards,
Your librarian Senate reps,

Genevieve Gore
Marc Richard
Natalie Waters