

Senate Meeting Report, 2015-11-18

Colleagues,

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

The meeting began with Principal Fortier congratulating Senator Zorychta on her re-election as a Senate representative on the Board of Governors, and with Senator Geitmann presenting a memorial tribute for Professor Kwet Fane (André) Ng-Kwai-Hang.

Senate adopted the minutes of the last Senate meeting

(http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/senate_minutes_october_21_2015.pdf), the report of the Steering Committee

(http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/1_report_of_the_senate_steering_committee_0.pdf) and the

agenda (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/0_agenda_-_senate_nov_18_2015.pdf).

In her remarks from the Chair, the Principal expressed the shock and sadness of the McGill community at the recent events in Paris. She offered her condolences to everyone affected by this tragedy and to the people of France. Commenting on the recent federal election, Principal Fortier noted the presence of several individuals with McGill connections in the new cabinet, and also underscored Prime Minister Trudeau's clearly expressed appreciation for the importance of universities. The Principal noted that, for the eleventh year in a row, McGill has been ranked in first place in the medical/doctoral category of the Macleans survey. She indicated that this year Homecoming and Open House had been combined as a single event, as the first phase of a pilot project which will continue for another two years. The Principal concluded her comments by reporting on her attendance at a recent meeting of Universities Canada (formerly the AUCC).

Following up on the Principal's remarks, Senator Benrimoh asked whether there were any intimations from Ottawa regarding government funding of research. Principal Fortier responded that the Prime Minister understands the importance of basic research, but that he has asked universities to please be patient. The government says that it will need time to translate its platform and its views into concrete terms. The Principal pointed to the fact that the government has a majority, and that universities should therefore think in terms of four budget years in connection with this issue.

Under the agenda point for formal questions, Senators Sobat and Rourke posed a question regarding the impact of international tuition deregulation on McGill's

international student community; the answer was provided by Deputy Provost Dyens

(http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/3_question_and_response_regarding_intl_tuition_deregulation.pdf).

The next agenda item was a presentation by V.-P. Di Grappa of the annual report on the financial state of the University ([http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/4_d15-](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/4_d15-15_annual_report_financial_state.pdf)

[15_annual_report_financial_state.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/4_d15-15_annual_report_financial_state.pdf)). Referring to a point mentioned by V.-P. Di Grappa about the heavy administrative burden imposed on universities by Quebec's extensive reporting requirements, Senator Richard noted that MNAs had recently admitted to representatives of the Fédération québécoise des professeures et professeurs d'université (FQPPU) that the government does not actually read the reports which universities send it because it has neither the staff numbers nor the expertise to do so. V.-P. Di Grappa commented that McGill could save an estimated \$1M a year if the reporting requirements imposed by Quebec were eased.

Senator Galaty asked if the liability figures presented for the McGill Pension Plan (MPP) include any amounts associated with special pension arrangements. V.-P. Di Grappa responded that supplementary pension plans are funded out of the operating budget, not out of the MPP.

Referring to the report's paragraph on the repairs needed to the Macdonald Stewart Library building, which states that "the full restoration project must be initiated by 2017 if the building is to be retained," Senator Gore asked V.-P. Di Grappa if he could clarify what is meant by "if the building is to be retained." He answered that a major investment in the building is required, with various issues needing to be addressed in priority order. V.-P. Di Grappa noted that when a major intervention is required on a building, one of the available options is sometimes to not spend money there, and instead to relocate the people and to deal with the building later. But he added that in this particular case the University has made representation to the government for funding to restore the building.

Provost Manfredi next presented a report on budget planning for 2016-2017 (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/5_d15-16_budget_planning_2016-17_report_i.pdf). Senator Gehr asked whether the distribution of funds to faculties is based on a formula and how often this formula is adjusted to reflect changing circumstances. The Provost responded that funds are distributed via an agreement process with the Deans, that the funding is driven by academic staff numbers and that it is adjusted periodically.

Associate Provost Campbell presented for approval a set of proposed revisions to the Policy on Safe Disclosure (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/6_d15-17_revisions_policy_on_safe_disclosure.pdf). She prefaced this item by noting that, while there had been MAUT membership on the working group which had crafted these proposed changes, the changes had not gone through the process which governs formal ad hoc consultations with MAUT. The basic title of the policy remains "Policy on Safe Disclosure" but a parenthetical qualifier ("Whistle Blowing") is being added to the title to clarify its meaning.

Senator Richard commented that the proposed revisions bring many improvements to the Policy, in particular as regards to fairness and due process. He noted, however, that while the preamble refers to the protection of the position and reputation of the Discloser, it makes no reference to such protection applying to the Respondent. Arguing that this was potentially prejudicial to innocent Respondents, he proposed an amendment to insert such a reference in the preamble. Associate Provost Campbell spoke against the motion, saying that Article 7.3 of the Policy protects the position and reputation of innocent Respondents. The amendment was defeated and the proposed revisions to the Policy were adopted.

Senate received for information the annual report of the Committee on Enrolment and Student Affairs (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/7_annual_report_committee_enrolment_and_student_affairs_ce_sa.pdf), which was presented by Deputy-Provost Dyens, and the annual report of the Committee on Student Discipline (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/8_d15-19_annual_report_committee_student_discipline.pdf), which was presented on behalf of Dean Costopoulos by Associate Dean Zabowski. Secretary-General Strople presented the report of the Joint Board-Senate Meeting on Designing a Smart Campus for the 21st Century Information (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/9_d15-20_joint_board-senate_report.pdf), adding that the next step would be to look at the possibility of implementing some of the ideas which had been raised.

As the final agenda item, Senate moved into confidential session to discuss the report of the Honorary Degrees and Convocations Committee.

The next Senate meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 2, 2015. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us.

Regards,
Your librarian Senate reps,

Genevieve Gore
Marc Richard
Natalie Waters