

Senate Meeting Report, 2016-02-17

Colleagues,

The following is a summary of the Senate meeting which took place on Wednesday, February 17, 2016.

The meeting began with the adoption of the minutes of the last Senate meeting (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/senate_minutes_jan.13.2016_-_final.pdf), the report of the Steering Committee (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/2_report_of_the_senate_steering_committee_9.pdf) and the agenda (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/1_agenda_-_senate_feb.17.2016_0.pdf). V.-P. Goldstein then presented a follow-up (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/4_follow-up_to_december_2015_open_discussion.pdf) to the December 2015 Open Discussion on Research Funding and Support.

In her Remarks from the Chair, Principal Fortier mentioned recent meetings of the Administration with several Quebec ministers, at which the University's priorities were discussed; these priorities include the revision of the funding formula for Quebec universities, a project which has been on the back burner for several years. She noted that Quebec's Minister of Finance, at his recent visit to McGill, stated that there would be investments made in education, but did not offer any specifics. The Principal also reported on her participation at the World Economic Forum in Davos last month; McGill was the only Canadian university invited to participate at this event.

Under the agenda point for formal questions, Senators Kpeglo-Hennessy and Sobat posed a question regarding course outlines; the response was provided by Deputy Provost Dyens (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/question_and_response_regarding_course_outlines.pdf). The second and final question, posed by Senators Noyhouzer, Toccalino and Mills, concerned post-doctoral fellows teaching opportunities at McGill; the response was provided by Dean Nalbantoglu (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/question_and_response_regarding_post_doc_teaching_opportunities.pdf).

The next agenda item was an Open Discussion on Employment Equity at McGill, for which a two-part background document (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/7_d15-33_open_discussion_on_employment_equity.pdf) was provided by a working group whose members included Associate Provost Campbell. This document includes a list of special initiatives which might potentially be used to address persisting salary differentials between women and men at McGill.

Senator Richard thanked the members of the working group for having prepared an informative document, and for the special initiatives it contains for the consideration of Senators. He commented that the initiative which reads "Considering methods for ensuring that periods of maternity and extended parental leave do not result in penalizing women's salary growth over time" is a particularly welcome proposal, given that in some academic units leaves of this type have had deleterious effects on the salary growth of female academic staff. He expressed concern, however, that the paragraph which introduces these proposals refers to salary differentials between women and men professors; he noted that librarians are members of the academic staff, and that the University Libraries are the academic unit at McGill with the largest percentage of women (86%) among its tenure-track staff. He asked if Associate Provost Campbell could clarify whether the special initiatives being contemplated are intended to apply to all members of the academic staff; Professor Campbell confirmed that this is indeed the case.

Senator Benrimoh asked whether the working group had contemplated any measures to address allegations reported in the press that residents in Quebec hospitals have been told not to get pregnant

during their residency. Associate Provost Campbell responded that this issue had not been raised; she commented that the allegations, if true, sound like workplace harassment, and she noted that in such a case there would be jurisdictional issues to consider. Senator Zorychta asked what specific plans are being contemplated to address salary inequities caused by maternity leaves and extended parental leaves. Professor Campbell responded that the issue requires governance attention; it needs to be considered collectively, and she does not have a specific plan at this stage. She drew attention to the fact, however, that the Academic Salary Policy includes a retention and anomaly envelope which is meant to correct academic salary inequities which have been identified.

Senator Rourke referred to a SSMU report which concluded that other universities are further along than McGill in advancing academic staff diversity. Associate Provost Campbell responded that the SSMU study did not use the same benchmarks as the working group had used. Senator Brunot expressed a wish to see a greater number of visible minorities in the senior levels of the Administration. Senator Benrimoh similarly felt that McGill should be proactive in generating a broader pool of applicants, for instance when the Administration uses the services of headhunting agencies to recruit for senior positions.

Senator Robaire commented that even though salary differentials have been addressed several times over the years, such differentials keep creeping back despite a commitment made by the Provost's office a decade ago to prevent their reoccurrence. Associate Provost Campbell indicated that she was not aware of this earlier commitment, but added that such differentials tend to be most noticeable to local unit heads. She also noted that there is a strong disparity between men and women in terms of how much use is made of the retention envelope.

Principal Fortier thanked Senators for their input. Her sense of the comments made is that Senate believes that the working group's proposals and thoughts provide a path in the right direction on these issues.

Provost Manfredi presented this year's second report to Senate on budget planning for 2016-17 (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/8_d15-34_budget_planning_2016-17_report_ii.pdf). In the period for discussion which followed, Senator Robaire asked if McGill is on track to be positioned this year, as is usually the case, midway between Quebec's other universities with regard to the size of its deficit. Provost Manfredi responded that he believes this to be the case, and that this is the position for which McGill is aiming. Senator Galaty, referring to the financial gains which were made from the sale of Redpath properties, asked the Provost to comment on the advisability of selling assets to pay the University's bills. The Provost responded that McGill has no such strategy; he explained that the Redpath property transaction was a particular case in which the condominium owners who were renting the land from McGill offered to buy it rather than renewing their lease; the purchase option was determined to be more financially advantageous to the University than the renewal option.

Provost Manfredi next presented the 470th report of the Academic Policy Committee (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/9_d15-35_470th_report_of_the_apc.pdf). Regarding the proposed creation of a School of Public Policy, Senator Moore commented that the proposal seems narrowly focused on the Faculty of Arts and does not seem to provide many opportunities for graduate students to be involved in public policy. The Provost responded that the School will be a living organism, and that although it will be based in the Faculty of Arts it is intended to be multi-disciplinary and multi-faculty in nature. Interim Dean Meadwell confirmed that, once the School is past its establishment stage, it will be engaging other units at McGill which have an interest in public policy. Senator Moore asked if the documentation's reference to "ensuring that the Faculty's Departments, Institutes and Schools will be meaningfully engaged" could be changed to say "Faculties" rather than "Faculty's". Provost Manfredi suggested the alternative of having the minutes of today's Senate meeting reflect this as being the

understood meaning of the documentation; Senator Moore concurred with this suggestion. The APC report was approved.

Senate approved the report of the Senate Nominating Committee, which included the nomination of Ms. Dawn McKinnon to the Senate Committee on Libraries (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/10._d15-36_nominating_report.pdf). Senate also approved a proposed revision to the Regulations Concerning Sabbatic Leaves for Tenure Track and Tenured Academic Staff (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/11._d15-37_proposed_revision_to_regulations_on_sabbatic_leaves.pdf), which was presented by Associate Provost Campbell. This amendment, which broadens and clarifies an existing provision, allows academic staff to count as credited service toward a sabbatical up to two years served at another institution prior to joining McGill in a position considered equivalent to a tenure track or tenured academic position.

Senate received for information the annual report of the Ombudsperson for Students (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/12._d15-38_report_of_the_ombudsperson_2014-15.pdf), which was presented by Professor Dimitrios Berk, Ombudsperson for Students, and the annual report on the Advisory Council on the Charter of Students' Rights (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/13._d15-39_advisory_council_charter_of_students_rights_memo.pdf), which was presented by Professor Jane Everett, Chair of the Advisory Council on the Charter of Students' Rights.

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, March 23, 2016. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us.

Regards,
Your librarian Senate reps,

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