

Senate Meeting Report, 2016-04-20

Colleagues,

The following is a summary of the Senate meeting which took place on Wednesday, April 20, 2016.

The meeting was chaired by Dean Nicell, owing to the fact that Principal Fortier is participating today in the Business Higher Education Roundtable in Toronto.

Senate adopted the minutes of the last Senate meeting (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/senate_minutes_march_23_2016_0.pdf), the report of the Steering Committee (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/2_report_of_the_senate_steering_committee_10.pdf) and the agenda (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/1_agenda_april_20_2016_0.pdf).

In response to a question from Senator Sobat regarding the points which are mentioned in the Steering report about the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in Canada, Provost Manfredi noted that the Administration has discussed with the Institute for some fifteen years the possibility that it might one day have to vacate the building which it currently occupies. The Institute's occupancy will be extended by one month, and Provost Manfredi will continue to be involved in discussions which aim to help the Institute find alternative housing.

Under the agenda point for formal questions, Senators Rourke and Brunot posed a question regarding the resolution of grievances under the Committee on Student Grievances, for which a response was provided by Secretary-General Strople (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/senate_question_and_response_re_grievances_revised.pdf). The next question, from Senator Brunot, concerned universal design for learning, mental health and neurodiversity; the response was provided by Deputy-Provost Dyens (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/senate_question_and_response_re_ud_with_appendices.pdf). The final question, from Senator Saroyan, pertained to opportunities and mechanisms for the employment of graduate students and postdoctoral trainees; Provost Manfredi provided the response (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/senate_question_and_response_re_employment_of_grad_and_postdoc_students_revised.pdf).

The next agenda item was a presentation by Provost Manfredi on the proposed McGill University Budget for 2016-17 (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/7_d15-50_draft_budget_2016-17_updated.pdf). During the discussion which followed, Senator Robaire asked for details regarding how spousal hires will be handled in the future; Provost Manfredi responded that from now on such hires, which are regarded as provostial hires, will be funded entirely from the academic salary pool. Senator Gehr asked if McGill will have to cap its growth due to space restrictions if it does not succeed in acquiring the former Royal Victoria Hospital property. Provost Manfredi responded that McGill's current growth rate is slow: the undergraduate population is more or less in a steady state; McGill is below its target complement for tenure-track academic staff, and once that target has been reached this complement will likewise remain steady.

Senate next approved the 472nd report of the Academic Policy Committee (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/7_d15-51_apc_report.pdf) and the nominations contained in the report of the Senate Nominating Committee (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/8_15-52_nominating_report_0.pdf), the latter including the appointment of Ms. Alexandra Kohn to the Intellectual Property Appeals Committee. The section of the Nominating report dealing with proposed revisions to the terms of reference of the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity (JBSCE) generated

considerable debate, with several student Senators arguing that the removal of the explicit enumeration of certain specific underrepresented or historically disadvantaged social groups would be a disservice to those groups. Senator Ibrahim argued that the proposed addition of the phrase "underrepresented or historically disadvantaged social groups" did not have to be done at the expense of deleting the current references to those specific groups. Senator Robaire moved that the proposed amendments be sent back to the JBSCE for further deliberation, and this motion was adopted.

Senate approved the appointment of three Assessors under the Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/9_d15-53_harassment_assessors.pdf), and also approved some further revisions to the University Student Assessment Policy (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/10_d15-54_student_assessment_policy_revised.pdf). With reference to this second item, Senator Saroyan asked if there is currently a process in place to look at what other revisions to the SAP might be needed. Deputy-Provost Dyens responded that a task force chaired by Dr. Elizabeth Wood has been set up to develop student assessment principles which will be brought to Senate by the end of 2016. Senator Saroyan asked if input on the subject should be sent to Dr. Wood; Deputy-Provost Dyens responded that the best option would be to await Dr. Wood's next presentation to the Enrollment and Student Affairs Advisory Committee (ESAAC) and to work from there.

Associate Provost Campbell presented for information a revised form for declarations pursuant to the Regulation on Conflict of Interest (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/11_d15-55_declarations_conflict_of_interest.pdf). Regarding the requirement that all ranked academic staff file an annual statement of conflict of interest, Senator Richard asked if a yearly reminder of this requirement will be sent out to academic staff members. Professor Campbell agreed that it would be a good idea to issue such a reminder; the Office of the Provost would be the source of the reminder, and it would most probably be sent out each year around springtime.

As its last item of business, Senate received for information the report of the Joint Senate Steering and Board Executive Committees Meeting (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/12_d15-56_report_of_the_joint_executive-steering_meeting.pdf), which was presented by Secretary-General Strople.

The next Senate meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 11, 2016. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us.

Regards,
Your librarian Senate reps,

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Natalie Waters