

Senate Meeting Report, 2017-04-20

Colleagues,

The following is a summary of the Senate meeting which took place on Thursday, April 20, 2017.

The meeting began with Dean Eidelman presenting a memorial tribute for Professor Mark Wainberg. Senate adopted the minutes of the last Senate meeting (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/senate_minutes_march_22_2017.pdf), the report of the Steering Committee (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/2_report_of_the_senate_steering_committee_20.pdf) and the agenda (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/1_revised_senate_agenda_april_20_2017.pdf). As a point of business arising from the March minutes, Deputy-Provost Dyens provided a verbal further response to the question regarding the sale of lecture materials by students and companies.

In her remarks from the Chair, Principal Fortier noted that the final report of the Advisory Panel on Federal Support for Fundamental Science (also known as the Naylor report) was released on April 10, and that it recommends reinvestments in this area. The federal and Quebec governments released their budgets in March; the Quebec budget features investments in the higher education sector over the next six years. The recommendations of the recently-released Corbo report on the proposed establishment of a *Conseil des universités du Québec* are well aligned with the position taken on the subject by the *Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire*; it is expected that the Quebec government will now move ahead with the creation of the *Conseil*.

Under the agenda point for formal questions, Senators Gore and Hébert posed a question regarding academic freedom (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/5_question_regarding_academic_freedom_0.pdf) and Senators Hastings, Saroyan, and Galaty posed a question regarding academic freedom of academic administrators (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/4_question_regarding_academic_freedom_of_academic_administrators_0.pdf). Principal Fortier provided a joint response to both questions (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/response_to_senate_questions_1_and_2.pdf).

In the follow-up to the Principal's response, Senator Saroyan noted that the negative impact of the tweet mentioned in the question from Senators Gore and Hébert had been recognized. She asked whether clear guidelines would be put into place to prevent such a situation from reoccurring, and what steps the Administration would take to follow up on the commitment that was made in Senate when the Statement of Academic Freedom was adopted in March 2016. On the latter point, Senator Richard noted that this commitment was that, going forward, the Statement of Academic Freedom would be taken into account when developing new policies and revising existing ones. He drew attention to the fact that "statements" are not part of the University's hierarchy of statutes, regulations, policies, procedures and guidelines, and that from a governance viewpoint their status is at best nebulous; unlike the other five types of instruments, statements have no teeth.

In response to Senator Saroyan, Principal Fortier reiterated that faculty members have the full protection of academic freedom and that "the university would never interfere in those matters," but that complexity emerges in rare cases in which it is unclear whether a faculty member is speaking as an academic or speaking on behalf of the unit under his or her responsibility. Principal Fortier indicated that she did not think a clear set of guidelines could be established for such rare cases. Principal Fortier further noted that expressing views in an academic leadership position creates ambiguity for members of the community who might interpret them as the views of the university, and that it is a matter of judgement to decide whether it is necessary for the university to clarify.

Senator Hébert expressed the view that it is inadequate for the handling of situations such as the Potter case to be considered "a matter of judgment on the part of both academic administrators and senior university officers" and that something better than this is needed. Senator Galaty commented that the negative effects of the tweet cannot be underestimated; henceforth, McGill will be associated with questions pertaining to academic freedom. Senator Bernard stated that clarity is needed on the issue of whether an academic administrator who is also a scholar is regarded as being an administrator first and further asked whether the outcome would have been different if the editors at Maclean's had only identified Prof. Potter as a professor at McGill (rather than "Director of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada"). Principal Fortier responded that if no indication of academic leadership within the university had been made, "there would have been no reaction at all."

The last formal question under this agenda point, posed by Senator Sobat, concerned student diversity initiatives; the response was provided by Deputy-Provost Dyens (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/senate_question_and_response_re_student_diversity.pdf).

Provost Manfredi provided a preview of the proposed budget which will soon be submitted to the Board of Governors (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/7_d16-51_budget.pdf). He also presented the two-part 480th report of the Academic Policy Committee (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/7_d16-52_apc_part_a_0.pdf and http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/8b_d16-52_apc_part_b.pdf), which was adopted. The latter item included the adoption of proposed revisions to the McGill Policy on Intellectual Property (included in the document as Appendix D). Senate also approved the report of the Senate Nominating Committee (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/8_d16-53_nominating_report.pdf); this included the approval of Ms. Jenn Riley as Alternate Chair for the University Tenure Committee for the Libraries, and of Ms. Tara Mawhinney as a member of the Advisory Committee for the Possible Reappointment of the Dean of Engineering.

Senate endorsed the McGill University Strategic Academic Plan 2017-2022 (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/9_d16-54_strategic_academic_plan_2017-2022.pdf), which was presented by Provost Manfredi.

Associate Provost Campbell presented for information a set of proposed revisions to the Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited by Law (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/10_d16-55_revisions_to_harassment_policy.pdf). She noted that one of the key revisions involves section 5.3, which pertains to the formal establishment of the Senior Equity and Inclusion Officer position. Ms. Pascale Legros, who currently serves in this role and whose office is currently in the James Administration Building, will move to 550 Sherbrooke West (the location of the Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education) as of May 1st. The proposed revisions to the Policy will be brought back to Senate in May for approval.

Provost Manfredi presented an update on the implementation of the Policy against Sexual Violence (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/12_d16-60_update_on_the_implementation_of_the_policy_against_sexual_violence.pdf). The Provost also presented, with V.-P. Beauchamp, an update on the Academic Vision and Development Plan for the RVH site (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/12_d16-57_rvh.pdf).

The last two information items were the annual report on Student Life and Learning (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/11_d16-56_student_life_and_learning.pdf), which was presented by Deputy-Provost Dyens, and the report of the joint meeting of the Senate Steering and Board

Executive Committees (http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/files/senate/15_d16-58_report_of_the_joint_executive-steering_meeting.pdf), which was presented by Principal Fortier.

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 Monday, May 15, 2017. If you have any questions, please get in touch with us.

Regards,
Your librarian Senate reps,

Genevieve Gore
Marc Richard
Natalie Waters