

SCHOOL of RELIGIOUS STUDIES

FACULTY OF ARTS McGill University

Governance Handbook

As the successor to the Faculty of Divinity, later Faculty of Religious Studies, the School of Religious Studies is established as an academic unit in the Faculty of Arts by actions of the Senate [Statutes 10.1; Senate Minutes: December 2, 2015] and Board of Governors [BoG Minutes: February 11, 2016], implementing a Memorandum of Agreement between McGill University and the Montreal School of Theology [MST: May 12, 2016].

1. THE DIRECTOR

1.1 The School is administered by a Director, who is advised by the School of Religious Studies (SRS) Council and its officers. The Director as departmental chair (*Statutes* 10.2) is generally responsible to the Dean of Arts, and prepares and administers a budget for the School under the direction and supervision of the Dean (*Statutes* 9.2.2). The allocation of academic duties to members of the School, including most appointments to Committees of the School, is the responsibility of the Director, taking into account the pattern of such allocation obtaining within the School, Faculty, and University (*Regulations* 1.3.2; 3.2). The Director shall determine course offerings, class sizes, teaching loads and teaching support in relation to RELG courses.

1.2 Before making recommendations to the Principal for the appointment of the Director of the School, or for the re-appointment of a Director who has served in that office for five years (*Statutes* 8.1.6; *MOA* 11), the Dean of the Faculty of Arts shall consult with a committee broadly representative of the membership of the School of Religious Studies, including representation from the Montreal School of Theology and including, at the Dean's discretion, other representatives from outside of the School. The Dean shall also invite submission of a written recommendation by the Montreal School of Theology (to be submitted within 10 days of the Dean's request, at the latest)

Before recommending to the Principal the appointment or reappointment of a Director, the Dean shall submit the nominee to the SRS Council for ratification by vote. Should the SRS Council fail to ratify the nominee (or nominees) of the Dean, or should the Dean decide finally not to recommend the appointment of a nominee who has been ratified, the Dean shall report to the School Council before forwarding any recommendation to the Principal.

2. THE SRS COUNCIL

2.1 Authority:

The SRS Council has the authority to deal with all matters which, under the University *Statutes* and *Regulations*, and the norms of the Faculty of Arts, may be properly dealt with by the School of Religious Studies.

2.1.1 The Council exercises oversight especially with respect to the undergraduate, professional and graduate research degree programs in Theology (BTh and STM) and Religious Studies (BA, MA, PhD). The SRS Council may, from time to time, recommend to the Faculty of Arts Council

modifications in, deletions of, or substitutions for courses of instruction offered through the School of Religious Studies. The SRS Council may, through the SRS Director and the Dean of Arts, discuss its objectives and problems with the Principal. (*Statutes* 9.1.3)

2.1.2 Amending Formula:

To the extent permitted by the University *Statutes*, and subject to approval by the Arts Faculty Council where required by the University *Statutes*, SRS Council, composed pursuant to *Handbook* Article 2.2.1 or 2.2.2 below, may amend the provisions of this *Handbook* in accordance with the Procedures of SRS Council (*Handbook* Article 2.3 below)

2.2 Composition:

2.2.1 For Plenary Meetings the SRS Council shall be composed of:

- a) faculty, that is, all Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and Full-Time University Lecturers and Faculty Lecturers, appointed to the School of Religious Studies;
- b) the Religious Studies Liaison Librarian;
- c) the Principals of The Presbyterian College, the United Theological College, and the Montreal Diocesan Theological College; and
- d) three students in the Faculty of Arts, chosen as follows:
 - i) the President, *ex officio*, or the representative, of the Religious Studies Undergraduate Society duly elected according to the Constitution of the Society;
 - ii) the President, *ex officio*, or the representative, of the Theological Undergraduate Students Association duly elected according to the Constitution of the Association;
 - iii) the President, *ex officio*, or the representative, of the Religious Studies Graduate Society duly elected according to the Constitution of the Society.

2.2.2 Notwithstanding, the SRS Council and its committees shall be composed only of the Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Full-Time University Lecturers and Faculty Lecturers (including Ranked CAStaff) appointed to the School of Religious Studies when dealing, otherwise than by way of the making of recommendations of general policy or enacting general regulations,

- a) with any matter relating to grades, standing and promotion of students, or setting, grading, and administration of examinations,
- b) with the promotion and terms of contract of members of the academic staff, or
- c) with nomination or appointment of affiliate or associate faculty.

2.2.3 Moreover, the SRS Council Professorial Planning Meeting shall be composed only of the Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Full-Time University Lecturers and Faculty Lecturers appointed to the School of Religious Studies when meeting from time to time to advise the Director and/or committee Chairs, to plan and coordinate professorial duties and appointments, subject to reporting and review of all substantial decisions in Plenary Meeting.

2.2.4 Where a question of composition or competence is in doubt, the Director shall reach a decision, or shall seek the ruling of the Dean.

2.3 Procedures:

2.3.1 A Plenary Meeting of the SRS Council shall be convened at least twice per year at the discretion of the Director, or upon the request of three members, given in writing to the Director.

2.3.2 The Director or the Director's delegate shall chair meetings of the Council.

2.3.3 The agenda for meetings of the SRS Council shall be prepared and circulated by the Director and shall consist of (a) items determined by the Director and (b) items as are proposed by any other member of the Council, normally at least one week in advance of meetings. Notice of motion is to be given in writing at least one week in advance of the meeting at which it is to be considered, except for:

- a) motions arising from reports of the standing committees of the Council;
 - b) procedural motions to regulate conduct of the meeting;
 - c) non-substantive motions with unanimous consent of the Council.
- 2.3.4 Attendance at meetings of the SRS Council and access to Minutes shall be open to members of the University except for meetings dealing with any matter contemplated by Articles 2.2.2 or 2.2.3. Nevertheless,
- a) SRS Council may vote to close any meeting or part thereof AND
 - b) the Chair of a meeting of SRS Council may require any person attending the meeting to withdraw, if this is considered necessary to keep order.
- 2.3.5 A quorum of the SRS Council shall consist of one-half of the members thereof.
- 2.3.6 Decisions of SRS Council shall be taken by majority vote of members present. In the event of a tie vote, the Chair of the meeting shall have an additional or casting vote.
- 2.4 STANDING COMMITTEES:
- 2.4.1 The SRS Council may establish or disestablish such committees as it may from time to time determine.
- 2.4.2 The following committees and officers of SRS Council are established:
- a) the BA Religious Studies Programs Committee;
 - b) the BTh Program Committee;
 - c) the BTh Admissions and Awards Committee;
 - d) the Graduate Programs and Policies Committee
 - e) the Graduate Admissions and Fellowships Committee;
 - f) the Visiting Speakers Committee;
 - g) the Chapel Committee;
 - h) the Doktorklub coordinator;
 - i) the Publications/ARC coordinator
- 2.4.3 The Director is *ex officio* a member of all committees of the SRS Council.
- 2.4.4 Subject to any resolution of the SRS Council, the Director shall determine the composition, membership, and Chair of all committees of the SRS Council. The eligibility of non-academic staff and students to serve as members of SRS Council committees shall be determined in accordance with Article 2.2.2.
- 2.4.5 Except where otherwise stated in this *Handbook*, the provisions in Article 2.3 shall apply *mutatis mutandis* (for example, substituting "Chair" for "Director") to committees and committee meetings.

3. THE BA RELIGIOUS STUDIES PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

- 3.1 The BA Religious Studies Programs Committee is composed of the Director *ex officio*; four members of faculty, as defined in Article 2.2.1 a); the Student Affairs Coordinator of the SRS, *ex officio*, with voice but not vote; and, except when dealing with matters contemplated in Article 2.2.2, the representative of the Religious Studies Undergraduate Society duly elected according to the Constitution of the Society.
- 3.2 The BA Religious Studies Programs Committee proposes, oversees, makes recommendations and reports to SRS Council and, where required, to Arts Faculty Council and Dean on all aspects of the structure, content, policy and courses relating to all BA programs in Religious Studies. The Committee initiates course and program revisions in BA programs in Religious Studies and communicates with the relevant organs of the Faculty of Arts.
- 3.3 The Chair of the BA Religious Studies Programs Committee is appointed by the Director of SRS. The Chair convenes meetings and prepares agenda. The Chair is Undergraduate Program Director for BA Religious Studies programs for purposes of liaison with the Faculty of Arts. The BA Chair also coordinates the SRS BA Academic Advisors.

4. THE BTh PROGRAM COMMITTEE and THE BTh ADMISSIONS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

- 4.1.1 The BTh Program Committee is composed of the Director *ex officio*; the faculty members in New Testament, Old Testament, Theology, and Church History whose appointments are intended to meet McGill University's commitments to the Montreal School of Theology as defined in Schedule E of the 1948 Agreement between McGill University and Theological Colleges (except when one of these is on leave); the Principals of each of the colleges of the Montreal School of Theology or their duly accredited delegates; other faculty, as defined in Article 2.2.1 a), as the Director shall deem necessary; the Student Affairs Coordinator of the SRS, *ex officio*, with voice but not vote; and the representative of the Theological Undergraduate Society duly elected according to the Constitution of the Society.
- 4.1.2 The BTh Admissions and Awards Committee is composed of the Director *ex officio*; the faculty members in New Testament, Old Testament, Theology, and Church History whose appointments are intended to meet McGill University's commitments to the Montreal School of Theology as defined in Schedule E of the 1948 Agreement between McGill University and Theological Colleges (except when one of these is on leave); the Principals of each of the colleges of the Montreal School of Theology or their duly accredited delegates; other faculty, as defined in Article 2.2.1 a), as the Director shall deem necessary; and the Student Affairs Coordinator of the SRS, *ex officio*, with voice but not vote. (The BTh Admissions and Awards Committee does not have student representation.)
- 4.2.1 The BTh Program Committee proposes, oversees, makes recommendations and reports to SRS Council and, where required, to Arts Faculty Council and Dean on all aspects of the structure, content, policy and courses relating to the Bachelor of Theology program. The Committee initiates course and program revisions in the Bachelor of Theology program and communicates with the relevant organs of the Faculty of Arts.
- 4.2.2 The BTh Admissions and Awards Committee deals with matters contemplated in Article 2.2.2 as they relate to the Bachelor of Theology program. Specifically, the BTh Admissions and Awards Committee deals with all matters relating to confidential student information, grades, standing, promotion and recommended graduation of BTh students. The committee monitors student progress and student standing status in the BTh program and consults with academic advisors and instructors as needed, and recommends action as needed to the appropriate person (academic advisor, instructor, other).
- The BTh Admissions and Awards Committee also reviews applications for admission or readmission to the BTh program and makes recommendations for admission, leaves of absence and readmission.
- 4.2.3 Meetings of the BTh Admissions and Awards Committee are closed to non-members, except by invitation of the Chair, and its deliberations are confidential.
- 4.3 The Chair of both the BTh Programs Committee and BTh Admissions and Awards Committee is appointed by the Director of SRS. The Chair convenes meetings and prepares agenda. The Chair is Undergraduate Program Director for BTh programs for purposes of liaison with the Faculty of Arts. The BTh Chair is also the BTh Program Student Advisor and coordinates with the college advisors of the Montreal School of Theology.
- 4.4 Quorum of a meeting of either the BTh Programs Committee or the BTh Admissions and Awards Committee shall require the presence of the Principals of each of the colleges of the Montreal School of Theology or their duly accredited delegates.
- 4.5 The BTh Admissions and Awards Committee may provide for electronic voting and quorum for Summer admissions decisions.

5. THE GRADUATE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES COMMITTEE and THE GRADUATE ADMISSIONS AND FELLOWSHIPS COMMITTEE

- 5.1.1 The Graduate Programs and Policies Committee is composed of all faculty, as defined in Article 2.2.1 a); one PhD student representative, one STM student representative, and one MA student representative, duly elected according to the Constitution of the Religious Studies Graduate Society; and the Student Affairs Coordinator of the SRS, *ex officio*, with voice but not vote.
- 5.1.2 The Graduate Admissions and Fellowships Committee is composed of all faculty, as defined in Article 2.2.1 a); and the Student Affairs Coordinator of the SRS, *ex officio*, with voice but not vote. (The Graduate Admissions and Fellowships Committee does not have student representation.)
- 5.2.1 The Graduate Programs and Policies Committee oversees and administers all aspects of the structure, content, policy, examinations and courses relating to the School's graduate programs (STM; MA; PhD), reporting as required to the SRS Council and to the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office. The Graduate Programs and Policies Committee reviews all MA and PhD thesis proposals and thesis supervision arrangements and supervisory committees.
- 5.2.2 The Graduate Admissions and Fellowships Committee reviews applications for graduate programs and recommends admissions and readmissions. The Graduate Admissions and Fellowships Committee deals with all matters relating to confidential student information, grades, standing, promotion and recommended graduation of MA, STM, and PhD students in Religious Studies.
- 5.2.3 Meetings of the Graduate Admissions and Fellowships Committee are closed to non-members, except by invitation of the Chair, and its deliberations are confidential.

6. VISITING SPEAKERS COMMITTEE

- 6.1 The Visiting Speakers Committee is composed of the Director *ex officio* and at least three other faculty, as defined in Article 2.2.1 a).
- 6.2 The Visiting Speakers Committee solicits nominations for possible Birks lecturers and other visiting lecturers and special speakers; brings possible nominations for Birks lecturers to the SRS Council; and advises the Director with regard to Birks lecturers and other visiting lecturers and special speakers.

7. CHAPEL COMMITTEE

7.1 The Chapel Committee is composed of the SRS Director *ex officio* (as Birks Building Director) and other faculty, as defined in Article 2.2.1 a), at the Director's discretion.

7.2 The Chapel Committee advises the Director and the Administrative Coordinator on appropriate uses of the Birks Heritage Chapel

8. SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD

- 8.1 The SRS School Advisory Board is composed of the Director *ex officio* and individuals invited by the Director who are not in the employment of the University, the Montreal School of Theology or its member Colleges.
- 8.2 The School Advisory Board provides advice and support to the Director in matters related to advancement, development and community relations.

9. DEPARTMENTAL TENURE COMMITTEE

Unless otherwise provided in the *Regulations Relating to the Employment of Academic Staff* or other relevant regulations:

- 9.1 In the School of Religious Studies the Director (normally *ex officio* chair of the DTC) shall appoint to the DTC at least four other members and two alternate members chosen from amongst tenured academic staff members of the School. In making the appointments the Director shall have due regard to the balance of gender identities, academic ranks, and research areas and expertise. The Director shall consult each candidate for tenure before appointing members of the DTC, to identify possible conflicts of interest, and to ensure inclusion on the DTC of at least one member from each candidate's broad research field.
- 9.2 Where a candidate has been appointed by the Board of Governors in the School of Religious Studies and another department, the composition of the Departmental Tenure Committee for that candidate shall be determined by the Director and the Chair of the other department.

10. SELECTION COMMITTEES

10.1 Composition:

- 10.1.1 A Selection Committee is struck when the Dean of Arts informs the School that a Recruiting Licence for a tenure-stream appointment has been issued.
- 10.1.2 There are two patterns for the composition of Selection Committees for academic appointments to the School of Religious Studies: for General Selection Committees; and for Special Selection Committees for new appointments in New Testament, Old Testament, History of the Christian Church, and Theology, where such appointments are intended to comply with the University's commitments to the Montreal School of Theology.
- 10.1.3 All prospective selection committee members must have completed, or concurrently receive University training about how to conduct an effective and equitable search, in compliance with University and Faculty norms.

10.2 General Selection Committees:

- 10.2.1 A General Selection Committee is struck for any for tenure-track appointment in the School of Religious Studies other than those described in Section 10.3 below. This includes appointments to the Named Chairs within the School of Religious Studies (the W.M. Birks Professorship of Comparative Religion; the J.W. McConnell Professorship of Philosophy of Religion; the Barbara and Patrick Keenan Chair in Interfaith Studies), as well as appointments in New Testament, Old Testament, History of the Christian Church, and Theology, where such appointments are not intended to comply with the University's commitments to the Montreal School of Theology
- 10.2.2 General Selection Committees shall be composed of at least four members of faculty, as defined in Handbook Section 2.2.1 a) (selected by the Director, who also appoints one of the four as Chair); one graduate student (selected by the Director in consultation with the Graduate Program Director); one undergraduate student (selected by the Director in consultation with the B.A. and B.Th. Undergraduate Program Directors); and (if the Dean chooses) one representative of the Dean of Arts. All members of the Committee have both voice and vote and, in the event of a tied vote, the Committee Chair shall have an additional or casting vote.
- 10.2.3 For Selection Committees for joint tenure-track appointments in the School of Religious Studies and another unit, the composition of the Joint Selection Committee for that appointment shall be determined by the Dean in consultation with the Director and the Chair of the other unit.

10.3 Special Selection Committees:

- 10.3.1 A Special Selection Committees is struck for any tenure-track appointment in New Testament, Old Testament, History of the Christian Church, and Theology, where the appointment is intended to comply with the University's commitments to the Montreal School of Theology, per Schedule E of the 1948 Agreement between McGill University and Theological Colleges.
- 10.3.2 Such Special Selection Committees shall be composed of nine voting members. These shall include *ex officio* the Principal of each college of the Montreal School of Theology and two other members nominated by the governing body of each participating college, chosen from among the tenured faculty of the University, and appointed by the Director of the SRS. The Director of the SRS may decline to appoint an individual nominated by a college, in which case the college may make a further nomination. The Dean of Arts may appoint an additional member as Dean's representative, with voice, but not vote. The Director may appoint an additional student member with voice, but not vote.
- 10.3.3 The Director of the SRS, whether a member of the Selection committee or not, shall convene the first meeting of the Committee, and appoint its Chair, who shall have full voting rights and, in the event of a tied vote, shall have an additional casting vote.

10.4 Mandate:

- 10.4.1 The Selection Committee and its Chair administer the search process, in cooperation with Faculty and University staff. After due deliberation, the Selection Committee reports in writing to the Director of the SRS and to the Dean of Arts, reporting in accordance with University and Faculty of Arts norms on the process of recruitment and making recommendations to the Dean.
- 10.5 Selection Committee process:
- 10.5.1 Committee decisions are by simple majority vote; in the event of a tied vote, the Chair shall have an additional or casting vote. All members must be present for all meetings of the Committee; the Committee may determine whether to accept electronic attendance; a member who is unable to attend a scheduled meeting shall be dropped from subsequent participation in the committee.
- 10.5.2 All meetings, deliberations, documents and records of the Selection Committee, including candidate dossiers, shall remain strictly confidential to the members of the Committee, support staff assigned to it, the Director and Dean and Academic Personal Office.
- 10.5.3 The Selection Committee shall serve until discharged by the Dean.
- 10.5.4 At the First Meeting of the Selection Committee, the Director of the School (per Article 10.3.3) or the Chair of the Search Committee shall declare the composition of the Committee. If necessary under Article 10.3.3, the committee shall elect a Chair. The committee shall determine expectations of procedure, of confidentiality and of reporting conflicts of interest.
- Especially in the case of a Joint Selection Committee for a joint tenure-track appointment in the School of Religious Studies and another unit, the committee shall review expectations and documented procedures of all participating units, as well as any special circumstances, to ensure equity between participating units and compliance with governance norms of the University and of each participating unit.
- The Committee shall review the Recruiting Licence and determine the profile of an ideal candidate. The draft advertisement shall be agreed, checked for compliance with established University norms for coding advertising information, and sent to Faculty for approval, finalizing and publication on Faculty Jobs site. The committee will agree on opening and, if applicable, closing dates for receiving and/or considering applications and verify how/where applications must be submitted to be eligible for consideration. The Committee will review minimum advertising obligations according to established University guidelines and develop a plan for effective advertising of the position to ensure the best possible pool of applicants.
- Before considering any candidates, the Committee will determine and rank clear criteria for determining shortlists, inviting for interviews (Skype, off-site/conference, on-site) and ranking candidates. Likewise the Committee will determine procedures for preliminary interviews (if any) and will establish a provisional schedule of subsequent meetings.
- 10.6 In addition to convening and moderating subsequent meetings of the Committee, the Chair works with relevant staff and officers of the School and Faculty to ensure accessibility and confidentiality of dossiers. The Chair ensures verification of credentials, especially of short-listed candidates. The Chair supervises arrangements for Committee meetings and interviews and ensures adherence to recruitment expense policies. The Chair drafts and, after approval, submits the Report of the Committee (per Article 10.4.1).
- 10.7 Subsequent Meetings and Reporting:
- 10.7.1 The Committee shall review all eligible applications;
- 10.7.2 The Chair will report to the Committee regarding support available for on-site interviews of select candidates;
- 10.7.3 The Committee will determine the short-lists of candidates: a "long short-list" for preliminary interview, if required; and a short-list for on-site interviews; the short-lists will be determined with due regard to recruitment equity;

- 10.7.4 The Committee will design the process of interviews and on-site visits to ensure fairness to the invited candidates and to optimize opportunities for stakeholders to observe and interact with short-listed candidates. On-site visits will include opportunity for each invitee to demonstrate undergraduate and graduate teaching ability.
- 10.7.5 The Committee will design and communicate mechanisms for stakeholders to communicate feedback on candidates' on-site visits; submitted feedback will be carefully reviewed as part of the Committee's review of each visit.
- 10.7.6 The Committee will design and implement a clear and agreed process for evaluating and determining recommendations following on-site visits. Immediately following each recruitment visit, the Committee will review that visit; after all the scheduled recruitment visits, the Committee will review the ranking of candidates.
- 10.8 The Selection Committee submits a written Report (per Article 10.4.1) recording all formally-adopted decisions and recommendations of the Committee. The Report documents the membership of the Committee and the Advertisement process. The range of applicants is described (supported by an accompanying Employment Equity Data Form) along with the process for initially accessing and evaluating applications and selecting short-lists. The Report describes the processes for preliminary and on-site interviews, the criteria and evidence for evaluating short-listed candidates.
- The Report shall record and motivate the Committee's recommendations regarding the advertised appointment. Wherever possible the Report should reflect the consensus of the Committee; any dissenting Minority Report will be submitted with the Majority Report.
- 10.9 In a search arising from the vacancy of one of the Named Chairs within the School of Religious Studies (the W.M. Birks Professorship of Comparative Religion; the J.W. McConnell Professorship of Philosophy of Religion; the Barbara and Patrick Keenan Chair in Interfaith Studies) the Selection Committee may recommend to the Dean either immediate appointment to the Named Chair or deferred appointment after tenure and promotion. In any case the Selection Committee and the Dean shall proceed in compliance with University procedures for appointment and reappointment to Named Chairs and any agreement established in writing between the Dean and the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) on the general process for the appointment or reappointment of academic staff to Named Chairs within the Faculty of Arts.

Approved without alteration by the School of Religious Studies Council on November 24, 2020. Also approved on January 21, 2020 by the Faculty of Arts constitutional advisor, Brian Cowan, as compliant with the constitutionality of the Faculty of Arts.