

S-06-17

FACULTY OF SCIENCE
Meeting of Faculty
Tuesday, November 7, 2006
Leacock Council Room - L232

ATTENDANCE: As recorded in the Faculty Appendix Book.

DOCUMENTS: S-06-14 to S-06-16

Dean Grant called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Pre-Agenda Items:

- At the start of the Faculty of Science meeting, short research presentations were given by:

Professor Bradley Siwick, Departments of Chemistry and Physics
Professor Athena Vouloumanos, Department of Psychology
Professor Boswell Wing, Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences

- Centraide:

Yvon Bellefeuille described some of the work of Centraide, and pointed out the reasons for Centraide's remarkably low administrative overhead.

Anna Cerrone highlighted upcoming events for Centraide at McGill.

(1) ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Prof. Roulet **moved**, seconded by Prof. Mysak, that the Agenda be adopted.

The motion carried.

(2) PROVOST AND CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER ANTHONY C. MASI

302.1 Dean Grant introduced Provost Masi and said he would give a presentation on McGill's priorities, to be followed by a question and answer session.

302.2 Provost Masi's talk concerned McGill's White Paper, which is available at:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/provost/>

302.3 Provost Masi said that he had been very impressed in the research presentations given at the start of the meeting. As research progress was occurring at McGill, so McGill itself was rapidly changing. Provost Masi reiterated what Dean Grant had mentioned — that half of the professors in the Faculty of Science had been hired in the last seven years — and he added that over a third of McGill's total faculty had also been hired in the last seven years. This was a tremendous transformation and was the fastest rate of change of any university in North America.

302.4 Provost Masi said that three years previously McGill had begun identifying the university's specific strengths in order to maintain and improve McGill's standing as a world-class institution. Identifying strengths across the university allowed the university

to encourage, by way of hiring and creating new facilities, the flourishing of interdisciplinarity. This interdisciplinarity was what had been emphasized in McGill's White Paper on strategic development. While new areas of strength could certainly emerge, McGill's strategic vision focussed on the university's current strengths. A challenge to deans was to identify new areas in which interdisciplinary work would be fruitful.

- 302.5** Cross-faculty collaboration in research currently being developed was showing stunning results. Also very successful was the undergraduate program in the tri-faculty [Faculties of Arts, Science, and Agricultural and Environmental Sciences] McGill School of Environment.
- 302.6** A unique aspect of McGill was the way the university operated on an international level. No other publicly-funded university had the diversity of undergraduate students of McGill. This level of diversity should be maintained.
- 302.7** Another strength and defining characteristic of McGill was the intensity of its research, which the White Paper intended also to maintain. About a quarter of the full-time students at McGill were graduate students; this was the highest proportion among the top research universities in Canada.
- 302.8** McGill's research activities should find their way into the classroom, and another goal of the strategic plan was to emphasize inquiry-based learning.
- 302.9** The strategic plan also aimed for innovation in the administrative function of McGill, and to improve McGill's responsiveness to changing requirements of both the student and professorial bodies.
- 302.10** To aid in the implementation of McGill's strategic vision, the administration had proposed, and the Board of Governors accepted, two fundamental changes in the budget. First, the budget had been transformed into a multi-year process, and second, that McGill, as an underfunded university, needed to be able to invest in the future by running deficits. This investment in the future was in the form of young professors with exciting research such as that given at the beginning of the meeting.
- 302.11** In creating the position of provost, academic priorities and resource allocation were combined in one position at McGill. Resource allocation would be directed by the Provost, and would involve three broad components: budget allocation, physical changes (new buildings, renovations, etc.), and the work of administrative and support staff.
- 302.12** Provost Masi answered questions from members of the Faculty.
- 302.13** Dean Grant thanked Provost Masi for a very informative talk. In response, Provost Masi said that if members had further questions they should feel free to communicate them via Dean Grant.

(3) MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 7, 2006

S-06-14

Prof. Gyakum **moved**, seconded by Prof. Mysak, that the Minutes be approved.

The motion carried.

(4) BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

(5) REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- a) **Committee on Student Standing** **S-06-15**

Due to lack of business, there was no report from the Committee on Student Standing.

- b) **Academic Committee** **S-06-16**

The Academic Committee approved the following on Tuesday, October 17, 2006:

SECTION A: NEW PROGRAMS

None

SECTION B: MAJOR PROGRAM CHANGES

None

SECTION C: NEW COURSES

REDPATH MUSEUM

REDM 399

Science Writing
1 credit

AC-06-15 (Rev)

Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Prof. Green, that the course be adopted.

The motion carried.

SECTION D: MAJOR COURSE CHANGES

None

SECTION E: MINOR COURSE CHANGES (For Information Only)

None

SECTION F: MINOR PROGRAM CHANGES (For Information Only)

None

SECTION G: OTHER (For Approval)

1). Proposed B.Sc. Liberal Program

AC-06-19(Rev1)/20

305.1

Associate Dean Hendren said that the program review process in the Faculty of Science had revealed that faculty programs were not uniform across the Faculty, so it had been decided to replace them with B.Sc. Liberal programs. She briefly described the structure of the proposed B.Sc. Liberal programs, which involved combining a Core Science Component to provide depth, with one of a number of very flexible options to provide breadth.

305.2 Associate Dean Hendren said that she was asking the Faculty to approve the framework of the B.Sc. Liberal program; core science components would be presented to the Faculty for approval at the next meeting.

305.3 Associate Dean Hendren answered members' questions.

Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Prof. Gyakum, that the framework of the B.Sc. Liberal program be approved.

The motion carried.

2). Renaming B.A. & Sc. Faculty Programs to Interfaculty Programs

- Interfaculty Program in Environment

- Interfaculty Program in Cognitive Science

305.4 Associate Dean Hendren explained that the B.A & Sc. Programs in Environment and in Cognitive Science were currently called "Faculty" programs whereas in fact they were "Interfaculty" programs. The proposed name change was being made to reflect the true structure of the programs.

Associate Dean Hendren **moved**, seconded by Prof. Mysak, that the change in name be approved.

The motion carried.

(6) DEAN'S BUSINESS

a) Faculty of Science Winners for Principal's Prizes for Excellence in Teaching

306.1 Dean Grant said that the nominees from the Faculty of Science for the Principal's Prizes for Excellence in Teaching had been:

Faculty Lecturer Level

Axel Hundemer, Department of Mathematics & Statistics

Assistant Professor Level

Debra Titone, Department of Psychology

Associate Professor Level

Daniel Levitin, Department of Psychology

Full Professor Level

David Wolfson, Department of Mathematics & Statistics

306.2 The winners of the Principal's Prizes for Excellence in Teaching had recently been announced. There were two winners from the Faculty of Science. They were:

- **Axel Hundemer**, Department of Mathematics & Statistics

- **Daniel Levitin**, Department of Psychology

306.3 Dean Grant, on behalf of the Faculty of Science, congratulated the nominees and the winners. He added that the Faculty of Science had been awarded more Principal's Prizes than any other faculty at McGill, and he mentioned that the Faculty's nominees were in competition not only with nominees from all other faculties at McGill, but in the

nomination process had been in competition with other excellent teachers in the Faculty of Science.

b) How do we Develop Excellence in Research?

- 306.4** Faculty moved into the Committee of the Whole with Associate Dean Burns as Chair. Associate Dean Burns said that Provost Masi in his presentation had mentioned excellence in research a number of times. Associate Dean Burns said that in addition to McGill's focus on excellence in research, the Faculty of Science had adopted its own initiative to provide resources to promote excellence in research. How does the Faculty help develop excellence in research? Associate Dean Burns said that excellence in research was already present in the Faculty of Science, and the issue was to push this excellence to the next level.
- 306.5** Associate Dean Burns mentioned some ways in which excellence in research could be promoted:
- increasing funding for graduate students
 - increasing services (such as writing courses) for graduate students
 - increasing the number of graduate students per professor
 - a greater focus on professor-professor mentoring
 - the provision of more support staff to assist researchers
 - increasing capital alterations
 - encouraging researchers to take more of a leadership role in international research and in applying for grants for this
 - increasing publicity of Faculty of Science researchers' accomplishments
 - holding forums at McGill - the McGill Conference?
- 306.6** Associate Dean Burns invited members to suggest other ways in which excellence in research might be promoted.
- 306.7** Among the suggestions were:
- improving and modernizing labs
 - increasing technical support staff
 - increasing departmental support for grant applications
 - waiving tuition fees for graduate students
 - improving the general maintenance level of McGill, which was not up to par with other top universities
 - increasing the level of security at McGill, which would encourage graduate students to work outside regular working hours
 - ensuring that high standards of ethics in research are adhered to
 - promoting undergraduate research
- 306.8** Associate Dean Burns said that a recurrent theme among the suggestions was the need to increase funding for capital alterations. He encouraged members to continue thinking about new initiatives to promote excellence in research. Ideas could be forwarded to him and he would attempt to implement them within the Faculty's framework for promotion of excellence in research.

(7) MEMBERS' QUESTION PERIOD

There were no members' questions.

(8) REPORT ON ACTIONS OF SENATE

Please note that the entire Minutes of Senate are available on the Web at <http://www.mcgill.ca/senate/minutes/>.

- Senate Meeting of October 11, 2006 - Prof. S. Whitesides

This report will be presented at the next Faculty meeting.

- Joint Meeting of the Board of Governors and the Senate Meeting of October 30, 2006 - Prof. N. Roulet

The annual joint meeting of the McGill University Board of Governors and the McGill University Senate was held October 3, 2006 at the Faculty Club. The meeting was chaired by the Chancellor of the University who requested 'pithy' questions on the Progress and Priorities for 2006-2007. The Principal then outline for approximately 20 minutes the Administration's Progress and Plans for 2006-2007. The presentation opened with review on McGill's missions and goals, an explanation that obtaining McGill's goals will not be easy given the current financial situation, and a summary on progress made on McGill's goals over the last academic year. Little of this first part was new. In the second half of the presentation the Principal outlined the Priorities for 2006-2007. Eleven priorities were presented:

- Receive the final version of the Report of the Principal's Taskforce on Student Life and Learning and begin implementing its recommendations establishing over the next year targets, a timetable for implementation, and a mechanism of reporting on progress.
- Launch the public phase of the University's development campaign.
- Finalize the University's Master Plan.
- Implement the next phase of the academic plans including getting the Deans to commit to a benchmarking scheme for their Faculties; a plan to optimize research (*not at all clear what this meant*); and getting Deans to articulate how research will interface with teaching in their Faculties.
- Continue to review committee structures and processes as part of the review of Governance of McGill University.
- Continue Faculty mentoring and development (*this was a bullet in her hand out but she never spoke to this particular point so it is not clear what was meant here, thought the issue of retention was raised several times in her general remarks.*).
- Move to the next generation of performance dialogue and Human Resources development.
- Move to a new model of partnership between the University and teaching and research in the hospitals, particularly the development of the McGill Academic Health Network.
- Further advance the advocacy agenda with the federal and provincial governments.
- Develop a new model for revenue generation.
- Try and solve the University's deferred maintenance problem, enhance facilities and grow space.

After the formal presentation the Principal raised three questions that might frame the discussion. The first two questions were straight forward. The third question, which was not well articulated, was by far the most provocative question of the evening but it was totally ignored by the House. Paraphrasing these questions:

- If you could do one thing to transform McGill University what would it be?
- What do you think of university ranking systems?
- How do we develop a new arrangement for financing the university that when imposed would unshackle us from our liabilities that do not let us take advantage of our successes?

There were then seven questions that came from the House. It took a few minutes to get the questions and they only began after the Chancellor pointed out that we were not allowed to start the social hour before 19:00. The questions were quite wide ranging and included (not an exhaustive list):

- What is the difference between a “publicly funded” university and the Principal’s term “public purposed” university. The Principal made it clear that McGill University will always serve the public good and will always receive a portion of its revenues from government but the proportion of its overall funding coming from the provincial government is shrinking. This is due to the province’s funding not keeping pace with other federal government and non-government sources. To illustrate “publicly purposed” she pointed out that no one wants to fund the social sciences and humanities, but the McGill University model sees them as essential components of a comprehensive university.
- What was not included as a priority and why – e.g. making McGill University a sustainable campus? This question was motivated because the the Principal said the university was making great strides in this area. It has appointed a sustainability officer that answered to V.P. Yalovsky and our students are extremely active in this area initiating many things on their own (*which is exactly why the question was asked*). Finally, the Principal said that one of McGill’s most significant initiatives over the last decade was the creation of the interdisciplinary, interfaculty program - the “McGill University Institute for Environment” – whatever that is?
- There were two questions on ranking which added little substance to what had already been said. The Principal did say the McGill University should be defining the parameters of the ranking systems proactively, not to bias the rankings in McGill’s favour, but to make them as transparent and fair as possible.
- McGill University is promising to deliver on certain things externally, but how can we do this when McGill University is having so much trouble delivering on its internal promises to new faculty such as start-up funds, and office and laboratory space? The Principal said it is working toward a model to ensure delivery on these internal promises by having a “totally integrated academic planning process” that clearly defines priorities and acts on these priorities through the compacts.

Is McGill University seen as a Quebec University? The Principal told a number of stories to illustrate how McGill University is becoming a more Quebec university and talked about several steps the University is taking raise McGill’s profile in Quebec.

The joint meeting adjourned just after 19:10 to the social hour.

(9) OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.