

**Meeting of Faculty
Monday, 15 January 2024
Robert Vogel Council Room (L232), Leacock Building**

ATTENDANCE: As recorded in the Faculty Appendix Book

DOCUMENTS: S-23-13, S-23-15

Dean Lennox called the meeting to order at 3 p.m., and welcomed members to the fifth Faculty of Science Council meeting of the 2023-2024 academic year.

1) ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Prof. Blanchette **moved**, seconded by Prof. Ditto, that the Agenda be adopted.

The motion carried.

2) MINUTES OF 14 NOVEMBER 2023 S-23-13

Prof. Choksi **moved**, seconded by Prof. Halverson, that the Minutes be approved.

The motion carried.

3) BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4) MINUTES OF 5 DECEMBER 2023 S-23-15

Prof. Choksi **moved**, seconded by Prof. Fabry, that the Minutes be approved.

The motion carried.

5) BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

In response to a member's inquiry about whether the University would permit students and staff to observe the solar eclipse in Montreal on 8 April 2024, Dean Lennox reported that he had raised the question with the Deputy Provost. However, as of the current meeting, there has been no response.

6) REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

As part of the ongoing effort to include program descriptions for the new calendar platform, Course Catalogue, Associate Dean Hundemer said that the program description has been revised for the **M.Sc. in Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences (Thesis)**.

Associate Dean Hundemer **moved**, seconded by Prof. Fabry, that the changes be approved.

The motion carried.

7) DEAN'S BUSINESS

- Announcements

(i) Kudos

On behalf of the Faculty of Science, Dean Lennox congratulated **Professor Hanadi Sleiman** of the Department of Chemistry for receiving the prestigious 2024 E.W.R. Steacie Award. This accolade is presented to a scientist who has made a distinguished contribution to chemistry while working in Canada. The E.W.R. Steacie Award is awarded annually by the Canadian Society for Chemistry (CSC), and is one of the most prestigious awards in Canadian chemistry.

For more in-depth information about the above awards, please visit [Kudos](#)

(ii) Update: Tuition Increases and Concerns

Dean Lennox provided an update on the evolving Québec Government directives related to tuition fees. Initially, the government announced it intends to nearly double tuition fees from about \$9,000 to \$17,000, but it was later revised to \$12,000 for all incoming BA, BSc, BA&Sc students beginning their studies in September 2024. The additional funds generated from this tuition increase will be distributed among French-language universities. Additionally, a new condition was introduced, stipulating that students entering in September 2025 must attain a Level 5 (on a scale of 12) French language capability by graduation, impacting approximately 80% of students.

A substantial portion of the university's revenues derive from enrollment tuition, alongside government grants associated with registered students in Québec, the rest of Canada, and students coming from Francophonie countries. Notably, international students do not benefit from government grants in the same manner as domestic students. Despite the University's concerted efforts, uncertainties persist, particularly regarding the impact on enrollment and revenues for the upcoming academic year starting in September 2024.

The University responded proactively to the recent Government measures by introducing the Canada Award (\$3000), aimed at reducing the impact of tuition increases for incoming undergraduates. However, this Award does not apply to BCom, BEng, and international students. It is important to note that 25% of BEng students' courses are taught by members of the Faculty of Science, and protecting their registration is crucial.

Dean Lennox said that efforts have been ongoing since the beginning of the year to understand the admissions profile and influence application outcomes, recognizing the multi-step process applicants undergo from receiving offers to registration.

Dean Lennox provided an overview of enrollment figures for admissions in the 2023-2024 academic year, emphasizing the application-to-registration ratios and noting the presence of error bars in the numbers. There were about 2,100 student applications from CEGEPs, resulting in 1,350 offers and 550 registrations, equating to a 65% offer rate and a 40% registration yield. For the rest of Canada, there were about 4,800 applications, 1,650 offers, and 350 registrations, resulting in a registration yield below 20%. International students showed strong numbers with 6,600 applications, 1,200 offers, and 375 registrations. Regarding Québec students, there was a 40% yield on offers, while for Ontario and international students, it ranged between 15% to 20%.

Dean Lennox said that, together with Vice-Dean David Stephens, Associate Dean (Academic) Axel Hundemer, and Communications Officer Grace Kiser, the team is currently in the process of discussing strategies to provide information and address inquiries from prospective and admitted students. Dean Lennox underscored the crucial importance of actively influencing decisions to register by highlighting the distinctive benefits of the programs offered by the Faculty of Science at McGill University.

Dean Lennox acknowledged the pivotal role of students in sharing their experiences, and commended the Office for Science Education for its inspiring presentations during the

pandemic in 2020. The focus is on facilitating interactions, especially for CEGEP students, with individual departments to enhance their understanding of the McGill experience.

Vice-Dean Stephens and Associate Dean Hundemer highlighted the significance of supporting Enrollment Services and leveraging the Faculty's subject-area expertise for recruitment efforts. Associate Dean Hundemer proposed extending opportunities, potentially during study break, for campus visits or virtual interactions to accommodate diverse preferences. The aim is to connect prospective students with academic experts to address their program-related queries comprehensively.

Dean Lennox mentioned that Grace Kiser will contact the SUS to review and refine messaging directed at prospective students. He also highlighted the importance of assistance from the SUS in forming teams to support incoming students and establishing effective communication channels.

Members emphasized the following points:

1. The need for direct engagement with prospective students to convey sincerity and ensure a personalized experience.
2. The importance of personalizing messages to students, especially at large universities like McGill.
3. Encouraging aiming for higher yield rates.
4. Recognizing the effectiveness of personalized interactions, considering both alumni and current students as valuable contacts for prospective students.
5. Advising against overwhelming students with excessive communication.

Dean Lennox expressed optimism but acknowledged the ongoing need for continued effort to maintain enrollment yields. He emphasized the importance of effective communication with incoming students in refining messaging.

Dean Lennox reminded members of upcoming application deadlines, emphasizing the need for timely action in the recruitment process, and encouraged them to share ideas and feedback via email for consideration in future discussions and decision-making.

(iii) Academic Salary Policy 2024-2025

Dean Lennox informed members that all academic staff would receive a memo regarding the Academic Salary Policy (2024-2025) within the next ten days, as requested by the Provost and Executive Vice-President (Academic). These instructions aim to ensure clarity and consistency across departments.

8) SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATE SOCIETY (SUS) REPORT

Asma Khamis, President of the Science Undergraduate Society, reported on the activities of the SUS.

The SUS extends warm wishes to the Faculty for a happy new year and hopes that everyone had a restful winter break and holiday season.

The annual SUS Gala is scheduled for Friday, 16 February 2024. The President and a committee of fellow SUS executives have been diligently working to plan this event. Additionally, the SUS equity team has arranged an equity training session for departmental executives in late January. They are also enhancing their social media presence to engage members of the science community in discussions about equity-related topics. In addition to these initiatives, the President has been actively involved in reviewing governing documents and checking in with departments regarding the status of their operations. Notably, the SUS has resumed the use of office 1B21 in the Burnside

Basement now that renovations are largely complete. Plans are underway for a reception, scheduled for late January or early February, to celebrate the reopening of the space with students and faculty alike.

The committees under the SUS Academic, Internal, and Sustainability portfolios have initiated planning for events in the upcoming Winter semester. Notable events include Academia Week, the first-ever SUS Kiki Ball, and Grad Ball. Recently, the VP Internal and their coordinating team successfully concluded Science Games, which took place from 9-13 January 2024, with over 500 students participating in a week of activities and competition.

The SUS VP Communications is currently in the process of hiring French translators to create a French version of the SUS website. Simultaneously, the VP External and their committee have successfully organized the representation of SUS-affiliated clubs and services at the SUS General Council.

Anticipating a wonderful semester ahead, the SUS is enthusiastic about the great initiatives, projects, and advocacy it will bring.

Dean Lennox thanked President Khamis for the SUS report, and shared his appreciation for the completion of the Burnside basement. He commended the efforts of the Science Computer Task Force and SUS, highlighting their early involvement in the design stages. Additionally, Dean Lennox acknowledged the crucial role of Marilena Cafaro, the Director of Infrastructure in the Faculty of Science, in organizing, designing, and securing funding for the project. He encouraged members to walk through the newly completed space, noting its well-designed features.

9) **SCIENCE EQUITY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE**

Associate Dean (Graduate Education) Laura Nilson provided an update on the Science Equity and Climate Committee. The first meeting of the Winter semester is scheduled for 24 January 2024, with upcoming reports expected.

The agenda will feature two items, including an initiative led by the Science Undergraduate Society (SUS) to establish a working group for creating a database on the accessibility of various meeting and event spaces on campus. This initiative, spearheaded by the SUS Sustainability Officer, Elaine Xiao, aims to streamline event planning efforts.

The Science Office of Science Education is actively involved in forming cohorts for the second phase of the Faculty of Science Inclusive Teaching Initiative. This initiative promotes collaboration among professors to cultivate inclusive and antiracist classroom environments.

Associate Dean Nilson highlighted recent annual reports pertinent to the equity portfolio presented at the Senate meeting on 6 December 2024. Professor Celeste Pedri-Spade, the Associate Provost for Indigenous Initiatives, presented the annual report from the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. Additionally, Professor Angela Campbell, the Associate Provost for Equity and Academic Policies, shared reports on the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Plan and the Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism. These reports are available on their respective sites on the university website.

10) **PROVOST'S ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS ANTI-BLACK RACISM**

Associate Dean (Graduate Education) Laura Nilson reminded members that February is Black History Month, with the opening ceremony scheduled for 1 February 2024 from 5 to

8 p.m. in the Elizabeth Wirth Music Building. The keynote lecture on 8 February 2024 will feature Melanie J. Newton, Associate Professor of History at the University of Toronto, specializing in Caribbean and Atlantic World History. Associate Dean Nilson shared an interesting fact about Professor Newton's involvement as a youth representative on the Barbados Constitution Review Commission from 1996 to 1998, which recommended transitioning Barbados from a constitutional monarchy to a republic, a change implemented by the Government of Barbados in 2021.

11) **THE NEW VIC PROJECT UPDATE**

Dean Lennox provided an update on the progress of the New Vic Project, noting that it is advancing with vigor. The deconstruction process has commenced with careful attention paid to safety measures across the site. Plans include the drilling of 220 holes for geothermal heating, marking a significant milestone as McGill's first geothermal site. The project has been presented to the Faculty Council on 23 May 2023, with upcoming presentations scheduled for other faculties including Arts, Engineering, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, and Management. A comprehensive communications plan is being developed to ensure project updates reach all corners of the university. Despite some delays, recent progress has been encouraging, and efforts to communicate project developments are underway, with broader dissemination planned by spring. Members were invited to ask questions about the project, but there were none.

Dean Lennox announced that the architects of the New Vic Project, Diamond Schmitt/Lemay Michaud Architectes, received a Canadian Architectural Award of Excellence from the Canadian Architect for their outstanding design. Their work successfully transformed a historic site while maintaining its integrity.

12) **REPORTS OF ASSOCIATE DEANS AND VICE-DEAN**

- a) **Vice-Dean David Stephens**
- b) **Associate Dean (Academic) Axel Hundemer**

There were no reports for the current meeting.

- c) **Associate Dean (Student Affairs) Anthony Mittermaier**

Associate Dean Mittermaier reported that the majority of grades were submitted by the grade deadline on 4 January 2024, a commendable achievement. He thanked all instructors who dedicated their time over the holiday break to ensure timely completion of grading.

- d) **Associate Dean (Graduate Education) Laura Nilson**

Associate Dean Nilson highlighted that this time of year involves the review of graduate applications for admissions and the planning of recruitment for the 2024-2025 cohorts. It was important to emphasize that the announced tuition increases do not apply to graduate students in thesis programs. Instead, standard annual increases (3%) for Master's and Ph.D. programs are in effect. However, there is a slightly larger increase (from 3% to 5%) for international students in Master's non-thesis programs. The tuition fees for students from the rest of Canada has not yet been announced. The Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies office is leading the dissemination of this information centrally, and individual Science departments are encouraged to communicate this message to their prospective graduate students during interactions.

Dean Lennox echoed Associate Dean Nilson's message the importance of correcting any misinformation and assuring applicants about the exemption of graduate students from tuition increases for the Master's and Ph.D. thesis programs.

e) Associate Dean (Research) John Stix

Associate Dean Stix reported on the progress of the CFI 12, the new CFI Innovation Fund. In the fall, researchers submitted expressions of intent to apply, which went well. Currently, researchers and their teams are writing 10-page proposals for internal submission by the end of February. The University will then assess the proposals and make decisions on which projects will advance. The projects chosen will have time to refine their proposals before the official CFI submission, which is scheduled for a later date.

13) REPORT ON ACTIONS OF SENATE

- Senate Meeting, 6 December 2023: Senator Anthony Mittermaier

The meeting was started at 2:33 p.m. by President Saini with an acknowledgement of 6 December massacre and a minute of silence. Memorial announcements were made for Prof. Douglas Stairs (Physics) and Prof. Byung Chan (BC) Eu (Chemistry).

In the President's remarks, he referenced ongoing discussions with the Québec Government regarding the changes to out-of-province tuition and discussed their potential impact on McGill and its international reputation. He discussed how McGill has met with federal government representatives and reemphasized McGill's international stature and success. He responded to questions regarding the hiring freeze: it is necessary to balance the current budget; HR is working with the budget office to establish general hiring guidelines; mission-critical hiring can proceed.

There were no members questions or motions.

Senator Gershwin reported proposed revisions to the Sustainability Policy, which were approved by a Senate vote.

Senator Nalbantoglu presented the Report of the Academic Policy Committee. A Senate vote approved new MSc thesis and non-thesis programs in Bioethics.

Senator Campbell presented revisions to the Conflict-of-Interest Policy. She responded to a question on what is meant by loyalty? It is the fiduciary duty of employees. They must not place personal benefit above McGill benefit in the context of their duties, for example by running a shadow lab, etc.

Senator Prando presented the annual report of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, on behalf of Senator Lekey.

Senator Lebeau presented on behalf of Senator Manfredi budget information for the current fiscal year, and briefly touched upon the uncertainty in the forecast for 2024-2025. He emphasized that McGill must not enter a deficit position and stressed that the entire Province's university system is underfunded. In response to Senator Pondicherry's question regarding how McGill aims to attract future students, Senator Lebeau pointed to McGill's strong student aid programs and the many opportunities our students enjoy.

Secretary-General Rogowska presented the report of the Joint Senate-Board meeting.

Ms. Cristiane Tinmouth presented the annual report on the Financial State of the University for information. She mentioned that the University is currently awaiting the Moody's report and that the University is meeting with S&P in January. Senators Nitu and Pastrana Mankovitz inquired as to the impacts of financial uncertainty on major infrastructure projects. Senator Labeau replied that progress may need to slow in some areas, depending on Québec governmental decisions that affect McGill's finances.

Professor Daniel Béland presented the Staff Grievances and Disciplinary Procedures Report: there were three grievances and two disciplinary actions over the past year.

Professor Celeste Pedri-Spade presented the annual report of the Office of Indigenous Initiatives highlighting key activities and accomplishments over the past year which included helping to craft land acknowledgements and Indigenous representation in convocation ceremonies.

Senator Campbell presented the annual report on the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan and the annual report on the Action Plan to address Anti-Black Racism. She was pleased to report that between 2020 and 2023, the number of tenured and tenure-track professors at McGill who identify as black increased from 14 to 39.

Senator Weinstein presented the University Advancement Annual Report. Over the past year there were 26,000 donors giving \$209M in gifts and pledges, with \$159M received in cash. The Made by McGill campaign has raised \$1.86B so far. He mentioned that 34% of donations went towards the endowment and the rest went to support specific causes: sustainability and climate, genomics, innovation/entrepreneurship, student wellness, bridge to the world, healthy democracies.

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

14) MEMBERS' QUESTION PERIOD

In response to a member's question regarding the New Vic Project, Dean Lennox emphasized the Project's recognition of the importance of incorporating Indigenous context into the Project's communications plan. Dean Lennox highlighted the Project's remarkable story and its alignment with Indigenous communities' aspirations for sustainability. He expressed optimism that merging these aspects positively would foster academic debate rather than legal disputes, underscoring the significance of discussing the Project comprehensively beyond its legal context. Dean Lennox assured that Indigenous perspectives are not just included but prominent in all communications discussions.

15) OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business, Prof. Perepichka **moved**, seconded by Prof. Fabry, that the meeting be adjourned at 4:27 p.m.

The motion carried.