

FACULTY OF SCIENCE
Meeting of Faculty
1 December 2020 at 3:00 p.m.
Held via Zoom Conference Application

ATTENDANCE: As recorded in the Faculty Appendix Book

DOCUMENTS: **S-20-12, S-20-13**

Dean Lennox called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m., and welcomed members to the fourth Faculty of Science meeting of the 2020-2021 academic year.

1) ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Ms. Mircescu **moved**, seconded by Prof. Robillard, that the Agenda be adopted.

The motion carried.

2) MINUTES OF 3 NOVEMBER 2020 **S-20-12**

Ms. Mircescu **moved**, seconded by Prof. Robillard, that the Minutes be approved.

The motion carried.

3) BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- Awareness of Foreign Influence from the Meeting of 3 November 2020

Dean Lennox informed members that further to the concerns expressed on the topic of foreign influence, a meeting will be held in mid-December 2020 with representatives from CSIS, Chairs, Directors, Associate Deans, Vice-Principal Martha Crago and Director Brian Bauer. In the new year, the Dean will report back to Faculty for an additional discussion with the aim of developing a framework on foreign influence.

4) REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

- **Academic Committee** **S-20-13**

Associate Dean (Academic) Axel Hundemer described the following proposals that were approved at the Academic Committee meeting on **17 November 2020**.

I. New Course:

Computer Science COMP 654	Graph Representation Learning 4 credits	<u>AC-20-10</u>
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COMP 654 will be a new course in machine learning, previously offered as a topics course.

Associate Dean Hundemer **moved**, seconded by Ms. Merritt, that the course be adopted.

The motion carried.

II. **Program Changes:**

1. **Computer Science**

- B.Sc. Major in Computer Science - Computer Games

[AC-20-11](#)

Proposed Revisions: (i) COMP 308, a Required course, has been moved to the list of Complementary courses because the course is not offered every year; (ii) clarification regarding the minimum and the maximum number of total program credits for students who have been exempted from taking COMP 202.

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

The motion carried.

2. **Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences**

- Honours in Atmospheric Science
- Major in Atmospheric Science
- Major in Atmospheric Science and Physics

[AC-20-12](#)

[AC-20-13](#)

[AC-20-14](#)

Proposed Revisions: PHYS 512 has been added to each stream in the above three programs in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences.

Associate Dean Hundemer **moved**, seconded by Prof. Haggard, that all the above program changes be approved.

The motion carried.

3. **Mathematics & Statistics**

B.Sc. Program Revisions:

- Honours in Mathematics and Computer Science

[AC-20-15](#)

Program Revisions: The Complementary course list has been revised in order to offer students more choices in Mathematics courses.

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

The motion carried.

- Major in Statistics

[AC-20-16](#)

Program Revisions: Since the creation of the Major Program in Statistics several years ago, several courses in Computer Science and Statistics have been approved and are now being added to the program.

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

The motion carried.

B.A. Program Revisions (for information only):

- Major Concentration in Statistics

[AC-20-17](#)

- Supplementary Minor Concentration in Statistics

[AC-20-18](#)

Graduate Program Retirements:

- M.Sc. in Mathematics and Statistics (Thesis); Bioinformatics Option [AC-20-19](#)
- Ph.D. in Mathematics and Statistics (Thesis); Bioinformatics Option [AC-20-20](#)

Program Revisions: The Bioinformatics Option in the M.Sc. and Ph.D. (Thesis) degrees is being retired because (i) there has been very little interest in the Option and (ii) some courses have not been offered for a long time.

Associate Dean Hundemer **moved**, seconded by Prof. Hurtubise, that the above program retirements be approved.

The motion carried.

Associate Dean Hundemer asked members to consider retiring the Bioinformatics Option offered by their unit if it is no longer offered.

III. Other (for approval):

Faculty of Science

- (i) Assessment Policy
- (ii) Addendum to Assessment Regulations

[AC-20-8](#)
[AC-20-8A](#)

Associate Dean Hundemer introduced two special regulations to be added to the existing Faculty of Science Assessment Policy (Document AC-20-8) for the winter 2021 and for potential subsequent remote semesters.

Addendum to Assessment Regulations

Special Regulation #3.1, Attendance Grades

Associate Dean Hundemer said that the purpose of the regulation was to limit the assessment weight for attendance to 5% or less. Instructors are encouraged to choose participation grades instead of attendance grades.

Associate Dean Hundemer **moved**, seconded by Ms. Mircescu, that Regulation #3.1, Attendance Grades in Document AC-20-8A, be included in the Faculty of Science Assessment Policy for winter 2021 and subsequent remote learning semesters be adopted.

The motion carried.

Special Regulation 3.2, 3.2.1, "No review" myCourses Quiz Option

Associate Dean Hundemer explained that the "no review" option in myCourses Quizzes prevents students from going back and forth through their exam. There have been a lot of negative responses from students because they do not have the opportunity to review their answers or look ahead before submitting their exam. TLS has posted a warning against using this option because it may go against the University Assessment Policy and the Charter of Students' Rights. Associate Provost (Teaching and Academic Programs) Christopher Buddle was amenable for Faculties to design their own regulations. The "no review" option should not be used solely to prevent cheating, but it could be used for pedagogical reasons for a small number of courses in the Faculty of Science. Associate Dean Hundemer proposed that the "no review" option will only be allowed by special permission of a Faculty committee chaired by the Associate Dean (Academic).

A lengthy discussion followed about the disadvantages of the “no review” option and a few members expressed the merits of using the “no review” option as shown in some research studies.

Associate Dean Hundemer **moved**, seconded by Associate Dean Stix, Regulations #3.2, 3.2.1, “No review” option in Document AC-20-8A, be included in the Faculty of Science Assessment Policy for winter 2021 and subsequent remote learning semesters be adopted.

The motion carried.

6) **DEAN'S BUSINESS**

- Kudos

Dean Lennox presented the following announcements:

- (i) **Professor Joe Schwarcz from the McGill Office for Science and Society** was selected as the inaugural recipient of the new Outreach Award of the Society of Chemical Industry (Canada). This award is given in recognition of sustained efforts in engaging the public in learning about chemical science and its impact on society.
- (ii) **Professor Kenneth Ragan, Department of Physics**, was awarded the Canadian Association of Physicists Medal for Excellence in Teaching Undergraduate Physics, for his overall accomplishments in teaching, and the promotion of quality teaching at McGill and within the Canadian Association of Physics.
- (iii) **Professor Antony Humphries from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics** was the recipient of the 2020 Principal's Prize for Excellence in Teaching in the category of **Associate Professor**.
- (iv) **Professor Thomas Fox, Department of Mathematics and Statistics**, won the 2020 Principal's Prize for Excellence in Teaching in the **Course Lecturer** category.
- (v) **Professor Jennifer Sunday from the Department of Biology** has received a Genome Canada grant to monitor biodiversity in Canada's marine protected areas under Genome Canada's Genomic Applications Partnership Program.

On behalf of the Faculty, Dean Lennox congratulated these awardees for their outstanding accomplishments and achievements.

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

a) Associate Dean (Academic) Axel Hundemer

Associate Dean Hundemer informed members that the December 2020 final examination schedule had been posted on the Exams website. Instructors should verify that their examination information on myCourses matches the online examination schedule. If there are any discrepancies, instructors should contact Stanley Whyte (stanley.whyte@mcgill.ca) from the Exam Office.

b) Associate Dean (Graduate Education) Laura Nilson

There was no report for the current meeting.

c) Associate Dean (Research) John Stix

Associate Dean Stix reminded members of the following deadlines:

- (i) An Open Call has been made for Tier 1 and Tier 2 Canada Research Chairs, James McGill Professors, and William Dawson Scholars. Professors who wish to be considered for these awards should contact their Chairs or Directors. The Faculty of Science deadline is **11 December 2020**, and departmental deadlines will be sooner.
- (ii) Nominations for the Principal's Prize for Outstanding Emerging Researchers. The Faculty's deadline is **11 December 2020**

d) Associate Dean (Student Affairs) Anthony Mittermaier

Associate Dean Mittermaier informed members that new procedures will be put in place to speed up the process regarding allegations of plagiarism or cheating on assignments or examinations. In cases where there are allegations, students will be notified by the Faculty Disciplinary Officer in a timely manner with the necessary information. i.e., procedures, no contest option, and students' rights. Following the allegations, students will receive a grade of NA (grade not yet available) in the course. If students do not contest the allegations, a grade of zero will be recorded on the transcripts and placed on conduct probation for 12 months. Associate Dean Mittermaier reminded members that sanctions must come from the Disciplinary Officer and not the instructor of the course. Instructors may direct any questions or concerns to Associate Dean (Student Affairs).

8) SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATE SOCIETY (SUS) REPORT

Ms. Sydney Merritt, President of the Science Undergraduate Society, gave the following report:

While no virtual event could fully replace in person activities, it was a successful semester!

Regarding the Academic portfolio, in collaboration with CAPS and AUS, the Graduate Fair was a success! The theme for Academia Week for winter 2021 is "Science Communication". Furthermore, Academic Events have started a "virtual library" on MS Teams. The plan is to collaborate with the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, School of Computer Science, and CAPS to host panels with industry speakers in winter 2021.

In collaboration with the Mental Health Committee, the VP (External) has been working with 10 local businesses to bring care packages to students living in the Montreal area. It was successful, with approximately 60 applicants for the 8 care packages draw. The VP (External) is also looking at revamping the SUS website for better advertisements of the clubs and the various sponsors of the events.

The Mental Health Committee is also currently running a virtual "Wellness Hunt" with a series of challenges for students to complete and post online for prizes. These challenges include self-care activities like cooking healthy meals, going on walks, and cleaning their "study space," wherever that may be. In terms of online challenges, the SUS Environment Committee just wrapped up their No Waste November Campaign, again with challenges to encourage more sustainable living. Winners will be announced shortly for the HydroFlask water bottle and Lush gift certificates. Charity Week was a success! The SUS and the departments raised almost \$1500.00 to be donated to the Old Mission Brewery through the week-long event. Considering how successful this was, the SUS is looking forward to the Winter Charity Week! The Social Sustainability Committee also hosted a "Disparities in Healthcare" online event on 31 November 2020 in conjunction with the Welcome Collective.

In terms of social events, this semester's online events have been quite successful! Even with low participation, the students that attended seemed to have a lot of fun! The Science Internal Committee (SIC) is looking at ways in reaching a wider audience.

Planning for the Graduation Ball and the Science Games has begun with both events being held in late April/May 2021. During the first week of classes, the application process will begin for the Graduation Ball, while the planning of the Science Games will start later in the semester. The reason for this is that there is a higher chance that the Graduation Ball can happen than is the Science Games due to the nature of the events. Both events are tentative and are entirely dependent on governmental restrictions at that time.

On behalf of the Faculty of Science, Dean Lennox thanked Ms. Merritt and the SUS for their impressive work during a challenging period.

9) SCIENCE EQUITY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE (SECC)

Associate Dean Nilson reported on the Science Equity and Climate Committee (SECC) which took place on 19 November 2021. She said that in alignment with the Committee's goal to ground its work in data from the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion literature, the November meeting featured two presentations by members: one on two recent published studies on the effectiveness of bias interventions, and another on diversity in hiring. The Committee also launched a new group on Microsoft Teams as a platform for sharing information and a biweekly group newsletter.

10) Provost's Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism

Associate Dean Nilson reported that the Office of the Provost has announced that it will grant up to ten tenure-track licenses, issued over a two-year period, to support the commitments made in McGill's Plan to Address Anti-Black racism. The first block of five licenses issued in the current fiscal year are targeted toward recruitment of faculty members (at any rank) whose research advances knowledge about Black communities and issues of particular relevance to those communities. The Provost's office will review proposals from the Faculties to award these licenses. The Faculty of Science has submitted proposals from the Departments of Geography, Psychology, and Computer Science. The positions will be then be posted and interviewing and hiring is anticipated to take place during Winter 2021.

11) The New Vic Project - Update

Dean Lennox gave a brief update on The New Vic Project. A decision on the funding was anticipated by December 2020 or January 2021. Presentations to various groups have been ongoing, and the next presentation was scheduled to take place on 14 January 2021. Dean Lennox said he will continue to provide updates on the progress of The New Vic Project at future Faculty meetings.

12) REPORTS ON ACTIONS OF SENATE

Senate Meeting of 12 November 2020 – Senator Martin Robillard

The November 12th meeting was the annual Joint Senate-Board meeting for the 2020-2021 academic year.

The meeting was chaired by the Chair of the Board of Governors Mr. Ram Panda. Mr. Panda commented on the relevance of the theme of last year's meeting on the present

situation ("How can McGill be a Model of an Open, Connected and Purposeful University?").

The Principal and Vice-Chancellor Prof. Suzanne Fortier introduced the topic of this year's meeting, "Pandemic Planning and Preparedness: Local Impact of Global Health Crises". The Principal observed that the University's response to the Covid-19 crisis has moved from a sprint to a marathon, but that encouraging signs were on the horizon (e.g., vaccine, rapid testing).

Dr. Tim Evans, Director and Associate Dean, School of Population and Global Health (SPGH), Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, and Associate Vice-Principal (Global Policy and Innovation) delivered an update on the Covid-19 situation. In this presentation he emphasized that:

- Covid-19 comes in waves with the 2nd wave being more significant in terms of infections numbers but less critical in terms of rate of hospitalizations and deaths; Contributing factors for this difference include that a more robust population was affected in the second wave and that hospital care for Covid-19 improved;
- "In Quebec, disparities in COVID-19 infection rates are shaped by the intersection of race, gender, immigration, labour, and public health. Health care workers account for 20 percent of infections, and in the hard-hit Greater Montreal area, up to 80 percent of the aides in long term care facilities are racialized women, mostly Black and Maghrebi." [From the presentation slide 5]
- "Survivors of Covid-19 appear to be at increased risk of developing a psychiatric condition as a consequence of the disease" [From the presentation slide 6]

Dr. Christopher Buddle, Associate Provost (Teaching and Academic Programs) delivered a presentation on the "Local Impact of the Global Health Crisis: Pandemic Planning and Preparedness". In the presentation he provided a term-by-term recapitulation of the evolving health crisis from the point of view of McGill's response, which he concluded with a reflection on success stories and opportunities for change. Success stories included early decision to move on-line, the resilience of the IT infrastructure and services, and a low rate of infection on campus. Opportunities for change centered around the need for additional feedback and consultation and more effective communication.

The meeting participants were then split up into ten break-out groups tasked with identifying the top short-, medium- and long-term opportunities and challenges University faces in its ability to carry out its mission during and after the Covid-19 health crisis.

Opportunities identified include:

- Realizing efficiencies in teaching and advising the reuse of on-line material and use of technology;
- Exploring various mechanisms that provide additional flexibility to various stakeholder and thereby acting as pioneers in a compassionate approach to crisis management.
- Envisioning more curriculums and programs oriented around technologies and broadening to other audiences;
- Leveraging the remote work model to help increase work/life balance;
- Using the situation as a catalyst to move more resources on-line, in particular lectures and library resources;
- Repurposing space;

Challenges identified include:

- Determining what must be sacrificed to account for the additional time required for certain aspects of remote university work, and in particular on-line teaching.

- Interpreting the requirements for credits and contact hours in the on-line environment, so as to properly calibrate the student workload;
- Accommodating the differences in how different groups of students adapt to on-line teaching;
- Addressing mental health issues in the student population and in particular their sense of isolation and anxiety about their immediate future;
- Getting research infrastructure back up and running;
- Scaling policies for on-campus activities;
- Exhaustion and burn out from most stakeholders.

Senate Meeting of 18 November 2020 – Senator Dima Perepichka

The meeting began at 2:30 pm with Dean Maioni presenting a memorial tribute for Professor Mario Bunge, and Dean Lennox presenting memorial tributes for Professors Henry Reiswig and Venamamalai Seshadri.

Senate adopted the minutes of the last meeting, the report of the Steering Committee and the agenda.

In the Chair's remarks, Principal Fortier announced that the Administration is exploring the possibility of adjusting the starting date of the Winter semester. A motion to extend the 2020-2021 winter holiday break by one week was discussed at a special meeting of the Senate Steering Committee. It will be presented at the next Senate meeting, on December 2.

Three formal questions from the Senators were discussed. A question regarding the withdrawal of an Emeritus designation was answered by Provost Manfredi who noted that the withdrawal of the Emeritus designation can take place in case of misconduct in accordance with the Regulations on Retirement of Academic Staff, and where such complaints are lodged, they are to be considered by the Provost. A question regarding the Principal's Message on Academic Freedom and Inclusiveness, which was also answered by Provost Manfredi who noted that while universities extend robust protection to academic freedom, the academic freedom cannot be invoked as a defense in cases where a member of our community is found, after a fair investigation, to have engaged in misconduct. A question regarding the naming of the Men's Varsity Team was answered by Deputy Provost Labeau, who noted that the new name "McGill Redbirds" has been announced yesterday.

Senate approved the 500th report of the Academic Policy Committee and the report of the Senate Nominating Committee.

Senate approved a motion pertaining to the Calendar of Academic Dates for 2023-24 and proposed revisions to dates for 2021-22 and 2022-23. This will allow for a Fall Reading Break while maintaining contact hours in the Fall semester. The document includes a Fall Reading Break implementation plan.

Senate approved revisions to the Standing Rules of Procedure Governing the Proceedings of the Senate of McGill University.

As the last two items of business, Senate received for information the annual reports for 2019-2020 on the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures and from the Committee on Enrolment and Student Affairs.

The meeting ended at 4:52pm.

13) MEMBERS' QUESTION PERIOD

There were no members' questions.

14) **OTHER BUSINESS**

Dean Lennox wished everyone a safe and healthy holiday season!

There being no further business, Ms. Mircescu **moved**, seconded by Prof. Lydon, that the meeting be adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

The motion carried.