

(April 5, 2022 meeting, in preparation for Senate meeting of April 19, 2022)

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SENATE

The minutes of the Senate meeting of March 23, 2022 were circulated to the Steering Committee for review. It is recommended that they now be considered by Senate for approval.

2. APPROVAL OF CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF SENATE

The Steering Committee reports that it has reviewed the confidential minutes of the meeting of March 23, 2022 and has approved them on behalf of Senate. These minutes are not published or circulated but are available for perusal by Senators upon request to the Secretariat.

3. SPEAKING RIGHTS

The Steering Committee requests speaking rights for:

- Mr. Serge Bergeron, Senior Director Budget and Finance, Analysis, Planning and Budget, for item IIB3 (Presentation on McGill University Budget 2022-2023)
- Ms. Diana Dutton, Associate Vice-Principal (Human Resources) for item IIB4 (McGill University Staffing Report)
- Professor Christopher Buddle, Associate Provost, Teaching & Academic Programs, for item IIB5 (Revisions to the Policy on the Assessment of Student Learning) and item IIB7 (Report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on COVID Academic Planning and Policies),
- Professor Glenn Zabowski, Associate Dean of Students, for item IIB5 (Revisions to the Policy on the Assessment of Student Learning)
- Professor Manuel Balán, Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts, for item IIB5 (Revisions to the Policy on the Assessment of Student Learning)
- Ms. Sophie Leblanc, Chief Investment Officer and Treasurer, for item IIB8 (Open Discussion: CAMSR Report Recommendations and Implementation Plan (2019-2020))
- Mr. Joel Raby, Chair of the Investment Committee of the Board of Governors, for item IIB8 (Open Discussion: CAMSR Report Recommendations and Implementation Plan (2019-2020))

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Steering Committee has reviewed the Agenda for the present meeting and recommends it for approval.

5. REVIEW OF QUESTIONS AND MOTIONS

The Steering Committee received one question, which was approved for submission to Senate (as drafted) and included on the April 19, 2022 Senate agenda.

The Committee also received one motion for review, submitted by Senators Downie, Kouchakji, Low, Nystrom, Shor and Subramanian. The motion called for Senate to express its disagreement with the Board on the question of divestment and to create a Senate-Board Conference Committee on fossil-fuel divestment.

The Committee had a comprehensive discussion on the motion, reflecting on the jurisdiction of the Board and the Senate as outlined in the Statutes, on the responsibility of the Steering Committee, and on the need for an informed Senate discussion on the matter of divestment and the University's work in this area.

After due consideration, the Committee agreed that a motion on the topic of divestment by Senate should only be entertained following an occasion for Senate to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the University's plans in this regard. As such, the Committee agreed to proceed first with an open discussion on the subject at the April 19, 2022, meeting.

The open discussion would be preceded by a presentation from the Chief Investment Officer and the Chair of the Board's Investment Committee relating to the implementation plan contained in the [CAMSAR Report](#) that was adopted by the Board of Governors in April 2020.

The Committee noted that such a discussion would provide for a more informed exchange on the matter, following which the Senator could opt to resubmit, if so desired, a revised version of the motion for consideration at the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

The Committee decided to defer the consideration of a motion on the topic in order to allow Senate to receive relevant information and discuss the issues first, in line with the Committee's Guidelines for reviewing motions.

The Committee also considered the current version of the motion and made the following observations and recommendations for consideration by the submitters in the event that they were to submit a revised motion on the matter following the April meeting.

With respect to the question of disagreement between Senate and the Board of Governors:

1. A clearer statement is needed on the nature of the disagreement, as related to the December 2019 CAMSR report and the implementation plan of April 2020 or alternatively, a reformulation of the motion is needed to reflect that the disagreement would be with the Board's decision not to divest in an absolute and immediate fashion, keeping in mind that the Board has agreed to a phased decarbonization of the endowment, which will, in effect, lead to

divesting from highly carbon intensive companies, including those within the fossil fuel industry.

With respect to the conference committee:

1. The Committee was unclear on the objective and desired outcome for seeking the creation of a conference committee, considering that ultimately any recommendation made by the conference committee, should it be established, would still be subject to the Board's approval.
2. The Committee's general view in respect of the conference committee is that this mechanism could be used, as it was in the past, in instances where there is a disagreement between the Board and the Senate on a matter that is within the jurisdiction of both bodies. In other words, the conditions to establish the conference committee would be met only if Senate were to approve a recommendation on a matter that falls within its mandate (i.e. approve an academic policy), recommend its approval by the Board and subsequently receive notice of the Board's decision to reject the Senate recommendation.
3. Given that Senate does not have approval rights with respect to the University's investment policies, and that it cannot make binding recommendations on the matter to the Board, the Committee's view is that the conference committee is an inappropriate mechanism to use for this issue.

The Committee was of the view that a motion asking Senate to make a representation to the Board on the topic of divestment would be considered to be within the mandate of Senate. Such a representation was made by the Board in October 2018, following Senate's approval of a motion to inform the Board that it favours, in principle, divestment.

Present: Suzanne Fortier (*Chair*), Angela Campbell, Jim Engle-Warnick, Andrew Kirk, Christopher Manfredi, Jim Nicell, Laura Nilson, Hossein Poorhemati, Marc Richard, Edyta Rogowska (*Secretary*).

Regrets: Claire Downie.