



(Committee meeting of March 12, 2024, in preparation for Senate meeting of March 20, 2024)

1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE APPROVAL OF SENATE

1.1 Minutes of Senate

The Steering Committee reviewed the minutes of the Senate meeting of February 14, 2024, and recommends that they be approved by Senate.

1.2 Speaking Rights

The Steering Committee recommends that the granting of speaking rights to Professor Amélie Quesnel-Vallée and Professor Jennifer Fishman, Members of the Senate Open Discussion Working Group, for item IIB2 (*Open Discussion: Developing, Fostering, and Consolidating meaningful Research Collaborations between the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Health Sciences*), and Mr. Richard Martin, Executive Director of Analysis, Planning and Budget, for item IIB4 (*Budget Planning [2024-2025] Report II*), be approved by Senate.

1.3 Meeting Agenda

The Steering Committee reviewed the Agenda for the Senate meeting of March 20, 2024, meeting and recommends that it be approved by Senate.

1.4 Confidential Session

The Steering Committee recommends that the holding of a confidential session for the consideration of item IIB9 (*Report of the Honorary Degrees and Convocations Committee*) be approved by Senate.

2. ITEMS FOR THE INFORMATION OF SENATE

2.1 Review of Questions and Motions

The Committee received one (1) question and four (4) motions for review for the Senate meeting of March 20, 2024. The deadline for the submission of questions and motions was 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 7, 2024.

Following review of a submitted Question regarding the Elimination of Floor Fellows, the Committee determined that it was acceptable for inclusion on the Agenda for the Senate meeting of March 20, 2024.

Following review of a submitted Motion to Condemn the Ongoing Israeli Military Operation in the Gaza Strip, the Committee determined that the content of the motion was not within the purview of Senate, since it neither pertained to the academic mandate of Senate as defined in the [Statutes of McGill University](#), nor to the academic business of Senate based on Senate's consideration of agenda items that have academic implications, which feature regularly on Senate's agenda. The Committee noted that the motion involved a highly divisive political matter, whose consideration would weaken the University's commitment to its principles. The Committee also expressed concern at the preamble's statement that the motion sought to speak for the 'McGill Community' as a whole. The Committee expressed that Senate, as a governance body operating within a vast organizational structure, does not have the authority to consider motions that aim to express the views of the University community as a whole. As such, the motion was not accepted for inclusion on the Agenda for the Senate meeting of March 20, 2024.

Following review of a submitted Motion to End Course Trips to Israel, the Committee highlighted that while Senate is responsible for approving course offerings through the Academic Policy Committee, it does not have oversight authority in regard to the elements of particular courses. The Committee noted that a motion calling to end trips related to a course could jeopardize the academic freedom of instructors, who are responsible for the design and delivery of their courses. The Committee further noted a range of factual errors that could have readily been avoided throughout the body of the document that presented the motion. As such, the motion was not accepted for inclusion on the Agenda for the Senate meeting of March 20, 2024.

Following review of a submitted Motion to End Exchange Programs with Israeli Universities, the Committee noted that although the Statutes provide Senate with the ability to offer recommendations concerning the affiliation and dissolution of agreements with other bodies, this work is done within the context of the University's standard governance process. Student exchange agreements are normally established for a specific time period, after which they are either renewed or terminated, in accordance with the student exchange agreement procedures, and ultimately a review by the Academic Policy Committee in the name of Senate. In line with the terms of reference of the APC, recommendations for new student exchange agreements are put forward by the Provost and Executive Vice-President (Academic) following due consultations, for consideration by the Academic Policy Committee in the name of Senate. As such, the motion was not accepted for inclusion on the Agenda for the Senate meeting of March 20, 2024.

Following review of a submitted Motion on Divestment from Israel's Occupation of Palestine, the Senate Steering Committee determined that the content of the motion, which calls for divestment, was under the sole authority of the Board of Governors. The Board has a dedicated committee and a process in place for reviewing requests related to divestment. The Committee highlighted that members of the University community may submit a written expression of concern to the [Committee on Sustainability and Social Responsibility of the Board of Governors](#) regarding matters of social responsibility that pertain to the University Investment Policy within the mandate of the Investment Committee of the Board of Governors. The Committee also acknowledged that while Senate considered a motion related to divestment in September 2018, this consideration took place only after the Board had completed its work on the question. Given this difference, and the jurisdictional separation that exists between the Board and the Senate, the Committee determined that Senate could not consider the submitted motion, and as such, the motion was not accepted for inclusion on the Agenda for the Senate meeting of March 20, 2024.

Please see the [Guidelines for the Review of Questions and Motions by the Senate Steering Committee](#) for further information on this process.

2.2 Steering Committee Discussion Items

The Steering Committee received an overview of recent updates to the Senate Calendar of Business, as well as an update on the ongoing planning of the Senate Open Discussion, being held on March 20, 2024.

2.3 Approval of Degrees, Certificates, and Diplomas for Spring 2024 Convocation

The Steering Committee convened on February 14, 2024, and approved a list of Degrees, Certificates, and Diplomas for Spring 2024 Convocation.

Present: Angela Campbell, Elham Emami, Lalia Katchelewa, Lara Khoury, Christopher Manfredi, Laura Nilson, Derek Nystrom, Marc Richard, Deep Saini (*Chair*), Satish Kumar Tumulu.

Regrets: None.