



(October 15, 2010 meeting, in preparation for Senate Meeting, October 20, 2010)

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SENATE

The minutes of the meeting of September 22, 2010 have been circulated. It is recommended that they now be considered for approval.

2. SPEAKING RIGHTS

The Senate Steering Committee requests speaking rights for Mr. Albert Caponi, Assistant Vice-Principal (Financial Services) for item IIB3 (Financial Report of the Board of Governors on Fiscal Year ending May 31, 2010) and Mr. Michael Porritt for item IIB6 (Presentation on Residences).

3. CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

Steering Committee recommends that Senate enter into Confidential Session for discussion of item IIB1, the Confidential Report of Honorary Degrees and Convocations Committee (D10-07).

4. SENATE ORIENTATION

A Senate orientation will be held on November 11, 2010 from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. The orientation will provide a more in-depth review of academic functions and explain the governance framework of the University. All senators are invited and encouraged to attend.

5. RESOLUTION REGARDING THE ARCHITECTURE CAFÉ (Appendix A)

The Secretary-General introduced discussion by noting the important student interest in having an opportunity to raise and discuss their concerns related to the decision to close the café. However, he drew attention to the final “whereas” paragraph in the proposed main motion. In proposing action “outside the scope of the organization’s object as defined in the bylaws or corporate charter,” according to Section 10 of Robert’s Rules of Order, the motion is out of order unless Senate by a two-thirds majority votes to authorize its introduction.

The Secretary General suggested that the resolution, as written, raises several jurisdictional and procedural questions. In pointing out that the Statutes dealing with the Senate do not make reference to matters of facilities, space or services other than with respect to academic buildings, he reviewed the sections of the resolution that, if approved by Senate, would pose serious challenges of operationalization. The proposed resolution includes the following: that a Senate committee be created to review the functions and operations of the Architecture Café, and make a report that would include a recommendation on the Café’s future; that an administrative decision on the *Space Use Plan for Room G-06, Macdonald Harrington Building* be rendered null and void; and that the Architecture Café remain open until the committee reports to Senate. These proposed measures appear to be a stretch of Senate’s mandate.

The Secretary General also pointed out that the issue of the Architecture Café closure has been raised at the Board of Governors through a similar resolution. He noted that the Board of Governors does have a statutory mandate to consider such issues and informed the committee that this issue will be addressed there.

The Committee discussed the proposed resolution noting that it was not the most appropriate subject for Senate to deal with at its meeting, especially since there would be an opportunity at the Board of Governors level to consider the issue. The Committee emphasized the importance of consultation and communication between the administration and students, and that these wider issues should be addressed through a process outside of Senate. It was pointed out that administrative decisions often involve a multi-year process as in the case of the Café closing, while many student leaders change on an annual cycle. This presents a particular challenge of ensuring continuity between successive groups of student leaders. However, it was noted that the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) has put in place a comprehensive transition process to ensure in coming leaders are briefed on issues.

The Committee endorsed processes of communicating decisions to students, and the larger McGill community in order that interested parties can discuss issues and provide input and feedback on decisions. The Committee recognized that administrative decisions are made daily in a University like McGill and that lapses in communication regarding single issues sometimes inadvertently happen. While some people will not be happy with certain administrative decisions, better consultation and communication will help with understanding and accepting such decisions.

It was suggested that the Architecture Café decision offered valuable lessons for the University, and that further examination of the decision through processes outside of Senate would be useful. The Board of Governors provides one such forum for discussion, as noted above, which ideally will provide an opportunity to hear from students. The Committee noted further that the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) and Senator Newburgh have been in discussions about establishing a working group - a second forum - to look at and make recommendations on consultation and communication processes between administration and students. It also will be helpful to identify the particular issues that require consultation and communication with students

The Committee agreed not to bring the resolution on the Architecture Café forward to Senate, and instead encourage the administration and committees to address the broader issues of consultation and communication in future through the manner in which reports are presented to Senate.

Present: Professor Heather Munroe-Blum (Chair), Mr. Joshua Abaki, Ms. Alexandra Bishop, Mr. Gregg Blachford, Professor David Covo, Professor David Harpp, Professor Richard Janda, Professor Bernard Robaire, Mr. Stephen Strople (Secretary).

Regrets: Professor Anthony Masi.



McGill

Main Motion

TO: Senate

FROM: Zach Newburgh, SSMU President

SUBJECT: Resolution Regarding the Future of the Architecture Café

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, September 22, 2010

PREAMBLE: For the past seventeen (17) years, the Architecture Café served as the only alternative social and study space on campus, offering a substitute to the traditional library and food service locations provided by McGill University. The McGill Community cherished the Café for its unique atmosphere, affordable food options, and ethical purchasing policy.

By granting students the chance to coordinate and facilitate the operations of a food service location, the McGill Administration displayed its commitment to experiential learning as a means of complimenting rigorous course study.

The Principal's Taskforce on Student Life and Learning committed to the improvement of social, study, and informal meeting spaces for the students of this university.

Despite this commitment, the University Administration closed the Architecture Café and repurposed Room G-06 in the MacDonald Harrington Building into study space for undergraduate students in the School of Architecture.

Although the responsibility of the Deputy Provost is "to [ensure] that impact on student life and learning is factored into decision-making (<http://www.mcgill.ca/deputyprovost/mendelson>)," those who would be most directly impacted by this decision – students of this university – were not consulted.

MAIN MOTION: *Whereas*, The Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning (hereinafter referred to as "PTFSSL") states,

"The Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) and the Vice-Principal (Administration and Finance) should engage in broad-based consultations, through a round table or other appropriate mechanism, to streamline procedures and decision processes for the reservation of university space

by student organizations wherever possible”;¹

Whereas, The University Administration closed the Architecture Café on 19 August 2010 without issuing broad-based consultations in the present year;

Whereas, One hundred percent (100%) of students in the School of Architecture support the continued operation of the Architecture Café, rather than the repurposing of Room G-06 in the MacDonald Harrington Building;

Whereas, The aforementioned percentage was a sample of eighty percent (80%) of undergraduate students and sixty percent (60%) of graduate students in the School of Architecture;

Whereas, The PTFSLL states, “Our students are outstanding, and have the potential to achieve excellence”;²

Whereas, The PTFSLL states, “Students are given the means and opportunities to freely probe, examine, debate issues and ideas”;³

Whereas, The PTFSLL states, “From the first contact of prospective students with the University, interactions among students, faculty, and administrative and support staff are based on mutual trust and respect”;⁴

Whereas, The PTFSLL states, “...students are encouraged to participate in ongoing dialogue, where their voices are heard and where their concerns are addressed”;⁵

Whereas, The University Administration has refused to do so, stating that the closure of the Architecture Café is simply a “fait accompli”;⁶

Whereas, in accordance with Statute 6.3.8 of McGill University, the Senate “may make such representations, through the Principal, to the Board of Governors as may from time to time become necessary or desirable, touching any claims and needs of the University or any part thereof”;

Whereas, in accordance with Statute 6.3.15 of McGill University, the Senate “shall appoint such committees, boards, or others bodies as may be necessary for the proper exercise of its authority”; and

Whereas, in accordance with Section 10 of Robert’s Rules of Order, “A main motion that proposes action outside the scope of the organization’s object as defined in the bylaws or corporate charter is out of order unless the assembly by a two-thirds vote authorizes its introduction”;⁷

Resolved, That the Senate shall strike an ad hoc committee to review the operations and functions of the Architecture Café; and

Resolved, That the aforementioned committee be composed of, and limited to the following representatives:

Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), Chair
Dean, Faculty of Engineering or designate
Director, School of Architecture or designate
Executive Director, Services for Students
Director, Food and Dining Services
Vice-President (Services), EUS
Senior Manager, Architecture Café
One (1) undergraduate student representing the ASA
One (1) undergraduate student representing the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU)
One (1) graduate student representing the Post-Graduate Students' Society (PGSS)

; and

Resolved, That the aforementioned committee shall report for approval by the Senate at the latter's first meeting in 2011; and

Resolved, That the aforementioned report shall include a recommendation for the future of the Architecture Café; and

Resolved, That the decision communicated by memorandum on 19 August 2010, entitled "Space use plan for Room G-06, Macdonald Harrington Building" shall be rendered null and void; and

Resolved, That the University shall not close the Architecture Café prior to the consideration of the aforementioned report by the Senate.

¹ "FOCUS ON STUDENTS: Principal's Task Force on Student Life and Learning at McGill." McGill University (December 2006): 17. Electronic. 9 July 2010.

² *Ibid.*, 7.

³ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Mendelson, Morton J. "Response to Question Regarding the Architecture Café." McGill Senate. Leacock Building (Room 232), Montreal. 22 Sept. 2010. Speech.

⁷ Robert, Henry M., Sarah Corbin. Robert, and Henry M. Robert. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*. [Philadelphia]: Perseus Pub., 2000: 106. Print.