

Minutes

Wednesday, February 24, 2021 20-21:07

Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. via the Zoom Conferencing Application.

PRESENT

Alli, Babatunde	Gonnerman, Laura	Ravenscroft, Brenda
Arseneault, Louis	Grignon, Chantal	Richard, Marc
Bartlett, Joan	Hastings, Kenneth	Riches, Caroline
Beauchamp, Yves	Hébert, Terence	Riddle-Merritte, Leela
Bede, Jacqueline	Hurtubise, Jacques	Rohrbach, Petra
Beech, Robin	Jorgensen, Jan	Rose, Jessica
Breau, Sébastien	Kemme, Bettina	Ruge-Murcia, Francisco
Brulé-Champagne, Emile	Kiester, Lucy	Salameh, Samer
Campbell, Angela	Kirk, Andrew	Salmasi, Kamal
Cook, Colleen	Komarova, Svetlana	Saumier, Geneviève
Crago, Martha	Kouchakji, Kristi	Sekhon, Harmehr
Cumming, Julie	Krishnamurthy, Srinivasan	Shor, Eran
Cummings, Beth	Labeau, Fabrice	Shrier, Alvin
Daryanani, Darshan	Lach, Lucyna	Snider, Laurie
Deschenes, Jean	Leckey, Robert	Sparks, Tabitha
Dias, Dahlia	Lennox, Bruce	Sroka-Fillion, Nathalie
Dorval Courchesne,	Loftus, Mary Lynne	Stephens, David
Noémie-Manuelle	Low, Bronwen	Subramanian, Narendra
Drouin, Susan	Manfredi, Christopher	Tessier, Adrienne
Earle, Jemark	McKenzie, Jeffrey	Theodore, David
Eidelman, David	Nalbantoglu, Josephine	Tureli, Ipek
Elbourne, Elizabeth	Ndao, Momar	Uttamchandani, Krishna
Elstein, Eleanor	Nicell, Jim	Vallée, Jean-Sébastien
Emami, Elham	Nilson, Laura	Voudouris, Nellie
Engle-Warnick, Jim	Nycum, Gillian	Weil, Carola
Eperjesi, Debbie	Nystrom, Derek	Weinstein, Marc
Faraj, Samer	Osiecki, Sophie	Willie, Bettina
Fortier, Suzanne	Parsons, Addy	Winer, Laura
Frizzle, Brooklyn	Perepichka, Dima	Yalovsky, Morty
Fronda, Michael	Quitoriano, Nathaniel	Zorychta, Edith
Geddes, Maiya Rachel	Ramnawaz, Shaainee	
Geitmann, Anja	Rassier, Dilson	

REGRETS: Bob Babinski, Tatiana Bedjanian, Gael Eakin, Alison Laywine, Arnav Manchanda, Michael Meighen, Ram Panda, Haoyi Qiu, Joella Reev, Martin Robillard, Jennifer Ronholm, Shaheen Shariff, Manon Vennat, Tracy Webb, Mu Rong Yang.

1. Welcoming Remarks

The Chair welcomed Senators to the seventh Senate meeting of the 2020-21 governance year. In light of the evolving situation regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19), the meeting was held virtually via the Zoom conferencing application. The Chair highlighted the guidelines for remote participation, which had been shared with Senators, noting that they were developed to enhance meeting effectiveness in a virtual format, while respecting the Senate Rules of Procedure. She mentioned that the audio portion of the Senate meeting was being livestreamed and the recording would be accessible until the approval of the meeting minutes.

2. Memorial Tributes: Professors David Ryan and William Purdy

Senator Lennox read the following memorial tribute for Professor Ryan, which Senate subsequently unanimously endorsed:

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Professor David Ryan, a Post-Retirement Professor in the Department of Physics. He passed away on September 28th, 2020. Professor David Ryan, a very talented and respected physicist at McGill University, will be remembered by his colleagues and students here and in other centres of research in Particle Physics in Canada and abroad.

David was an exceptional student in his secondary school in Quebec City before entering Queen's University where he received a Bachelor and Master's degree in Engineering Physics. During his years at Queen's, he was greatly influenced by Professor B. W. Sargent, a student of Rutherford and later, Director of Physics Research at The Chalk River Laboratory. For his PhD, David moved to The University of Birmingham where a high energy proton synchrotron was in operation.

After completion of his PhD studies in 1965, David accepted a Research Associate position at Cornell University. During this period of his career, he joined Professor D. H. White in experiments at Brookhaven National Laboratory. It was in this new challenge that David developed his skills in the techniques of Particle Physics and in the application of computers to the analysis of experimental data. Many students and colleagues at McGill were to benefit from his knowledge and experience acquired at Cornell and later at The Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory. David started at McGill in 1967 as an Assistant Professor and stayed at McGill for more than three decades until his retirement in 2001.

David was highly organized and systematic. In his research and teaching he strove to achieve the highest standard of precision and thoroughness. In this effort, he was usually successful and always much appreciated by his students and colleagues.

In a different but important aspect of David's life, he was a dedicated curler and skier, sports he had learned in his early life in Quebec.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his brother Peter, his sisters Louise and Marie as well as to his extended family members, his many friends, colleagues and all those whose lives he touched. He will be missed.

Senator Lennox then read the following memorial tribute for Professor Emeritus Purdy, which Senate subsequently unanimously endorsed:

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Dr. William Crossley Purdy, Emeritus Professor in the Department of Chemistry, McGill University, on October 30, 2019, after a prolonged illness.

Bill Purdy was born in 1930 in Brooklyn, New York and obtained his Ph.D. degree in Analytical Chemistry from M.I.T. in 1955 under the supervision of Professor David Hume. He immediately took up a position as an Instructor in Analytical Chemistry at the University of Connecticut and in 1958 moved, as an Assistant Professor, to University of Maryland where he eventually became a Full Professor and Head of the Analytical Chemistry Division. He served the country as a Consultant to the Surgeon General-U.S. Army (1959-70) and as a Science Advisor to the Food and Drug Administration (1967-69).

In 1976, Bill moved to Canada to become Professor of Analytical Chemistry in the Department of Chemistry at McGill. He retired in 2002 and, during his 26 years at McGill, he was appointed Sir William Macdonald Professor of Chemistry, and Associate Vice-Principal (Academic) (1986-91). His research mainly focused on clinical analytical chemistry involving electrochemistry, electrophoresis, high-pressure liquid chromatography and atomic absorption spectroscopy. He directed the research of 23 M.Sc. and 49 Ph.D. students, and published over 200 peer-reviewed papers, with over a 100 of them reporting his work at McGill. He is also known as an author of an important monograph “Electroanalytical Methods in Biochemistry”.

Bill was the recipient of several prestigious awards from the American Association of Clinical Chemistry and Canadian Society of Clinical Chemistry. He was named as a Fellow of the Chemical Institute of Canada, the Royal Society of Chemistry (U.K.), and was the founding member of the National Academy of Clinical Biochemistry.

We extend heartfelt condolences at this difficult time to his wife of 66 years, Myrna (affectionally known as Chris); his three remaining children Scott, Lisa and Lori; and his five grandchildren. Bill will be sorely missed by his many friends and scientific colleagues throughout the world.

3. Report of the Steering Committee (20:21-07)

Senate received the Report of the Steering Committee (20-21:07).

Item 1. Approval of Minutes of Senate – January 20, 2021 meeting.

Item 2. Speaking Rights. Upon approval of the report, speaking rights were granted to Ms. Martine Gauthier, Executive Director, Student Services; Dr. Vera Romano, Director Student Wellness Hub, Student Services; and Dr. Lina Di Genova, Director Strategy, Assessment and Evaluation, Student Services, for item IIB1 (Open Discussion); Dr. Christina Wolfson, Research Integrity Officer, and Me Line Thibault, General Counsel, Legal Services, for item IIB2 (503rd Report of the Academic Policy Committee); Dr. Richard Martin, Executive Director, Analysis, Planning, and Budget, for item IIB4 (Budget Planning 2021-2022 Report II); and Professor Patricia Hewlin, Ombudsperson for Students, for item IIB5.2 (Annual Report of the Ombudsperson for Students).

Item 3. Approval of the Agenda.

Item 4. Review of Questions and Motions. No questions or motions were submitted for the February Senate meeting.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the Report of the Steering Committee.

4. Business Arising from the January 20, 2021 Minutes

There was none.

5. Chair's Remarks

The Chair began her remarks by providing an update on the situation at McGill in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. She informed Senators that, further to the encouragement of the provincial government, the University was resuming the in-person academic activities that had been planned for the Winter semester, noting that remote alternatives continued to be available. With the study break fast approaching, the Chair reminded Senators that international travel restrictions were in effect and that non-essential travel within Quebec was discouraged, noting that University-sponsored travel remained suspended (with certain exceptions). She reported that the Spring Convocation ceremonies would be held virtually and that all outbound international exchanges and terms away for the Summer 2021 were cancelled. Finally, she mentioned that McGill was planning to return to in-person teaching as of Fall 2021 and that plans for a progressive return to on-campus work for administrative and support staff was underway.

Regarding government relations, the Chair indicated that McGill was working with the U15 and Universities Canada on updated recommendations for the pre-budget process. She also mentioned that domestic bio manufacturing was a priority for the Government of Canada and that the University was working to position itself as a key player in this area. At the provincial level, the Chair indicated that McGill had met with cabinet ministers to discuss the provincial budget. She shared that the government announced a new bursary to encourage students to persevere and to successfully complete their studies. Finally, she mentioned that several meetings were held with government officials regarding the New Vic Project, noting that the University's *dossier d'opportunité* was still under review and that the government's position was anticipated to be revealed in the March provincial budget.

Regarding external relations, the Chair spoke about her participation in the Davos Agenda virtual summit. She highlighted that reoccurring themes included “building back better” and net-zero.

Regarding community relations, the Chair informed Senators that 50 students from across the country (including five McGill students) had been named finalists for the inaugural McCall MacBain Scholarships, noting that up to 20 scholars would be chosen. She then spoke of her participation in several virtual campus events, including the annual John D. Thompson Entrepreneurial Development Seminar, a commemoration in memory of the 2017 Quebec City Mosque Attack, and Black History Month events.

The Chair concluded her remarks by giving highlights of the kudos circulated prior to the meeting. She congratulated Professor Mathieu Maheu-Giroux (Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics) who was one of four co-winners of Radio-Canada’s Scientist of the Year 2020. She mentioned that McGill was named one of Montreal’s Top Employers for the 13th consecutive year. She reported that there were additional donations that had not been processed when she announced the results of this year’s Centraide campaign at the last meeting, noting that in total, \$504,000 was raised. She congratulated the fundraising committee led by Senators Arseneault and Leckey and thanked all those who had donated. The Chair then congratulated Ms. Geneva Yang, an undergraduate International Development and Psychology student, on her leadership in founding a Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Student Hub at McGill. She shared that Dr. Lucy Gilbert, Director of Gynecologic Oncology at the MUHC, was named to the Top Women of Influence for 2021 and that Professor Cindy Blackstock (School of Social Work) was named one of Canada’s Top 50 most influential people by Maclean’s Magazine. Finally, she congratulated Professor Audrey Moores (Department of Chemistry) on receiving the Canadian Chemistry and Chemical Engineering Award for Green Chemistry and Professor Victoria Kaspi (Department of Physics) on being named Fellow of the American Astronomical Society.

Senator Riddle-Merritte asked whether the government considered the number of COVID-19 cases in residences when making its assessment regarding the return to campus. She also asked whether the prohibition on travel would remain in place during Fall 2021. The Chair stated that the government examined the situation within the general population, noting that there are fewer students in residences at other Quebec universities as most students begin their studies after Cégep. She stated that the number of cases due to work and study spaces are low and that many cases are due to socializing. She then indicated that the travel restrictions would depend on the directives from the federal government.

Senator Hébert commented that most COVID-19 cases were associated with hospitals and residences and asked how community transmission would be prevented when on-campus activity resumed. Senator Labeau stated that several possible scenarios were being explored, noting that the level of actual transmission, the likelihood of transmission in different situations as well as the vaccine rollout and efficiency would inform the plan. He stated that a clearer picture was expected to emerge as September approached. The Chair added that the return to campus would likely be gradual to ensure members of the McGill community remained safe.

Senator Daryanani asked what was meant by “academic activity” and whether remote alternatives would continue to be offered. He commented that some international students may be unable to travel and students living with their parents and grandparents could be worried

about putting their families at risk. Senator Labeau reiterated that different scenarios were being considered and would be re-evaluated as September approached. He stated that core academic activities would be prioritized, mainly teaching and learning activities and research activities. He mentioned that questions regarding the lessons learned from the pandemic with respect to what can and cannot be done efficiently online would be used in the planning process. Senator Labeau stated that the return to on-campus activity was not being prioritized over the health and well-being of members of the community and their families. He explained that a large portion of the population was expected to be vaccinated by September, particularly groups considered at-risk, and as such, the risk to household members would be limited.

Senator Nystrom asked if instructors, including Teaching Assistants, with health concerns would have the option to continue teaching online. Senator Manfred stated that reasonable accommodations would be made for employees with a documented health condition. Senator Rose noted that concerns from graduate students regarding the risk of exposing household members to COVID-19 when on-campus activities resumed had been dismissed by the administration in the past and asked if the University was considering changing its position on this matter. Senator Labeau stated that the impact on household members is not a valid reason for not returning to work. He explained that this decision was based on McGill being a low-risk environment for COVID-19 transmission, noting there have been zero cases of transmission over the last several months of operation.

Senator Alli commented that certain universities have implemented initiatives to support incoming international students with their arrival to Canada, including covering the cost for their quarantine hotel stay, and asked if McGill had any similar plans. Senator Labeau responded that the University was looking at the possibility of enhancing student aid packages and was in discussions with the federal and provincial governments to ease requirements for international students or to provide alternative solutions. He mentioned that the booking process for the quarantine hotels was expected to improve shortly, as the government was strengthening its processes.

Senator Daryanani asked if a communication would be issued addressing some of the concerns raised regarding the return to on-campus activity. The Chair indicated that the Emergency Operations Committee had been issuing messages to the McGill community on a regular basis and would continue to do so. The Chair also assured Senators that there would be opportunities in the coming months for members of the community to further discuss the return to campus at other venues (such as a town hall), as the planning for Fall 2021 continued.

SECTION II

Part "A" –Questions and Motions by Members

There were none.

Part "B" –Motions and Reports from Organs of University Government

Open Session

1. Open Discussion: Student Academic Experience (D20-34)

Ms. Gauthier introduced the topic of the open discussion on behalf of the Senate Committee on Student Services. She mentioned that Student Services focuses on improving student well-being through an approach focused on awareness, prevention and early intervention. She explained that student well-being is envisioned as a wheel with many spokes that work together to maintain overall well-being (the “wellness wheel”): mental, academic, career, social, cultural, physical, financial, and spiritual wellness. She informed Senators that best practices and research in student affairs suggest that connecting holistic wellness to the student academic experience and taking a community approach to student well-being is optimal for student success.

Ms. Gauthier then highlighted some of the results of the surveys developed by Dr. Lina Di Genova, Director of Assessment and Evaluation for Student Services, and Natalie Phillips-Elgar, Planning Analyst from the Academic Planning and Budget Office, in order to plan and adapt student supports during the pandemic. She noted that the impact of COVID-19 would likely continue post-pandemic, especially considering students have missed out on expected career and skills building opportunities and are facing an uncertain economic future.

Senators then engaged in small group discussions on key questions related to the open discussion topic using the breakout rooms on the Zoom conferencing application.

The first question focused on the strategies used to maintain a strong commitment to student academic success during the pandemic. Senators noted that online activities organized by student associations (e.g., tutoring sessions; trivia nights) and small group discussions during classes helped develop connections amongst students and kept them engaged. However, some other activities were not as successful, such as certain in-person classes and advising (since most activities were virtual) and certain events and workshops led by various units. Senators spoke favourably about the University’s efforts to collect information on the student experience throughout the pandemic and use the feedback to adapt to student needs. Other strategies that worked well were the increased communication between faculty, staff and students (whether it was at the level of individual classes, student town halls or through student associations) and the higher degree of coordination and integration of activities throughout the University. Senators recognized that, despite the challenges, critical services to students including Student Services and library access continued in an effective manner and some services, such as the provision of health and advising services, were enhanced from the remote format of the work. Although there were no layoffs, it was noted that the hiring freeze resulted in an increased range of responsibilities for many staff members. It was suggested that further support be provided to administrative and support staff so that they can, in turn, better support students. Many students enjoyed the flipped and blended classroom approaches, Zoom breakout sessions, guest speakers and multiple low-stakes assessments. They also appreciated the flexibility of the additional Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) option. However, some students felt overwhelmed at times by the number of different platforms that they had to use, the little to no transition time between

activities and their increased workload. Instructors indicated that they experienced difficulties moderating the workload for students, dealing with issues of academic integrity and not being able to see their students. It was noted that discussing their struggles with their students helped students feel they were not alone and helped them talk about their own struggles.

The second question focused on the steps that should be taken to encourage a sense of shared responsibility within the University when it comes to promoting student academic success and well-being. Senators recognized that this was a shared responsibility between faculty, staff and students and spoke in favour of enhanced coordination and communication between these stakeholders as well as efforts to understand each other's perspectives and build connections. Collegiality in the decision-making process and mutual trust were identified as essential elements to foster change. Senators also highlighted the importance of improving awareness of existing services and resources, ensuring consistent academic practices across the University and providing sufficient support to instructors. Senators encouraged sharing strategies that work well and implementing best practices regarding COVID-19 remote learning in syllabi. Finally, it was suggested that the University move away from a culture that emphasizes resilience to one of flexibility and compassion (for example, by maintaining some of the measures that have been taken even after the pandemic ends, namely extended deadlines, recorded lectures, non-mandatory attendance for lectures and increased S/U flexibility).

2. 503rd Report of the Academic Policy Committee

(D20-35)

Senator Manfredi presented this report for Senate's consideration. The report contained proposed revisions to the *Regulations Concerning the Investigation of Research Misconduct* and the *Regulations on Graduate Student Supervision*.

Senator Richard asked how the new requirement for the Panel for the Investigation of Research Misconduct to be composed of a diverse group of members reflective of the diversity of the University community would be operationalized. Dr. Wolfson indicated that it would be the responsibility of the Senate Nominating Committee. Similarly, Senator Hastings noted that, going forward, the Senate Nominating Committee would have to ensure that half the Panel was bilingual (French/English). He highlighted potential issues that could be encountered, notably that the level of second-language competency may vary over a wide range with self-reported bilingualism.

Regarding the scope of the policy, Senator Hastings noted that the proposed definition of the term "Member of the University Community" excluded staff of affiliated institutions who are not staff of the University itself and asked whether any students have such staff members as research supervisors. Me Thibault responded that McGill students can have co-supervisors that are not staff of the University, stressing that at least one of the co-supervisors would be a member of the University Community. She explained that the revised wording was meant to target the Regulations to people over whom McGill had jurisdiction. She added that in cases of cross-appointments or collaborative work involving more than one institution, the Research Integrity Officers of the institutions would determine which institution was best placed to conduct the inquiry and investigation, if warranted.

Senator Perepichka noted that the determination by the Committee on Research Misconduct on whether Research Misconduct occurred is made by a majority vote, with the chair of the Committee having a casting vote in the event of a tie. As the Committee was composed of three members and a chair, he noted that there could be situations where there would be either no resolutions (if the chair abstains from voting) or the outcome would depend on one person which presents a certain risk in light of the seriousness of a finding of research misconduct. Dr. Wolfson indicated that in practice, decisions were reached by consensus and did not believe a chair would abstain from voting. She stated that increasing the number of members on the Committee would be problematic as it would result in delays.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved and recommended to the Board of Governors for approval, the proposed revisions to the Regulations Concerning the Investigation of Research Misconduct.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the proposed revisions to the Regulations on Graduate Student Supervision.

3. Report of the Senate Nominating Committee (D20-36)

Senator Manfredi presented this report for Senate's consideration. The report contained recommendations for appointments to Senate Standing Committees and Committees arising from University Regulations. It also contained proposed revisions to the Senate Steering Committee Terms of Reference and a proposal to create a working group to review the Joint Board-Senate Committee on Equity's Terms of Reference.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the recommendations contained in the Report of the Senate Nominating Committee (D20-36).

4. Budget Planning 2021-2022 Report II (D20-37)

Senator Manfredi delivered the second of three presentations concerning the FY22 University budget for Senate's information. He reminded Senators that the final budget for FY21 included an anticipated unrestricted funds deficit of \$13.1M. He shared some updates on FY21, including that total enrolment for Fall 2020 was comparable to Fall 2019, that early signs indicated stability for the Winter term, and that no major variances in the total expected revenues and expenses were anticipated. With respect to FY22, he stated that there was continued COVID-driven uncertainty impacting all primary revenue sources (i.e., Quebec government funding, tuition and fees, and the sales of goods and services). He explained that to deal with the many unknowns, assumptions were being established for the main revenue sources and expenses using three scenarios (pessimistic, realistic and optimistic) to set the amount of the contingency. He then presented an overview of the planning process (enrolment targets, non-compressible budgets, deregulated tuition increases, academic review and renewal planning, other incremental budget allocations, financial review of Faculties and units, and finalization of the FY2022 budget), the major assumptions and scenarios being considered as well as the uncertainties and risks.

In response to Senator Riddle-Merritte’s question on where the information on deregulated tuition was found, Senator Manfredi indicated that it was on the Student Accounts website.

Senator Kirk suggested including an executive summary highlighting the current financial status of the University and indicating dollar figures for the three scenarios to provide a better idea of the magnitude of the changes. Senator Manfredi indicated that the monetary amounts were not clear when the assumptions were developed, but based on the preliminary information available, there was not a great difference between the pessimistic and optimistic scenarios.

Senator Hastings asked what would constitute the largest expenditure change from FY21 to FY22. Senator Manfredi replied that it would be meeting agreements on salary increases (non-compressible expenses). He also mentioned that the biggest uncertainty would be the sale of goods and services, noting that there had been a \$60M decrease in revenue in that area last year.

5. Annual Reports (2019-2020)

5.1. Annual Report on Student Life and Learning (D20-38)

Senator Labeau presented this report for Senate’s information. The report provided an overview of the organizational structure of Student Life and Learning and highlights of the unit’s activities in 2019-2020. It also emphasized activities undertaken by Student Life and Learning in support of the University’s COVID-19 response.

5.2 Annual Report of the Ombudsperson (D20-39)

Professor Hewlin presented this report for information, in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Ombudsperson for Students. The report provided an overview of the activities of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Students from June 1st, 2019 to May 31st, 2020, including relevant statistics regarding inquiries and complaints. Professor Hewlin stressed the importance of effective communication. She stated that poor communication was the underlying issue of most of the issues brought to the Office of the Ombudsperson for Students and encouraged Senators to be mindful of power dynamics and how they communicate.

6. Other Business

There being no other business to deal with, on a motion duly proposed and seconded, the meeting ended at 4:50 p.m.

END

The complete documents, including presentations at Senate, are kept as part of the official minutes.