

Minutes

Wednesday, January 19, 2022 21-22:06

Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on Wednesday, January 19, 2022, at 2:30 p.m. via the Zoom Conferencing Application.

PRESENT

Ahsan, Arshiyana	Geitmann, Anja	Qiao, George
Arseneault, Louis	Girard-Lauriault, Pierre-Luc	Quitoriano, Nathaniel
Bartlett, Joan	Grignon, Chantal	Rassier, Dilon
Beauchamp, Yves	Guyatt, Claire	Ravenscroft, Brenda
Bede, Jacqueline	Hastings, Kenneth	Richard, Marc
Beech, Robin	Hunter, Mary	Riches, Caroline
Behzadi, Houman	Hurtubise, Jacques	Robillard, Martin
Blanchette, Mathieu	Karaminassian, Roubina	Rodriguez Saenz, Maria
Breau, Sébastien	Khoury, Lara	Rohrbach, Petra
Campbell, Angela	Kiester, Lucy	Ruge-Murcia, Francisco
Chan, Yolande E.	Kirk, Andrew	Sekhon, Harmehr
Chen, Jennifer	Kouchakji, Kristi	Shariff, Shaheen
Collins, Paige	Labeau, Fabrice	Snider, Laurie
Cook, Colleen	Leckey, Robert	Sroka-Fillion, Nathalie
Cumming, Julie	Lennox, Bruce	Steinhauer, Karsten
Cummings, Beth	Levey, Margaret	Subramanian, Narendra
Czemmel, Nancy	Levine, Alissa	Theodore, David
Deschenes, Jean	Levy, Jacob	Tureli, Ipek
Dirks, Melanie	Low, Bronwen	Vachon, Brigitte
Downie, Claire	Manfredi, Christopher	Vallée, Jean-Sébastien
Drouin, Susan	Mantere, Saku	Voudouris, Nellie
Dworek, Nikulas	McKenzie, Jeffrey	Weil, Carola
Eakin, Gael	Moore, Catriona	Weinstein, Marc
Eidelman, David	Nalbantoglu, Josephine	Werber, Joshua
Elstein, Eleanor	Ndao, Momar	Willie, Bettina
Emami, Elham	Nicell, Jim	Winer, Laura
Eperjesi, Debbie	Nilson, Laura	Wright, Risann
Fortier, Suzanne	Nycum, Gillian	Yang, Kerry
Frona, Michael	Nystrom, Derek	Zorychta, Edith
Geddes, Maiya Rachel	Perepichka, Dima	

REGRETS: Darelle Agtang, Bob Babinski, Martha Crago, Elizabeth Elbourne, Jim Engle-Warnick, Samer Faraj, Terence Hébert, Miranda Hickman, Srinivasan Krishnamurthy, Lucyna Lach, John McCall MacBain, Carla-Elvira Olteanu, Ram Panda, Addy Parsons, Hossein Poorhemati, Jennifer Ronholm, Samer Salameh, Eran Shor, Manon Vennat, Daniel Weinstock.

1. Welcoming Remarks

The Chair welcomed Senators to the sixth Senate meeting of the 2021-22 governance year. The meeting was held virtually via the Zoom conferencing application. The Chair wished Senators a happy and healthy New Year. She reminded Senators of the announcement made earlier in the month of her intention to step down as Principal and Vice-Chancellor on August 31, 2022, noting that the timing would mark the beginning of the Fall semester as well as, hopefully, the end of the COVID-19 pandemic

The Chair then mentioned that the Senate Rules of Procedure prohibit the recording of the sound or images, and the communication or posting of Senate deliberations. She indicated 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

Senator Eidelman read the following memorial tribute for Professor Olli Miettinen, which Senate subsequently unanimously endorsed:

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Dr. Olli Miettinen, a renowned epidemiologist and thought leader, on November 24, 2021. Dr. Miettinen was a Professor in the Department of Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health and in the Department of Medicine, at McGill University for over 30 years.

Born in Piikkiö, Finland, Dr. Miettinen obtained his medical degree at the University of Helsinki in 1962. As a medical student, he observed how the medical community at the time undermined the significance of statistics and its application in medical research. Determined to bridge this gap, Dr. Miettinen pursued further education in epidemiology and biostatistics, obtaining his Master of Public Health, Master of Science and PhD degrees at the University of Minnesota.

In 1966, Dr. Miettinen joined the faculty at Harvard University. After appointments as Assistant and then Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the Harvard School of Public Health, he was promoted to Full Professor in 1974, a position he held for over a decade. In 1985, Dr. Miettinen moved to McGill University as Professor of Epidemiology and of Medicine, a position he held until being appointed Professor Emeritus upon his retirement in 2016.

Dr. Miettinen is known as the developer of the theory of epidemiological research and was among its very few teachers. In addition to his contributions to epidemiological theory, his areas of expertise included the epidemiological theory of medicine, public health and medical research, which have contributed to the knowledge base of scientific medicine. He published numerous papers in the top journals in epidemiology, medicine, and public health, as well as eight textbooks, that continue to be cited by scholars around the world.

He received Honorary Doctorate degrees from the University of Tampere (Finland) in 1982 and from the University of Athens (Greece) in 1998.

Dr. Miettinen was passionate about technology and mathematics and was an avid writer. Throughout his career, he was in great demand to teach not only at McGill but in universities around the world. His greatest satisfaction came from teaching the many students enrolled in the courses he offered, both here and abroad. He continues to be recognized for his pivotal contributions to epidemiology, in areas such as cardiovascular disease etiology and prevention, cancer screening, and the identification of adverse effects of medications.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Dr. Miettinen's wife, The Honourable Judith Seidman, and his family, as well as to his friends, colleagues, and all those whose lives he touched. He will be greatly missed.

3. Report of the Steering Committee (21:22-05)

Senate received the Report of the Steering Committee (21-22:05).

Item 1. Approval of Minutes of Senate – December 1, 2021 meeting.

The minutes of Senate were approved with a modification proposed by Senator Hastings to page 11 of the minutes, item 2.1, third paragraph to replace the word under-distribution with over-distribution.

Item 2. Speaking Rights.

Upon approval of the report, speaking rights were granted to Mr. Richard Martin, Executive Director, Analysis, Planning, and Budget, for item IIB2 (Budget Planning 2022-2023: Report I); and Professor Christopher Buddle, Associate Provost, Teaching & Academic Programs, for item IIB3 (Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on COVID Academic Planning and Policies).

Item 3. Approval of the Agenda.

Item 4. Review of Questions and Motions

No questions or motions were submitted for the January 19, 2022 meeting of Senate.

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

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

Secretary's note: Following verification, the minutes of Senate were corrected to incorporate a modification proposed by Senator Hastings. Please see agenda item 3, *Item 1. Approval of Minutes of Senate – December 1, 2021 meeting.*

5. Chair's Remarks

The Chair began her remarks with a campus update. She indicated that the University's highest priorities continue to be the safety of the community, and the quality of the learning experience for students. She reported that in-person teaching activities would begin to resume as of January 24, 2022, and that most instructors were able to elect to perform up to 20% of their teaching online. In light of this, she reminded Senators that flexible pedagogical accommodations were available and suggested that an Open Discussion be held on the subject at the February meeting of Senate. She then reported that education is being prioritized by the Government of Quebec, and that their support largely afforded the University the ability to retain parts of its workforce. She also reported that the Government is assisting students through scholarships and investments in services related to mental health. She mentioned that she had the opportunity to attend a panel which featured Dr. Fauci and Stephane Bancel, the CEO of Moderna. The Chair indicated that they were cautiously optimistic about the future of the COVID-19 pandemic, before turning to Senator Labeau to provide an update regarding campus preparation for the return of in-person activities.

Senator Labeau reported that the Fall 2021 semester had ended positively, despite the arrival of the Omicron variant near the end of December. He shared that, on average, there were 25-30,000 students and staff on campus daily, and that 8-10,000 of those were frequenting the Library. He went on to indicate that contagion was low on campus, thanks to adequate safety measures that continue to be in place (including masks, social distancing, and augmented ventilation).

He reminded Senators that, during the Summer prior to the Fall 2021 semester, there was a great deal of anxiety in the community regarding the return to campus. He then offered reassurance that despite these initial fears, from a contagion perspective, the Fall semester was highly successful. He shared his optimism that the Winter 2022 semester would follow a similar trend.

Senator Labeau then repeated that in-person activities were to begin to resume on January 24, 2022, mentioning that while the Government had allowed such activities since January 17, it was deemed important that the University community should receive ample notice in advance of resumption.

He reported that PCR testing is no longer available to the general public, and that rapid tests are, for now, the recommended tool for confirming positivity in symptomatic individuals. He also shared that contact tracing was now to be carried out by individuals, and that the recommended isolation period had been lowered to five days, from ten, previously.

Senator Labeau mentioned that while January's teaching activities thus far had been done online, the University was not closed. During the week of January 3, 2022, it was reported that around six thousand individuals were on campus daily, and during the week of January 17th, there were, on average, ten thousand individuals on campus. In-person functions at those times included research, tier one teaching activities, and essential Administrative and Support Staff duties.

He shared that courses with over two hundred attendees will continue to take place online (unless the instructor had opted-in for in-person teaching), before reiterating that instructors have the freedom to delegate up to 20% of their teaching in a remote fashion over the semester.

Senator Labeau then indicated that safety measures would remain in place, including residence wastewater testing and ventilation support. He shared that the functions of the rapid test clinic, which had been operating out of the Trottier building, are paused until further notice. However, in line with current public health guidelines, the clinic is to be redeployed within residences, for use by symptomatic inhabitants. He also noted that any individual who has symptoms associated with COVID-19, but does not have access to a rapid test, should assume that they are positive and self-isolate for five days. He went on to ask that any member of the University community who is positive, or deems themselves to be positive, to kindly inform the Case Management Group. Given the reliance on self-reporting, he indicated that the case numbers reported on the web dashboard would differ from the true number of infections on campus, though trends would still be able to be identified through averages.

Senator Labeau concluded his update by informing Senators that an MRO email was forthcoming regarding the activities of Administrative and Support staff in relation to the progressive resumption of in-person academic activities, mentioning that a goal of the University is to maintain a low density of Administrative and Support staff within campus buildings.

The Chair then continued with her remarks, noting, on the topic of Government relations, that mandate letters were issued to Ministers at the end of the year. The letter issued to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, François-Philippe Champagne, included mention of the modernization of the federal research funding ecosystem, as well as the creation of 1000 new Canada Research Chairs (CRC), a number of which would likely go to McGill, pending their inclusion in the 2022 Budget. She then invited Senators to read the letter at their leisure.

Continuing on the topic of Canada Research Chairs, she mentioned that nine new and eight renewed McGill CRCs were granted by the Minister, and that one of these individuals, Noemie-Manuelle Dorval Courchesne was called upon in a virtual roundtable to present her research. The Chair extended her congratulations to all new and renewed McGill CRCs.

The Chair reported that the Desautels Faculty of Management had received a gift from alumnus David Laidley (BCom'67), in the amount of \$5M to establish the Laidley Centre for Business Ethics.

She also reported that the 2021 Centraide campaign had exceeded its goal of raising \$425 000, ending the year at a running total of \$436 000. She congratulated the Centraide committee co-chairs, Senator Arsenaault and Senator Geitmann, and thanked all Senate members who had donated.

The Chair concluded her remarks with community kudos, mentioning Morris Goodman, Professor Roderick McInnes, and Governor Emerita Harriet Stairs, all of whom were appointed to the Order of Canada by Governor-General Mary Simon. The Governor-General also presented Ebrahim Noroozi (MSc'78) with the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers. She went on to acknowledge two McGill researchers, Professor Michel Biron and Professor Susanne Lajoie, who had received ACFAS research prizes for their exceptional contributions to their fields. Finally, she mentioned three McGill-led initiatives that graced the Quebec Science Top 10 List for 2021, namely, a study

on novel treatment for Triple Negative Breast Cancer, a study on self-pollinating flowers, and a study aiming to create softer brain implants.

Senator Nystrom began by thanking the Chair and Senator Labeau. He expressed concern that the return to in-person activities on January 24th would be disruptive, and shared his decision to teach online for the next two weeks. He indicated a desire to adhere to the guidelines on student accommodation but mentioned a sense of fatigue in his department when it comes to making complex plans and decisions on short timelines. He stated that he had been contacted by many students regarding departmental policies on remote learning and/or asking for lists of courses that offered remote capability, and that he was unable to impart the information they sought. He reported that some students were having a hard time adjusting to the current learning situation. He expressed concern regarding the Omicron variant's transmission within classrooms and indicated that in-person activities should have been postponed until after reading week.

Senators Quitariano and Downie echoed Senator Nystrom's comments about the struggle with the return to campus activities. Senator Quitariano mentioned that it would be prudent to see how the situation evolves over time. He also noted that the 20% online instruction option was not available to all professors in all Faculties, mentioning specifically that the Faculty of Engineering was not adhering to that accommodation. Senator Ahsan added that students' emotional considerations were not being acknowledged enough to constitute an inclusive community.

Senator Elbourne expressed a desire to bolster IT support for professors who may be required to offer hybrid instruction, indicating that this is important for the accommodation of students who are not able to attend class in-person. She reported that it can be difficult to contact IT services, and that it would be helpful to have assistance in the classroom.

Professor Buddle responded to Senator Elbourne that Faculties were directly allocated additional IT resources to support instructors. He then requested that the term 'hybrid' not be used, as, at the November meeting of Senate, it was defined that 'zooming in' students to a class in session should be referred to as 'Online Synchronous Participation'. He mentioned that some faculties hired remote learning assistants, and that direct resources currently exist. He urged those unaware to reach out to Faculty Deans for additional information.

Echoing the concerns raised by Senators Nystrom and Downie, Senator Dworek inquired, on behalf of immunocompromised/quarantining students, if notes from the Office for Students with Disabilities could be made available for non-recorded classes that do not offer Online Synchronous Participation.

Senator Subramanian inquired if universities held the autonomy to maintain online teaching for longer than the Government requires, and if it was an option that McGill had considered.

The Chair responded by stating that the University does have some flexibility, which was why in-person activities were to resume on January 24th, in lieu of January 17th, as permitted by the Government.

Senator Eidelman expressed his understanding of the concerns relating to the Omicron variant, indicating that it is indeed more transmissible, but urged caution in concluding that this fact meant that it is equally dangerous. He reminded Senators that the University boasted a high vaccination rate, and that third doses were available and should be taken as soon as possible. He asked Senators to consider a balance of risks, indicating that the best option for learning is to get those students who are able to return, to return. He concluded by sharing that the risk of community transmission is never zero, and that individuals may contract COVID-19 just about anywhere. He stressed that with proper health measures in place, it is reasonable for the vast majority of students and staff to return to campus.

Senator Werber echoed Senator Eidelman's balance of risk comments, mentioning the costs of precautionary measures. He inquired if the University would consider supplying N95 masks.

Senator Eidelman imparted that N95 do boast high levels of filtration, though the most important aspect to consider is mask fit. He urged Senators to ensure that their masks fit well, no matter if they are procedural or N95s. Mentioning that procedural masks are still highly recommended for non-vigorous activity, he deferred to Senator Cummings for further comments.

Senator Cummings responded that N95 masks are uncomfortable, though they are valuable in a hospital setting when dealing directly with patients. She also mentioned that fourth doses of vaccine are forthcoming for those individuals who are immunocompromised.

Senator Mantere added that he had witnessed students' difficulties with continued online coursework. He reported that he intended to return to campus as soon as possible and was looking forward to meeting his students.

Professor Buddle mentioned that the accommodations framework is constantly shifting, for both long-term and short-term cases. He recommended that Senator Dworek's constituents reach out to the OSD regarding his inquiry, indicating that a case-by-case management approach exists for concerns akin to the one proposed.

The Chair thanked members for the discussion and comments.

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. 509th Report of the Academic Policy Committee (D21-28)

Senator Manfredi presented this report for Senate’s consideration. The report contained recommendations from the Academic Policy Committee (APC) to approve a Graduate Certificate in Cybersecurity within the Faculty of Arts.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the creation of the Graduate Certificate in Cybersecurity (15 cr.)

2. Budget Planning 2022-2023: Report I (D21-29)

Senator Manfredi presented this report for Senate’s information. He shared that the Budget Report I was dual-purpose, as it provides an update on how the University is tracking with regard to the current fiscal year’s budget, and outlines the preparation timeline for the budget of the upcoming fiscal year, as well as any risks or issues that are being considered.

He reported that the Board of Governors approved an operating (unrestricted fund) budget with an anticipated deficit of \$9.8M, including a \$15M contingency for FY22. He indicated that the contingency would be used first to support measures that ensure campus safety with respect to the pandemic.

Regarding FY23, Senator Manfredi reported that the University plans to present a balanced budget to the Board of Governors, and that this budget will include the introduction of a Graduate Enrolment Driven Incentive that will increase funding for Graduate Excellence Fellowships and other general budget allocations to Faculties.

Highlighting the importance of strategic enrolment, Senator Manfredi stated that the University’s general operating revenues are critically enrolment-driven, mentioning that the University’s Quebec grants are also driven by enrolment, as well as revenues from tuition and fees. With respect to FY23, Senator Manfredi indicated that top priorities for FY23 include continuing to maintain a safe environment for students, faculty, and staff, noting that costs relating to pandemic recovery would certainly be covered. Teaching, research, and critical operations were also highlighted.

Concluding his presentation, Senator Manfredi mentioned that restrictions on international student mobility may affect aspects of the University’s strategic enrolment plan, especially with consideration to deregulated individuals.

Senator Kirk inquired if other universities are seeing reductions in international student numbers, and if it was believed to be related to the pandemic, or if it was a longer-term trend.

Senator Manfredi responded that it was due in part to the pandemic, though he expressed that it may be a longer-term trend with regard to students from China. He went to share that the University boasts a diverse portfolio of international students, with no country representing more than 26-27% of the overall group.

3. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on COVID Academic Planning and Policies (D21-30)

Senator Campbell and Professor Buddle presented this report for Senate's information. Noting that the Committee was halfway through its mandate, Senator Campbell offered an overview of activities thus far. Firstly, she mentioned the motion which was carried at the November meeting of Senate outlining the parameters for teaching in the Winter semester, noting that additional resources were provided to faculties to support Online Synchronous Participation. Secondly, she reported that the Committee had developed a recommendation to the Provost (which was subsequently accepted), regarding protocol for instructors living with dependants who may be vulnerable to COVID-19-related health complications. Senator Campbell reported that several requests were received regarding this protocol. Lastly, she mentioned that the Committee continues to work to enhance accommodations for both students and instructors. She also offered a reminder to Senators that Teaching and Learning Services hosts drop-in sessions for instructors to address concerns relating to instruction.

Professor Buddle addressed the proposed forthcoming Open Discussion at Senate, asking Senators to consult constituents in advance in preparation for a robust discussion. He shared that any individual may email the Committee at covidadhoc@mcgill.ca to provide feedback or pose questions.

Senator Rohrbach added that the minutes of all meetings of the Committee are available online, noting that, for the moment, the minutes of the previous two meetings are not yet posted.

Senator Kirk expressed his appreciation for the Committee's work, and asked that the Committee's minutes be updated online as soon as possible. Regarding instructors with vulnerable dependants, he inquired as to how the Committee was handling new Omicron concerns, given that the deadline to apply for accommodations had passed.

Senator Campbell indicated that the minutes were shortly forthcoming, and that they would include topic headings for readers' convenience. Regarding new Omicron requests, she mentioned that Deans had been asked to be flexible, and that the Committee had entertained new requests as late as last week. She indicated that the deadline was in place to allow students to make informed decisions with respect to their education in advance of the end of the add/drop period. She went on to impart that new requests should go to respective Faculty Deans, who would then consult the Committee.

Senator Hastings thanked the members of the Committee before urging Senators to look over the Committee's minutes, noting that the pandemic situation evolves at a rapid pace. He recommended that in advance of the Open Discussion, Senators should avail themselves of the Committee's current activities.

Senator Quitariano suggested that Omicron be considered more strongly by the Committee, as the effects of it were not known before the Holidays.

Senator Campbell responded by mentioning that the Committee's decisions are underpinned by public health guidelines.

4. Annual Reports

4.1 Student Life and Learning (D21-31)

Senator Labeau presented the Annual Report on Student Life and Learning for Senate's information. He highlighted the work done by the staff at Student Life and Learning, noting that their efforts had been valuable to the University over the course of the pandemic. He mentioned that Student Housing and Hospitality Services had continued to operate residences efficiently through difficult circumstances. He went on to note that the Dean of Students' office has been working with individual students to resolve issues using a case management approach. He reported that Enrolment Services had weathered challenging recruitment seasons, rebounding since the onset of the pandemic. He also mentioned that convocations had also been affected by the pandemic, and reminded Senators that the first in-person convocation ceremony post-pandemic took place in November of last year. He addressed calls to reopen sports activities by sharing that the University had been doing all they could to adapt to the ever-changing health measures.

4.2 Policy on Harassment and Discrimination (D21-32)

Senator Campbell presented the Annual Report on the Policy on Harassment and Discrimination for Senate's information. She began by mentioning that the minutes of the January 5, 2022 meeting minutes of the Ad Hoc Committee on COVID Academic Planning and Policies had just become available online. She went on to report that, over the most recent reference year, the Policy was reviewed and heavily revised. She described the new outcomes of the revision, firstly noting the creation of the Office for Mediation and Reporting, which is now responsible for receiving and responding to inquiries about, and formal reports of, discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence involving members of the University community. She reported that the office also provides information on reporting processes, and referrals to relevant University resources and support services. Secondly, Senator Campbell mentioned that the professionalization of the investigative process had been augmented through the appointment of a full-time Harassment and Discrimination Officer for the McGill community, thus, volunteer assessors are no longer relied on to carry out investigations under the Policy. Thirdly, she shared that the scope of the Policy had been extended. She then described the key data captured by the report. She concluded her presentation by thanking Sinead Hunt, the Associate Director of the OMR, and her team.

4.3 Policy against Sexual Violence

(D21-33)

Senator Campbell presented the Annual Report on the Policy against Sexual Violence for Senate's information. She shared that the Policy focuses on best practices on building a healthy, safe, and inclusive campus climate. She mentioned that the professionalization of services for supporting those individuals who have experienced harm is a tenet of the Policy, and that the educational aspects of the Policy are carried out through in-person trainings and workshops for individuals in leadership roles. She noted that the educational efforts are tied to the 'It Takes All of Us' module, and outlined some challenges in achieving higher completion rates of the module within precise demographics. Senator Campbell distinguished the differences between disclosures and reports, and noted that in the reference year in question, there were 149 disclosures, 6 reports, as well as 1 additional investigation. She noted that most individuals filing reports are students, against other students. She indicated that the severity of disciplinary measures varied based on the gravity of findings, and whether or not the respondent had an existing disciplinary record. She concluded her presentation by thanking Émilie Marcotte, the University's Sexual Violence Response Advisor, and her team.

4.4 Advisory Council on the Charter of Students' Rights

(D21-34)

Senator Levy presented the Annual Report on the Advisory Council on the Charter of Students' Rights for Senate's information. He indicated that the Council did not convene during the 2020-2021 governance year, as no requests for investigations were received.

5. Report from the Board of Governors to Senate

(D21-35)

Senator Rohrbach presented this report for Senate's information. The Report provided an overview of matters considered by the Board on December 16, 2021 as well as the Executive Committee on October 28, 2021, December 6, 2021 and January 12, 2022. Senator Rohrbach highlighted a number of items approved by the Board and the Executive Committee, including the appointment of the Chair of the Board of Governors, the re-appointment of the Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors and the appointment of a new member-at-large of the Board.

6. Other Business

There being no other business to deal with, on a motion duly proposed and seconded, the meeting ended at 4:31 p.m.

END

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