McGILL UNIVERSITY **SENATE**

Minutes

Tuesday, February 19, 2013 12-13:06

Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on February 19, 2013, at 2:30 p.m. in the Robert Vogel Council Room (Room 232, Leacock Building.)

PRESENT
Aitken, Ellen
Algieri, Stefano
Azmy, George
Bachelet, Stephanie
Beheshti, Jamshid
Bell, Graham
Bouchard, Adam
Boyer, Daniel
Breitner, Leslie
Carriere, Segre
Cook, Colleen
Costopoulos, Andre
Covo, David
Cowan, Brian
Dedek, Helge
Di Paola, Antonia
Dinel, Haley
Doucette, Elaine
Dudek, Gregory
Espinosa, Rodrigo
Ferrie, Frank
Galaty, John
Goldstein, Rose
Grant, Martin
Grütter, Peter
Gutman, Jimmy
Harman, Christopher
Harpp, David
Heath, Nancy
Hebert, Terence
Henry, Evan
Hepburn, Allan
Hurtubise, Jacques
Hynes, Andrew
Jonsson, Wilbur
Jutras, Daniel
Kalil, Alex
Kirby, Torrance
Kreiswirth, Martin
Kucij, Maya
Kuzaitis, Ruth
Lane-Mercier, Gillian
Lennox, Bruce
Lowther, David
Lu, Catherine
Manfredi, Christopher
Marcil, Olivier
Masi, Anthony
McCullogh, Mary Jo
Mendelson, Morton
Michaud, Mark
Misra, Arun
Mooney, Jonathan
Munroe-Blum, Heather (*Chair*)
Ngadi, Michael
Nystrom, Derek
O'May, Che
Pekeles, Gary
Perrault, Hélène
Peterson, Kathryn
Potter, Judith
Price, Cynthia
Redel, Josh
Richard, Marc
Riches, Caroline
Rush, Avi
Sinacore, Ada
Snider, Laurie
Srinidhi, Nikhil
Stromvik, Martina
Thordardottir, Elin
Todd, Peter
White, Lydia
Wolfson, Christina
Yalovsky, Morty
Zhang, Ji
Zidel, Max
Zorychta, Edith
Strople, Stephen *(Secretary)*

REGRETS: Paul Allison, Laurence Belanger, Daniel Bernard, Andrew Boudreau, Renzo Cecere, Stuart Cobbett, Claudio Cuello, Michael Di Grappa, David Eidelman, Sean Ferguson, Daniel Gagnier, Charles Gale, Kalle Gehring, Brendan Gillon, Shannon Herrick, Ashraf Ismail, Andrew Kirk, David Lametti, Eric Laverdiere, Mark Lefsrud, Chandra Madramootoo, Mo Nasr, Nigel Roulet, Melvin Schloss, Honora Shaughnessy, Arnold Steinberg, Isabel Vivas, Marc Weinstein, Boran Xu.

SECTION I

The Chair reminded Senate that this meeting was being transmitted live via the web to members of the McGill community. She informed Senate that this was Senator Peterson's last meeting. On behalf of Senate, she thanked Senator Peterson for her dedicated service to Senate over the last 11 years. The Chair also welcomed Senator O'May as the new postdoctoral fellow on Senate.

1. Report of the Steering Committee (12:13-06)

Item 1. Approval of Minutes of Senate. On motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the minutes of the January 23, 2013 meeting.

Item 2. Senate Open Discussion on Student/Professorial Interactions. The Chair informed Senate that the Steering Committee had discussed the Senate Open Discussion on the topic of Professorial/Student Interaction, which would be facilitated by Senators Mendelson, Harpp and Mooney.

Item 3. Livestreaming Protocol. The Chair informed Senate that the Steering Committee had discussed whether portions of this meeting should be held off-camera and had made no such recommendations.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

On motion duly proposed and seconded, the agenda was adopted.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair began her remarks by informing Senate of two recent decanal appointments: Professor Paul Allison was reappointed to a second five-year term as Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry and Professor Jim Nicell was named to a five-year term as Dean of Engineering. The Chair thanked Senator Kirk for his contributions as Interim Dean of Engineering. Senate applauded all three announcements. The Chair expressed her thanks to all members of the McGill community who had provided support and assistance during the flood on the downtown campus on January 28.

The Chair next provided remarks on government relations and budget cuts. She told Senate that the University was facing a crisis, with nearly $40 million less provincial funding over the next two years. She said that, because cuts had also been made to Quebec's research granting councils, the impact on research-intensive universities would be especially severe. The Chair thanked community members for their participation in budget Town Hall meetings hosted by Senators Masi and Di Grappa. The Chair said that, going forward, McGill would continue to work through the Conference of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities and on its own to seek additional funding. She added that the University was modelling a range of possible outcomes and would make final presentations to the Board at its April meeting. The Chair reported that with the Summit on Higher Education one week away, the provincial government had still not shared its agenda or any proposals.

The Chair also informed Senate that consultations were underway regarding the Statement of Values and Principles Concerning Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly. She invited community members to provide input ahead of the March Senate meeting, where the Statement would be presented for approval.

The Chair ended her remarks by commending Senator Manfredi and the Faculty of Arts for the recent Arts Undergraduate Research Event and for the recent annual conference of the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, which was co-chaired by Senator Ferguson.

SECTION II

Part "A" – Questions and Motions by Members

1. Question Regarding Assessment Policies and Procedures

Senator Dinel asked the following question:

> While McGill has very effective and helpful policies surrounding academic integrity and academic assessment, these policies are not always well communicated to students. Moreover, although instructors are generally informed of policy changes, instructors across faculties do not adhere to the policies.
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> The University undertakes its responsibility of making policies accessible on its website, but there is no guarantee that students or staff read and understand them.
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> If both students and staff are unaware that the policies aren't being followed the problem is perpetuated, or at least left unidentified.
>
> Even when students are fully aware of the policies and an instructor is not conforming, it is often difficult or intimidating to approach an instructor about such violations. Furthermore, it is not clear what procedures students should follow if they do find a course or instructor has violated these policies.
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> On whom does the responsibility fall to ensure that both students and staff understand the policies of the University?
>
> What mechanisms are in place at the University, Faculty, and/or departmental levels to make certain that Instructors are following policy?
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> Could the University make it a policy that all faculties and departments assess course syllabi to ensure that all university academic policies are being followed?

Senator Mendelson, Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), answered as follows:

First, let me thank Senator Dinel for raising this important question.

The University's policies and regulations are meant to be taken seriously, so it is indeed unfortunate that some instructors have not fully followed them. Although this does not appear to be a widespread problem and instructors likely do not wilfully disregard University policies and regulations, infractions must be taken seriously.

There are, of course many policies and regulations that govern the University. Furthermore, as the University evolves, various amendments are adopted from time to time. Therefore, an important step in ensuring compliance is to ensure that instructors are aware of the relevant policies and are informed about changes that may be made to them. Currently, orientation for new academic staff includes portions that draw instructors' attention to policies relevant to their teaching. In addition, at the beginning of each semester, instructors are reminded through email of required elements of their course outlines and provided links to the Course Outline Guide on the Teaching and Learning Services website and to the University Assessment Policy. As is true with all mass mailings, it is likely that some, many, or perhaps most, instructors do not read the message nor click on the links.

There are other means for communicating teaching-specific information, most notably the biweekly electronic newsletter, Focus on Teaching. Although policy-related issues have not routinely been included in it, we will explore ways of better using that medium.

Instructors who have questions about policies and regulations regarding teaching can consult their chair, director, associate dean or dean. The Associate Provost (Policies, Procedures and Equity) and I are also available to respond to questions.

It is also important for students to be aware of University policies and regulations regarding teaching and learning. We have not been as proactive as we might be in informing students about these issues. There are, of course, a number of means of communication at our disposal, and I will undertake to explore with students how these can be used better.

Students who believe that an instructor may be violating a University policy or regulation are understandably in an awkward position and may feel uncomfortable just raising a question, let alone, challenging the instructor. Students who do not feel comfortable informing the instructor, either in person or anonymously, may report the problem confidentially to their chair, director, or associate dean, who will investigate and resolve the issue. Students who are unsure about where to turn or who feel that an issue is not being resolved can also consult the Ombudsperson for Students.

> Reviewing all course syllabi for compliance would require a considerable amount of work at a peak time of the year and at a time when University resources have become scarcer. Regardless, I believe that better informing instructors and students about our policies and regulations and informing students about how they may safely report infractions will have the desired effect.

Senator Dinel asked whether professors would be amenable to including the assessment policy in their syllabi. Senator Bell said that this issue betrayed the tension between uniform practices and professorial freedom. He suggested that University procedures should take into account the diversity between faculties. Several Senators agreed with this suggestion and reiterated that regulations should be publicized as effectively as possible.

2. Question Regarding MyCourses2

Senator Redel asked the following question:

> The University has invested a great deal of funds into learning management systems, with the most recent being the deployment of the new myCourses2, powered by Desire2Learn. The goal of the learning management system is to provide a unified platform for professors to provide course content and for students to access that course content.
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> Despite this unified system existing, many professors continue to use other course management solutions or even resort to creating their own course website or course management system. While this solution may prove easier in the moment for professor, failure to use the University-wide learning management system is a disservice to students, as it goes against the core principle that the learning management system is in place to provide a unified platform for online course content.
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> Furthermore, the University has gone through and continues to go through great efforts to provide training for professors on both past and present learning management systems
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> What efforts has the University taken to collect feedback from students who either use the central learning management system or a custom-build course website/course management system?
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> What reasons does the University have for allowing professors to use a learning management system of their choice?
>
> Should the University consider a single policy that ensures consistent use of a single learning management system?

Senator Masi, Provost, answered as follows:

1. What efforts has the University taken to collect feedback from students who either use the central learning management system or a custom-build course website/course management system?

Prior to the selection of the current learning management system, the University solicited feedback from students in four different ways: focus groups, interviews with representatives of student associations, open demonstrations, and various feedback forms. Many students indicated that they would like to see more consistency in how instructors used myCourses, but the issue of the use of alternative learning management systems was not raised in those deliberations.

After deployment of the new system, all students using myCourses in fall 2012 were surveyed regarding their experiences. Unfortunately, we have no method of identifying students and instructors using other systems and so cannot collect feedback from them.

2. What reasons does the University have for allowing professors to use a learning management system of their choice?

There are 3600 courses every semester and, at present, approximately 81% of instructors actively use myCourses. An active user is someone who has logged in consistently over the 13 weeks of the semester. It is possible, although not likely, that all 19% are using some other system, website, or online tools. In general, decisions regarding curriculum and other academic directions are made by the programs/departments and individual instructors. The only aspect of teaching and learning over which we provide oversight are administrative, such as systems used for submitting grades and collecting course evaluations.

In the selection process for the new LMS, we consulted with representatives from all Faculties to identify requirements for the system, we involved faculty members and students in the vendor demonstrations, and included instructors in the selection committee process.

Although we continually strive to meet faculty members' needs for functionality, we acknowledge that it is not possible to find a system that will meet the needs of every single instructors. There will be specific needs as well as emerging tools that an enterprise-wide LMS cannot meet. There will always be issues with agility in systems that are geared to provide broad functionality and integration with other enterprise systems. However, as issues arise, we work closely with our vendors and suppliers to find appropriate solutions.

Over the years, we have found that the most influential drivers of changes in educational uses of technology are the students. For example, SSMU recently approached Senate about increasing the use of clickers, and when we shared that information and offered support to any instructors who wished to adopt the tool, nine instructors teaching a total of 1,200 students elected to adopt the tool in their upper year courses. In addition, we know of faculty members who are opposed to proprietary systems on principle.

3. Should the University consider a single policy that ensures consistent use of a single learning management system?

While we strongly encourage all members of the McGill community to use the central system, we recognize that some faculty members are actively exploring emerging tools, and their interests inform the development of systems and the identification of future requirements.

We built our system to be integrated with the student information system, so that when students' changed courses, the system would follow. I will be working with TLS to try to integrate professors' systems with the student information system as well.

Senator Redel said that professors more often use their own systems for basic tools, rather than advanced functionalities. The Provost agreed that this could be problematic and said that the use of non-McGill emails was not appropriate.

3. Question Regarding Course Evaluations

Senator Dinel asked the following question:

Course Evaluations at McGill have proved to be extremely useful for instructors, students, and administrators to assess the teaching in classes. These evaluations are also used for teaching awards and in considerations of tenure.

Many students, however, do not fill out their evaluations for various reasons. A significant reason is that most of the deadlines for completion are before the examination period is over. This gives students an additional responsibility during a very stressful time. Moreover, in some cases a final exam counts for the majority of a course grade, and a proper evaluation can not be done when assessments haven't been marked.

Pilot projects are currently underway where deadlines are extended both earlier into the semester and later into the examination period. These pilots which have proved to be beneficial to all parties.

Many students have advocated for more departments to extend their course evaluation periods and for course evaluations to be more comprehensive. These requests have been met with resistance: from departments who claim that they will not change unless so expressly instructed by the University and by the University administration who say such decisions rest with the departments.

What is the University doing to encourage more departments have more in-depth evaluations with longer evaluation periods?

What administrative or governance steps can be taken to make extended deadlines for course evaluations required by the University?

Senator Mendelson, Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning), answered as follows:

I again thank Senator Dinel for asking this question and for giving me an opportunity to encourage Senators to lobby your academic units to extend course evaluation periods through the end of exams.

Just recently, a message was sent to all deans / directors / chairs, inviting units to extend the evaluation period. Currently, 22 units do so, and we hope that number will grow. The deadline for informing Teaching and Learning Services of the change is March 1st, and, except for the initial notification, there is no additional administrative work required for the extended evaluation period.

Our Course Evaluation Policy, which was last amended by Senate in 2011, states the following:

The evaluation period shall normally last approximately 3 weeks and end the day before the start of the examination period. Individual academic units may, with the prior approval of the Dean, extend the evaluation period to no later than the last day of exams.

Thus, given the current policy, students seeking to extend the course-evaluation period have been told to address their academic units.

It should be noted that there are excellent reasons to extend the period, as indicated by data from academic units that have moved in that direction:

- There have been no significant differences in the overall ratings of either courses or instructors between students who completed their evaluations before their exams and those who completed them afterward.
- Students consistently communicate that the extended period is highly appreciated.
- The extended period yields higher response rates, with some individual units attaining increases of up to 12%, and with approximately 40% of students completing their evaluations during the exam period.

The substantive reason for extending the evaluation period is that the final exam, as part of a course requirement, should be subject to the scrutiny of students who are evaluating the course. Some instructors may feel that students would negatively judge a challenging final exam and consequently negatively rate the entire course. However, the same could be said for midterms, term papers, and other graded work, all of which occur prior to course evaluations.

> However, unless the Course Evaluation Policy were amended, academic units will continue to have a say in when their courses are evaluated. Amendment of the policy would normally require discussion at the APC Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning and then approval at APC and Senate. However, individuals wishing to impose one evaluation period on the entire University should understand that any attempt to do so might very well lead to the imposition of another evaluation period.

Senator Dinel pointed out that faculties which had experimented with longer evaluation periods had typically kept those in place. Senator Wolfson added that the transition to longer evaluation periods had been seamless in the Department of Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health and had been appreciated by faculty members and students alike.

4. Question Regarding Faculty and Library Councils

Senator Galaty asked the following question:

> A central element of academic freedom is the right of faculty members and librarians to participate in university governance, which normally occurs in departments, faculties and libraries or through elected representatives in Senate. In Senate and in many Faculty Councils, faculty members are kept informed about current academic affairs, vote on academic matters including changes to academic programs and courses, and comment and pose questions to administrators and present motions. Although many academic Faculties make use of Faculty Councils, some have adopted "Town Halls" which, though often useful in conveying information from officers to defined constituencies, do not provide an equivalent opportunity for academic faculty members to participate actively in Faculty governance.
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> In 2012, the Provost initiated a review of Faculty and Library Councils at McGill.
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> Can the Provost inform Senate of the status of this review, its expected outcome and an estimated time for completion of the review?
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> Will the Provost report the results of the review to Senate upon completion?

Senator Masi, Provost, answered as follows:

> Thank you for the timely question Senator Galaty.

Based on an initiative spearheaded by MAUT, I established a working group in February, 2012 to review the issue of Faculty Councils at McGill, with particular focus on membership and terms of reference. That working group consisted of Professor Galaty, Associate Provost (Policies, Procedures and Equity) Lydia White and the Secretary General. A series of events over the last year overtook this work and the working group was unable to undertake the review in a timely matter. I ask the working group to reconvene and issue a report in the coming months.

I commit to bringing the report that that working group produced back to Senate for information and discussion as appropriate sometime in the fall of 2013.

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

1. Budget Planning 2013-2014: Report II (D12-42)

The Provost presented this item for Senate's information. He began by telling Senate that the government's decision to eliminate tuition increases, and its subsequent decision to cut $19.1M in funding this year and next, would result in higher deficit forecasts throughout McGill's 5-year budget plan. The Provost said that the University would have to implement at least half of the cuts by April, 2014 or would risk having $32M of provincial funding withheld. He reported that, without cuts or additional revenue sources, the University's initial projection of a $3.9M deficit for Fiscal Year 2014 would be revised to a $43.3M deficit.

The Provost presented an itemized gap analysis of various University expenditures. It demonstrated how McGill was severely underfunded compared to its peer institutions in areas such as academic salaries, deferred maintenance deficits and information technology. The Provost told Senate that McGill's accumulated deficit now projected to rise to historic highs, both in real terms and as a percentage of operating revenue. The Provost explained that while McGill's accumulated deficit was not favourable, it was in the middle of the pack among those of research-intensive Quebec universities. The Provost explained that going forward, McGill would face budgetary constraints arising from wage pressures, pay equity concerns, pension plan liabilities, deferred maintenance and certain one-time-only costs. The Provost explained that the University was considering various scenarios that would meet the targets, with a view of coming out of this crisis in as strong a position as possible. In response to a question, he explained that the administration was developing budget models, but it was too soon to make firm proposals as he was still receiving input from consultation with focus groups and the wider community. The Provost ended by presenting McGill's budget-planning assumptions for Fiscal Year 2014 and by inviting Senators to consider how McGill could best address the cuts.

Several Senators pointed out that growth in the central administration had been disproportionately high in recent years and suggested that cuts should focus there rather than in the faculties. Senator Lu added that salary should be cut from those who could most afford it. The Provost explained that the growth in administration had followed an earlier growth in academic staff and served to support their academic work. He added that student life and learning was mostly covered by student fees, but that there could be no sacred cows. Senator Redel said that the administration served the needs of the entire university in valuable ways.

Senators discussed possible changes to McGill's mission arising out of these cuts. Senator Mooney emphasised the need to protect McGill's fundamental missions of teaching and research by maintaining teacher-student ratios and academic salaries. Senator Grant said that McGill would need to remain a meritocracy while working with the government. Senator Zidel asked whether McGill might consider focusing on its highest-calibre programs and dropping others. He also said that cuts might lead the University to shift some outlays onto student fees through referenda. Senator Zidel suggested that McGill consider an opportunity to innovate in cost-effective ways, including full-year internships or shorter programs. Senator Richard asked whether McGill should stop striving for excellence, since our accomplishments let the government off the hook. Senator Bouchard suggested that these cuts should make McGill reconsider its mission and its standing as a peer of better-funded institutions.

Senators floated ideas about McGill's relationship to Quebec and the current government. Senator Galaty suggested that McGill attach sunset clauses to any cuts, in consideration of the unstable political context. The Chair responded that it was never prudent to think of governments as temporary. The Provost added that the University budgeted in a specific context while maintaining long-term plans. Senator Bouchard suggested that it might be more feasible to relocate the institution out of the province, while Senator Ferrie suggested that the cuts should be part of a plan to gradually reduce McGill's dependence on provincial funding. The Provost said that McGill would be best served by decoupling government support from tuition.

Senator Kalil asked about the situation at other Quebec universities and whether they were advocating for additional revenue and revenue sources. The Provost answered that the situation was similar across the province and that all institutions were looking at their own best ways to meet the government-mandated cuts. He added that the Principal had been bringing Quebec universities together to advocate for common interests, but not all institutions shared the same interests. In response to questions about philanthropy and the endowment, the Provost explained that endowment funds were restricted in use and that donors were loath to stand in for the government.

Senator Lu asked about the University's $10M in "consultant fees." The Provost responded that such costs were among the first things the administration was looking at. Senator Gutman asked about negotiations with unions.

Senator Mooney proposed the following motion, which was unanimously approved by Senate:

> *Be it resolved that the McGill Senate considers the cuts in provincial funding to Quebec universities injurious to their academic missions and calls on the government to reverse the cuts*

2. 444th Report of the Academic Policy Committee (D12-43)

The Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) presented this report for Senate's approval. Senate approved the following resolutions in one motion:

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the proposed B.A.; Joint Honours – African Studies Component.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the proposed Certificate in Applied Marketing.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the proposed Diploma in Applied Marketing.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the proposed Diploma in Health and Social Services Management.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the proposed Graduate Certificate in Health Services Management.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the proposed B.Com.; Major in Organizational Behaviour.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the proposed B.Sc.; Honours in Neuroscience

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the proposed B.Sc.; Honours in Earth System Science

The Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning) next presented the following resolution:

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved and recommend to the Board of Governors for approval the creation of a McGill Centre for the Convergence of Health and Economics/ Centre McGill de convergence de la santé et de l'économie.

3. Report of the Nominating Committee (D12-44)

The Provost presented the Report of the Nominating Committee for approval.

On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the recommendations contained in the Report of the Senate Nominating Committee.

4. Presentation from the Office of the Dean of Students (D12-45)

Professor André Costopoulos, Dean of Students, delivered this presentation for Senate's information. He went over the responsibilities of the Office of the Dean of Students, including the following:

- Student rights and responsibilities, including the Charter of Student Rights and the Code of Student Conduct;
- Student well-being, which includes coordinating University services in emergencies as well as regular life;
- Academic integrity, with the aim of fostering an environment where integrity is presumed;
- Administration of the student discipline process;
- Student recognition, which includes Rhodes Scholarships and Forces Avenir awards; Dean Costopoulos asked Senators to propose any additional student awards or recognitions of which they are aware;
- Coordination of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group and diversity on campus in general; and
- Community relations with residents of the Milton-Park neighbourhood.

Dean Costopoulos added that his office was working to improve academic advising and hoped to make it easier for students access advising resources in the most effective way.

Senator Galaty asked about the Dean of Students' Office's relationship with disciplinary officers on campus. Dean Costopoulos explained that the Dean of Students was not a disciplinary officer, but oversees the work of disciplinary officers across both campuses. He said that he regularly met with officers – and students – to discuss the application of policies and that these meetings had helped inform the revisions to the Code of Student Conduct that were due to come before Senate.

5. Report from Board of Governors to Senate (D12-46)

Ms. Cynthia Price delivered this report for Senate's information. She highlighted the recent appointment of two new governors as well as the Board's resolution opposing provincial funding cuts.

Senator Richard asked whether a timeframe existed for the announcement of the next Principal. The Secretary-General responded that an announcement would be made as soon as possible.

6. Other Business

There being no other business to deal with, on motion duly proposed and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

END

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