

**Minutes**

Wednesday, September 18, 2024 24-25:01

Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on Wednesday, September 18, 2024, at 2:30 p.m. in the Robert Vogel Council Room (Room 232) of the Leacock Building.

**PRESENT:**

Abakar, Chidimi	Flanagan, Tara	Orsat, Valérie
Adams, Annmarie	Fournier, Sofie	Parsons, Michael
Ali, Genevieve	Fronza, Michael	Quitoriano, Nathaniel
Arista, Denise	Fujinaga, Ichiro	Ramamurthy, Racchana
Bartz, Jennifer	Gervais, Philippe	Richard, Marc
Beaudry, Guylaine	Greene, David	Ronholm, Jennifer
Berglas, Abe	Grütter, Peter	Saini, Deep
Bertrand, Maryse	Gupta, Priya	Scholtz, Christa
Bérubé, Dominique	Hébert, Terry	Shapiro, Lisa
Bitout, Mars	Huberman, Samuel	Shevell, Michael
Blanchette, Mathieu	Hunter, Mary	Smeall, Cheryl
Boivin, Pierre	Kopyscinski, Jan	Sparks, Tabitha
Bonneau, Josée	Krishnamurthy, Srinivasan	Stephens, David
Borenstein, Bonnie	Labeau, Fabrice	Taylor, Dymetri
Campbell, Angela	Lencucha, Raphael	Tumulu, Satish Kumar
Carrieri, Francesca	Lennox, Bruce	Türeli, Ipek
Chan, Yolande	Levey, Margaret	Van Hoof, Krystle
Choksi, Rustum	Levine, Alissa	Venkatesh, Vivek
Chow, Nicholas	Li-Jessen, Nicole	Watt, Alanna
Crema Black, Seraphina	Lu, Catherine	Wei, Anzhu
Dastmalchi, Mehran	Manfredi, Christopher	Weil, Carola
Demers, Isabelle	Mansour, Steve	Weinstein, Marc
Elbourne, Elizabeth	Meyer, Brett	Weisbord, Noah
Emami, Elham	Mittermaier, Anthony	Winer, Laura
Etemad, Hamid	Muñiz-Fraticelli, Victor	Wright, Vivian
Fellows, Lesley	Nilson, Laura	Yargeau, Viviane
Ferguson, Sean	Nycum, Gillian	Zorychta, Edith

**REGRETS:** Amine Arezki, Matthew Bacz, Manuel Balán, Jaqueline Chow, Beth-Ann Cummings, Luciano D'Iorio, Eleanor Elstein, Maiya Rachel Geddes, Darlene Hnatchuk, Juliet Johnson, Katherine Joseph, Amir Kalan, Lara Khoury, Svetlana Kochkina, Robert Leckey, Josephine Nalbantoglu, Momar Ndao, Diletta Prando, Petra Rohrbach, Eran Shor, Thomas Soehl, Manon Vennat, Ma'n Zawati.

## **1. Welcoming Remarks**

The Chair welcomed Senators to the first regular Senate meeting of the 2024-2025 governance year. He recognized that McGill University is located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe nations, and thanked the diverse Indigenous peoples whose presence marks this territory, on which peoples of the world now gather. He presented the University's Mission and Principles, and reminded Senators that, while the use of electronic devices was permitted for viewing meeting documents, the Standing Rules of Procedure prohibited the recording of sound and/or images, as well the communication or posting of Senate deliberations. He noted that the meeting was being livestreamed, and that the audio recording would be accessible until the meeting minutes are approved at Senate's next meeting.

## **2. Memorial Tributes**

The Chair informed Senators that three memorial tributes had been submitted for the September 18, 2024, meeting of Senate, for Professor Emeritus Douglas Ellis (ARTS), Professor Emeritus Norbert Gilmore (FMHS), and Professor Barbara Hales (FMHS). He explained that the University Flag had been lowered for the day in their honour.

Senator Shapiro presented a memorial tribute for Professor Emeritus Douglas Ellis, following which Senate unanimously endorsed a motion of condolence:

“It is with sadness that the McGill's Department of Linguistics announces the death of Dr. Douglas Ellis co-founder of McGill University's Department of Linguistics. Born in 1923 in Shawville, Quebec, Douglas Ellis was educated at Montreal Public Schools and at the High School of Montreal. He held degrees in Classics from McGill University, the University of Toronto and Yale and had fellowships at Cornell and Michigan University at both of which he studied Linguistics. He studied Theology at Trinity College, Toronto and Cambridge University. Ordained to the priesthood in 1948, he served at St. Matthias Church in Westmount (Montreal) and for several years at Albany Post on James Bay in the Diocese of Moosonee. In 1953 he was married to Joan Allton of Montreal West. From 1959 to 1963 Dr. Ellis taught Linguistics in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto and from 1963 to 1991 at McGill University. From 1964 to 1968 he served as Vice-Dean for the Humanities Division in the then Faculty of Arts and Science and was also co-founder of the Department of Linguistics which he chaired for over a decade. On his retirement Dr. Ellis was appointed Emeritus Professor at McGill. Dr. Ellis helped to provide McGill's Linguistics Department with superb leadership at a time when other departments were being established in North America and, hence, were competing with McGill's for academic talent. His work on the Cree Language helped to create the profile of a Department with an interest in North American Indigenous languages that still endures. After retiring from McGill, he remained active, accepting a position as Adjunct Research Professor at the School of Linguistics and Language Studies at Carleton University, Ottawa. Author of publications in Classics and Linguistics, Dr. Ellis's specific focus for many years was on Cree, the most widely spoken indigenous language in Canada. Among his better known publications are *âtalôhkâna nêsta tipâcimôwina* / Cree Legends

and Narratives and Spoken Cree, the latter a three-level Cree Language course (Spoken Cree, Cree Legends and Narratives). Since his first contact with Cree-speaking people at Moose Factory in 1947, the Cree language became one his major academic preoccupations. He has taught intensive summer courses in Cree for government, medical, and teaching personnel working in the North as well as courses at the university level. Dr. Ellis is survived by his wife, two children, their spouses and his two grandsons.”

Senator Fellows presented a memorial tribute for Professor Emeritus Norbert Gilmore, following which Senate unanimously endorsed a motion of condolence:

“It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing on June 8 of Dr. Norbert Joseph Gilmore, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Medicine, a renowned specialist in HIV and AIDS, and a champion for human rights of HIV-infected individuals. Originally from the small city of Lowell, Massachusetts, Dr. Gilmore, affectionately known as “Nobby,” attended medical school at the University of Vermont. He halted his studies to pursue a Doctorate in pharmacology at the University of London, England, where he worked alongside Nobel Prize winner Sir John Vane. He obtained his PhD in 1968 and returned to the University of Vermont to earn his medical degree in 1970. Nobby then joined McGill to complete his internship and residency in allergy and immunology at the Royal Victoria Hospital. In 1975, he became a faculty member; in 1991, he became Full Professor in the Department of Medicine; and in 2010, Professor Emeritus. Nobby made significant contributions to the fields of pharmacology, allergy, immunology, issues related to drug use, prisons, immigration and especially the clinical, ethical and legal aspects of HIV and AIDS. During his career he served as Medical Director of the Chronic Viral Illness Service at the McGill University Health Centre, Associate Director of the McGill Centre for Viral Diseases, which was known at the time as the “McGill AIDS Centre,” and was one of the founding members of the McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law. In 1987, he co-founded the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research, a national independent organization committed to advancing HIV knowledge and science, where he would serve as President and Director for several years. In 2011, he was responsible for merging the RVH and MGH HIV/AIDS clinics. Nobby was a pioneer in HIV/AIDS medicine in Canada. He was a brilliant clinician, researcher and teacher, but above all, he was someone who believed in the whole person approach to care, practicing medicine with compassion and humanity. At the onset of the AIDS epidemic, he led the fight against stigmatization, appearing in media to dispel myths and to advocate for his patients. After serving as Chair of the Canadian National Advisory Committee on AIDS for six years, he resigned to protest the government’s inaction in establishing HIV/AIDS education programs. Throughout a career that spanned nearly 40 years, Nobby remained devoted to his patients. He treated them with kindness, humility and respect. Despite his health crises, his cheerfulness and positivity never wavered. He was quick to ask you how you were doing and strived to ensure that all who surrounded him were happy. He found joy in organizing dinner parties for his friends, and sometimes strangers, and cooking many delicacies like fish pies and beef bourguignon. He was also an art connoisseur, with his art studio in Pointe-Saint-Charles, home to original pieces crafted from discarded materials found on the streets of Montreal. Shortly after retiring in 2014, he moved to Victoria, BC, where he sat on the Board of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. Nobby leaves behind a legacy that is marked

by courage, generosity and inspiration. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Nobby's family, colleagues, friends and all those whose lives he touched. He will be greatly missed."

Senator Fellows presented a memorial tribute for Professor Barbara Hales, following which Senate unanimously endorsed a motion of condolence:

"It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Professor Barbara Hales on July 12, 2024, two months shy of her 75th birthday. A James McGill Professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, Professor Hales was a luminary in the fields of developmental and reproductive toxicology, committed to improving human health through science. A native Montrealer, Professor Hales obtained a Bachelor of Science degree with Honours in Cell & Developmental Biology from McGill in 1970. She then completed her Master's in Pharmacognosy at the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science before returning to McGill to earn a PhD in Pharmacology and Therapeutics. In 1977, she was recruited to McGill's Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics as a FRSQ postdoctoral-fellow. She was appointed Assistant Professor in the Department in 1979 and rose to the rank of Full Professor in 1992. In 2011, she was named a James McGill Professor. Professor Hales made significant contributions to understanding the impacts of teratogens and environmental chemicals on health. Her research interests included the developmental toxicity of environmental chemicals and drugs, paternal exposure to anticancer agents, and the effects of flame retardants and plasticizers on reproduction and development. Her outstanding work continues to influence international policy objectives and legal standards. Professor Hales sat on many local and international committees. She successfully directed the Pharmacology Undergraduate Program for 17 years. She served as the Vice-President, and later President, of the Teratology Society, and scientific advisor for Developmental and Reproductive Toxicity at the Health and Environmental Sciences Institute. She was the President of the Society of Toxicology of Canada; the society created an award last year and named it in her honour to recognize the accomplishments of a toxicologist affiliated with a Canadian institution over the past five years. Professor Hales' reputation as a leading international expert in developmental and reproductive toxicology earned her multiple awards. In 2018, she received the prestigious 'Edward W. Carney Distinguished Service Award' from the Teratology Society, highlighting her excellent leadership, exceptional career in teratology and outstanding service to the Society. In 2019, she received the 'Teratology Society Agnish Fellowship Award.' Her publications include over 160 articles in peer reviewed journals, 45 book chapters, and 270 abstracts and presentations at meetings. Throughout her more than 45 years as a member of the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, she led by example in everything she did and had a profound impact on her colleagues, students, trainees and the wider scientific community. Those who knew her remember her grace, thoughtfulness, curiosity, contagious smile and laughter, and her love for books and travel. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Professor Hales' husband, Professor Bernard Robaire, her children Stephen and Sandra, her grandchildren, family, colleagues, friends and all those whose lives she touched. She will be greatly missed."

**3. Report of the Senate Steering Committee [Consent Item] (24:25-01)**

*On a motion duly proposed and seconded, Senate approved the recommendations contained in the Report of the Senate Steering Committee as a consent item.*

The recommendations concerned the following:

*Approval of Minutes of Senate. Meeting of May 8, 2024.*

*Approval of Speaking Rights. Upon approval of the report, speaking rights were granted to Professor Taylor Owen and Ms. Nellie Voudouris, Members of the Senate Open Discussion Working Group, for item IIB3 (*Open Discussion: Evaluating the Statement of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly*)*

*Approval of Meeting Agenda. Meeting of September 18, 2024.*

The Report of the Senate Steering Committee also contained the following items, for information:

*Approval of Confidential Minutes of Senate. Meeting of May 8, 2024 (approved by the Committee on behalf of Senate).*

*Open Discussion Topics (2024-2025). Future meeting: “Creating and Maintaining Harmonious and Engaging Academic Environments.”*

*Review of Questions and Motions. Two questions were received and accepted for the September 18, 2024, meeting of Senate.*

*Steering Committee Discussion Items. Overview of the Senate Calendar of Business (2024-2025).*

*Approval of the Report of the Senate Nominating Committee (August 16, 2024). Approved by the Committee on behalf of Senate, in line with section 23 of the [Standing Rules of Procedure, Governing the Proceedings of the Senate of McGill University](#).*

**4. Business Arising from the Minutes of the May 8, 2024, Meeting (23-24:09)**

None.

**5. Chair’s Remarks**

The Chair began his remarks by addressing the campus climate. He indicated that the return to campus was unfolding within a context of ongoing global tensions and social polarization, and called upon the University Community to channel its efforts toward sustaining an academic environment that centers around respect, inclusion, and collegiality. He went on to encourage the McGill community to familiarize itself with the University’s policies, particularly those concerning academic freedom, harassment, and discrimination. It was noted that number of

initiatives were being developed that would focus on supporting and exploring the importance of dialogue.

Concerning enrolment, the Chair shared that the University's enrolment status on the first day of classes was comparable to last year (39,597 students compared to last year's 39,130 students). He continued, noting that 10,426 students from CEGEP are enrolled in Bachelor's programs (an increase of 5.2%), and that the top five citizenships of international students enrolled in credit-seeking programs for Fall 2024 had remained the same as last fall: China, USA, France, India and Iran. He reminded Senators that Canadian non-resident students entering in Fall 2024 were subject to a tuition increase of \$3,000. Despite this, it was highlighted that Fall 2024 new registrations from Canadian high schools outside of Quebec had increased by 11%, and that the Canada Award, which offsets said tuition increase in certain Bachelor's programs, had contributed to this result.

On the topic of international students, the Chair mentioned that one of the Provincial Government's priorities was to reduce temporary immigration to Quebec. He noted that, recently, a six-month freeze on new temporary foreign workers coming in to work low-wage jobs in the Montreal area had been implemented. He reassured Senators that this freeze did not affect postdoctoral researchers who are on a temporary work visa, and shared that the Provincial Government also planned to table a Bill to regulate the arrival of international students more strictly in Quebec. It was reported that these policy decisions were intended to protect public services that have been under pressure with the current influx of temporary workers. The Chair indicated that the University was working in concert with other research institutions in Quebec to develop key points for conversations with the Minister, which would highlight the growth and development opportunities provided by the presence of international students.

Discussing provincial government relations, the Chair reminded Senators that the University was facing significant financial challenges, including cuts to operational grants and capital allocations from the Provincial Government, tuition claw-backs, and rising costs. He shared that the University had undertaken a robust evaluation of its infrastructure plans, and, following extensive deliberation, arrived at the painful decision to stop the Fiat Lux Project. He expressed his sadness with the outcome, and extended his gratitude to the supporters and champions of the Project. He reminded Senators that the University Libraries provide vital academic services and spaces to our community, and as such, other options to increase study, research, and collaboration spaces within Library venues were being explored. It was indicated that infrastructure and operational spending was continuously being reviewed across the University, with a view to prioritizing the most cost-efficient ways to strengthen the quality of McGill's academic mission, while maintaining health and safety standards and meeting the core needs of units.

The Chair highlighted recent news concerning changes to the Quebec Cabinet. Pierre Fitzgibbon, the provincial minister for economy, innovation, and energy, stepped down. Former immigration Minister Christine Frechette was thus named to the role. Jean-François Roberge was, in turn, named to the immigration portfolio, which were added to his other duties as minister responsible for the French language, and minister responsible for Canadian relations.

Turning to Federal relations, the Chair reported that the University's submission to the current federal pre-budget consultation process had included four recommendations, namely that the

Government enhance Canada’s international competitiveness through sustainable funding for the commercialization of research; that the Government build on the Budget 2021 investment in Canada’s Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy, to fully take advantage of the mobilization of the research and innovation ecosystem, while adjusting the model to increase efficiency and impact; that the Government expand the eligibility of Tri-agency doctoral scholarships to include international students, while at the same time increasing, by one-third, the quotas for doctoral scholarships allotted to Canadian universities; and that the Government create an infrastructure fund accessible to academic institutions.

Regarding community relations, the Chair highlighted that The Neuro was turning 90 at the end of the month, and that Indigenous Awareness Weeks will run from September 19 to September 30, 2024, marking the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, as well as Orange Shirt Day. He also mentioned upcoming Homecoming celebrations taking place at the end of October 2024.

In terms of global rankings, the Chair reported that McGill had ranked 74th in the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities, and 29<sup>th</sup> in the 2024 QS World Rankings.

The Chair went on to highlight the achievements of sixteen graduate students for having earned Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships, four postdoctoral researchers for having received Banting Fellowships, Professor Myrna Lashley and Professor Dan Poenaru, for being appointed to the Order of Canada, and Senator David Stephens, for being inducted as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, among twelve other McGill inductees, including two new members to the College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists, and ten other new Fellows.

Senator Quitoriano requested more information concerning enrolment trends by Faculty. Senator Manfredi indicated that some faculties, such as Engineering, Management, Arts, and the School of Music, had seen enrolment increases beyond what was predicted. Senator Greene inquired if the Fiat Lux Project was suspended permanently, or if there was an intention to resume it in the future. Senator Labeau stated that the University would continue exploring options for how to best utilize available space to meet the evolving needs of students and other library users, though there was no timeline for these efforts.

## **SECTION II**

### **Part A – Questions and Motions by Members**

#### **1. Question regarding the Implementation of the Policy on Harassment and Discrimination (D24-01)**

Senator Berglas and Senator Muñiz-Fraticelli submitted the following questions:

“Has this annual meeting to review the operation of the Policy occurred in the past year? If not, when was it last held? When will it next be held? Given that the Policy was last reviewed in 2021, was it reviewed between 2021 and 2024 by the working group? If so, where can we find a report of this review? If not, why didn’t it occur? What are the

consequences of failing to abide by the rules set out by this Policy? What does McGill do to ensure accountability for staff mandated to act by this Policy?”

The Provost and Executive Vice-President (Academic) provided the following written response prior to the meeting:

“Thank you for your questions, Senators. This working group has not met since the last review of the Policy on Harassment and Discrimination (“Policy”) in late 2021. The reason for this is that since then, a range of meetings have been held with key campus and external community stakeholders regarding issues of harassment and discrimination on campus. This has included: Black students, faculty, and staff in line with the Action Plan to Address Anti-Black Racism; Indigenous students, faculty, and staff in line with the Provost’s Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Education; Indigenous faculty in the context of the Policy on Indigenous Citizenship and Membership; Jewish and Muslim students, faculty, and staff in line with the IAIAS (developed in 2022); Students, faculty, and staff who are persons with disabilities in the context of the development of the McGill Accessibility Strategy (forthcoming AY24/25); Students, faculty, and staff in the context of the preferred/used name working group (initiated in AY23/24, ongoing); and Students, faculty, and staff who are members of minoritized communities in connection with the development on the Policy on Academic Freedom (AY22/23). This has entailed meetings over scores of hours, raising cross-cutting policy concerns. Issues arising in these discussions also illuminated that the membership of the working group set by section 101 of the Policy was potentially both over- and under-inclusive. The working group will be reconvened in Fall 2024 to begin a review of the Policy as foreseen by s. 10.1. The review process is beginning with a review presently underway by a third-party legal expert, benchmarking our Policy against other universities and best practices. Accountability regarding the policy is upheld through annual reports submitted to Senate and the Board, and to the standing Joint-Board Senate Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee and the Human Resources Committee of the Board of Governors. Any member of the McGill community who takes the position that there was a lapse in abiding by the Policy’s requirements may bring a grievance in accordance with the applicable regulation or collective agreement.”

Senator Berglas requested more information concerning the review process of the Policy, particularly with respect to the fact that a working group for the purpose had not yet been convened. Senator Manfredi noted that the first step comprised an external benchmarking exercise. Senator Muñoz-Fraticelli raised his hand, to which the Chair presented the following statement:

“Before allowing Senator Muñoz-Fraticelli to speak, I would like to make the following comments. The role of senator, as far as professors are concerned, is attached to their employment relationship and is part of their university and academic duties. As you may be aware, law professors are currently on strike, and the University recognizes that it is their right under provincial labour laws. As a legal consequence of this strike, professors are prohibited from working, and the University, as their employer, is prohibited from allowing them to work. Thus, in accordance with the Labour Code, the University as employer cannot use the services of professors on strike, including during Senate meetings.



It is the University's intention to respect the legislative provisions to this effect. Senator Muñoz-Fraticelli, despite you being on strike, and with the understanding that in no way is the University asking or encouraging you to perform your work, do you still wish to address the Senate?”

After confirming that he did indeed wish to speak, Senator Muñoz-Fraticelli asked if recent changes to the personnel filling the roles of the Associate Provost (Equity and Academic Policies), as well as the redistribution of tasks within that role’s portfolio were affecting the implementation of the Policy. Senator Manfredi noted that the distribution of tasks among the Associate Provosts was within his purview as Provost, and indicated that there had been no changes to the responsibilities of the role or to the implementation of the Policy. Senator Crema Black, referring to Section 10.2 of the Policy on Harassment and Discrimination, expressed that the Provost had met with campus and external community stakeholders in lieu of a stipulated annual meeting with a working group, and inquired if there were any other University policies with overdue annual reports or unaddressed review processes. Senator Manfredi confirmed that there was no backlog of annual reports, and indicated that a detailed list of all University policies would need to be perused to determine if any others were due for review. Senator Wright inquired as to the channels available to a member of the University community to bring forward a grievance regarding non-compliance with Policy requirements. Senator Manfredi replied that, for students, the applicable document is the Code of Student Grievance Procedures, and that he would be the respondent of any grievances relating to the Policy in question as its executive sponsor. Senator Berglas asked Senator Manfredi if the decision to not hold the annual meeting was deliberate. Senator Manfredi responded in the negative and explained that this had been an oversight.

**2. Question regarding Demonstrations on Campus** (D24-02)

Senator Berglas and Senator Chow submitted the following questions:

“Was the Charter of Student Rights in effect during the period of partial shutdown? If not, who made the decision to suspend it? If so, does McGill feel that it was effectively upheld during this period? What instructions did Security Services receive from McGill regarding demonstrations on lower campus during the period of partial shutdown? What instructions have Security Services received from McGill regarding demonstrations for this coming school year? What training do contracted security personnel receive on the Charter of Student Rights?”

The Provost and Executive Vice-President (Academic), and the Vice-President (Administration and Finance), provided the following written response prior to the meeting:

“Thank you for your questions, Senators. The Charter of Students’ Rights was unaffected by protests including during the weeks where lower campus was closed following the removal of the encampment last July. McGill Security Services’ operations are governed by the law and by McGill policies. In the context of protests that involve violations of the law or policies, they will work in collaboration with senior administration and, where necessary, with the Montreal police (SPVM) and/or special constables. The University has an internal protocol for protests that disrupt University activities. The process is focused

on attempts to de-escalate the situation, and allow the protesters to correct any disruptive behaviour. When this de-escalation fails, and after appropriate warnings, authorities are called to intervene. It is not possible to train all members of private security firms on the details of University policies given the transient nature of staff who are dispatched to work on our campus. However, those individuals take instructions from our permanent Security Services team, who are well trained in McGill policies, including the Charter of Students Rights, the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures, and the Policy against Sexual Violence.”

Senator Berglas shared a story in which a student on campus, in possession of a flag, was alleged to have been asked to leave by a security agent who cited that protesting was not permitted. Senator Manfredi indicated that he was unaware of any formal complaint regarding this alleged incident, and reaffirmed that the Charter of Students’ Rights was in force. Senator Labeau stated that it was entirely possible that the described incident had occurred, and referred Senators to the final sentences in the response. Senator Lu suggested that an informal reporting process be implemented through which affected individuals would have an opportunity to share details of any incidents arising from encounters with security agents. Senator Labeau offered a reminder indicating that while students were able to file a grievance on an applicable matter, an alternative to this would be to contact the relevant supervisor to discuss an incident, or, in the case of encounters with security agents, to reach out to him directly in his capacity as Vice-President (Administration and Finance). Senator Wei inquired as to how it was expected that security agents on campus would be able to de-escalate situations in line with University protocols, when they did not receive detailed training. Senator Labeau explained that external security agents were supervised by internal employees who were trained on matters concerning University protocol, and that these internal employees were called to the field in cases where incidents arise. Senator Elbourne asked about the barriers for training security agents. Senator Labeau clarified that while new external agents did receive general training, it was not possible or feasible to train them on every detail of the University’s myriad policies, procedures, and regulations.

## **Part B – Motions and Reports from Organs of University Government**

### **Open Session**

#### **1. Report of the Senate Nominating Committee (D24-03)**

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

The recommendations concerned recommendations for appointments to Senate Standing Committees, and recommendations for appointments to Committees arising from University Regulations.

**2. Report of the Academic Policy Committee** (D24-04)

Senator Manfredi presented this report for information. He explained that it provided an overview of matters considered by the Committee at its meeting of May 21, 2024.

**3. Open Discussion: Evaluating the Statement of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Peaceful Assembly** (D24-05)

It was noted that this Open Discussion was held to provide Senators an opportunity to explore whether the University’s current regulatory framework regarding expression and assembly, especially within the context of political activism on campus, provides sufficient certainty and clarity, and if any revisions or additional guidelines may be favourable. The Chair presented the following statement:

“Over the last year, the University has faced forms of expression and assembly that have challenged, or called into question, the boundaries of the law and our policies. There is no question that our university can and must be a place that welcomes dissent and demonstration; institutions have long been the site of prompting and reflecting social transformation and advancement. At the same time, the nature of the protests that we have seen of late have involved actions and situations that are legally and morally ambiguous, and sometimes, clearly in breach of our regulatory framework. Throughout this past year, senior leadership has been called to make decisions in the face of these protests, often within a very short time frame, as actions are taking place, and while subject to polarized and competing pressures and calls to action. We have endeavoured to make the best decisions in extremely challenging circumstances. Our decisions have been guided by our Mission and Principles, which I read out at the beginning of today’s Senate meeting, but the senior administration should not navigate these circumstances alone. We need our collegial governance bodies to engage with these issues in a thoughtful and courageous manner. It is our collective duty as Senate to discuss and debate these difficult matters, and to come together to chart a course that serves the best interests of our institution and its mission. The goal of today’s Open Discussion is to give us a chance to examine, collectively and collegially, some of the difficult questions we have encountered over the last months. The scenarios you have before you are all fictional, but they draw to the fore issues that were raised by actual circumstances McGill has faced of late. We urge your small group discussions to be brave, meaningful, respectful, and guided by our institutional principles as opposed to personal ideological viewpoints. Facilitators for the session are responsible for ensuring that all members of each small group have a chance to speak. I urge you to listen to one another with care, and to find points of convergence in your discussion. Thank you for your engagement. This is a critical discussion for us, and I look forward to hearing from you when it comes time to report back in plenary.”

Senator Campbell added that the University community had endured a difficult year, and encouraged Senators to engage deeply with the content presented as part of the Open Discussion. She noted that the Open Discussion was intended to foster a culture of dialogue on challenging topics for the University, and that its outcomes may prove to be useful as the institution continues into the future. The Chair then provided an overview of the discussion format, and its time

allotments. Senator Quitariano inquired if the Open Discussion was intended to inform new Policy. Senator Campbell informed him that the core intention of the Open Discussion was to explore whether the University’s current regulatory framework was sufficient to address challenging and complicated scenarios. Senator Levey requested a guarantee that the University would not consider the Open Discussion a consultation with Senate on a new Policy. Senator Campbell and the Chair offered their guarantees on the matter. Senator Richard added that a scenario such as the one described by Senator Levey would be procedurally incorrect; any proposals for the development or revision of a University policy must follow the procedure for that purpose as prescribed by the University’s policy framework.

Senators were then divided into ten breakout groups, and assigned, for the discussion, one of the five following case studies:

1. Students stage a non-violent sit-in in a library. Library staff and students are frustrated because library users and staff cannot circulate freely and because the protesters do not say when they will leave. All the protesters are masked. The protest is filmed and circulated online, leading to a rapid sequence of outraged emails demanding intervention.
2. A teaching assistant includes the slogan “Long Live [Country Name]” in the footer of all handouts printed for class and on the myCourses site for the course in question. The professor supervising the TA asks whether this is permitted.
3. A faculty member in a natural sciences discipline begins the first lecture of term with a land acknowledgement followed by the following statement: “Like Canada, most western democratic nations including but not limited to [list of three countries] have perpetrated and are complicit in colonial genocide.” A colleague, who is a national of one of the accused three countries, raises the matter as a concern with the Department Chair.
4. An instructor in a humanities class assigns readings on a highly divisive topic that presents only one perspective, which reflects the instructor’s own views as expressed publicly in social media, mainstream media, and in the classroom. Some students write an anonymous open letter critiquing the instructor, stating that they self-censor in class and on assignments to avoid adverse consequences.
5. A student asks a professor to write a letter of reference for graduate school. The professor replies by email: “You are an excellent student, and I would be delighted to support your application to grad school. However, I cannot in good conscience do so in regard to the application for this university as it is located in a country with an atrocious foreign policy and human rights record.” The student asks whether the professor has engaged in discrimination.

With respect to the first case study, Senators expressed that it would be valuable to upgrade the University’s regulatory framework, based on a benchmarking exercise, notably as it relates to social media, though it was felt that the current framework was generally insufficient. It was also noted that the University’s role is in that of education, and that masking alters the potential consequences for the masked individual, and creates a barrier for reasonable dialogue between them and others.

With respect to the second case study, some Senators suggested that an appropriate first step would be for the instructor to discuss with teaching assistant the reasons for which they feel it is appropriate to include the slogan on the course materials, and to consider removing the slogan until others may be consulted on the matter. Other Senators felt that since the slogan was not related to course content or its objectives, it should be removed. It was strongly expressed that members of the University community in positions of authority over students should not exploit this power imbalance to promote their own political views.

With respect to the third case study, Senators suggested that the Policy on Academic Freedom best covered the situation. It was noted that an individual's discomfort with a subject-matter or in a given situation does not necessarily equate to a lack of safety.

With respect to the fourth case study, Senators shared that, in their view, it is possible that the described action would not be considered a violation of the Policy on Academic Freedom. Senators discussed the idea of including a link to the University's Statement on Academic Freedom on course syllabi.

With respect to the fifth case study, Senators highlighted that instructors are not obligated to provide letters of reference, but also that they should support students to the greatest extent possible.

Senator Kochkina expressed the need for guiding tools for community members when addressing challenging instances such as the ones described in the case studies. Senator Lu suggested that the University provide additional training resources for Faculty members and teaching assistants on managing these fraught matters. The Chair thanked Senators for their healthy and helpful conversation.

**4. Guidelines relating to the Policy Regarding the Use and Quality of the French Language (D24-06)**

The Secretary-General presented this item for consideration. She explained that the *Ministère de la langue française* had indicated that the University's current Policy regarding the Use and Quality of the French Language did not sufficiently address the subject of the required command of the French language for students domiciled in Quebec at the end of their studies. She went on to explain that the University had developed the presented guidelines to provide direction on the application of measures in each academic program, with a view to allowing affected students to develop their command of the appropriate French terminology, according to their program. Senator Crema Black asked if the French language requirements could delay degree conferrals. Senator Manfredi responded in the negative, and clarified that this question was related to the *francisation* efforts and not to the Policy, which was a separate matter.

**5. Report of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) (D24-07)**

Senator Nilson presented this report for information, on behalf of Senator Leckey, who was unable to attend. She explained that it provided an overview of matters considered by the Committee at its meeting of September 6, 2024.

**6. Report of the Board of Governors** (D24-08)

Senator Zorychta presented this report for information. She explained that it provided an overview of matters considered and activities undertaken by the Board of Governors on May 3, May 16, July 10, and July 16, 2024, and by the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors on June 16, August 16, and August 27, 2024. Senator Richard requested more information regarding the cancellation of the proposed honourific naming process that was expected to rename the Leacock Building as the Rimer Building. Senator Weinstein stated that this was due to the funding provided by the gift being redirected to address a different purpose in support of students at the University. Senator Türeli inquired if other security firms continued to be present on campus, and requested information regarding the cost and duration of any new contracts therewith. She also requested details concerning the cost of the University’s legal expenditures. The Chair noted that the contract referred to by Senator Türeli and the contract reported upon in the report of the Board were distinct, and then reminded Senators that questions should be in relation to the item presented. Senator Labeau explained that an additional security firm had been hired on a temporary basis, which, for now, remained part of the University’s security complement. Senator Parsons requested clarification regarding the status of the University’s contract with GARDA between June 1, 2024, and August 26, 2024. Senator Labeau explained that, to avoid service gaps, the previous contract had been extended during the indicated interim period while the new contract was in the procurement stage.

**7.1 Annual Report of the Committee on Libraries** (D24-09)

Senator Campbell presented this annual report for information. She explained that provided an overview of activities undertaken by the Committee over the period 2023-2024. Senator Berglas inquired as to why information concerning the recent decision to suspend the Fiat Lux Project was not included in the Report. Senator Campbell noted that this was due to the timing of the Fiat Lux decision taking place after the preparation of the Report.

**7.2 Annual Report of the Committee on Enrolment and Student Affairs** (D24-10)

Senator Campbell presented this annual report for information. She explained that provided an overview of activities undertaken by the Committee over the period 2023-2024, as well as related statistical information.

**8. Other Business**

There being no other business to deal with, on a motion duly proposed and seconded, the meeting ended at 4:39 p.m.

**END**

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