

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION
OF THE MEETING OF SENATE

Held on Friday, September 13, 2019, immediately
following the Closed Session meeting,
in Room MB 2.430 on the SGW Campus

PRESENT

Voting members: Graham Carr (*Chair*); Ali Akgunduz; Amir Asif; Leslie Barker; Matthew Barker; Arshdeep Singh Bhatia; Pascale Biron; Elizabeth Bloodgood; Catherine Bolton; Christopher Brett; John Capobianco (*Acting for André Roy*); Sally Cooke; Mark Corwin; Frank Crooks; Anne-Marie Croteau; Ricardo Dal Farra; Rebecca Duclos; Mehdi Farashahi; Ariela Freedman; Vince Graziano; Jarrad Hass; Chris Kalafatidis; Helena Osana; Gilles Peslherbe; Colin Philip; Justin Powlowski (*Acting for Christophe Guy*); Martin Pugh; Patrick Quinn; Marguerite Rolland; Timir Baran Roy; Catherine Russell; Bayan Abu Safieh; Anmol Singh; Matt Soar; Reza Soleymani; Marlena Valenta; Victoria Videira; Anne Whitelaw; Paula Wood-Adams; Radu Zmeureanu

Non-voting members: Johanne Beaudoin; Denis Cossette; Roger Côté; Nadia Hardy; Tom Hughes; Ilze Kraulis (*Acting for Stéphanie de Celles*); Frederica Jacobs

ABSENT

Voting members: Shimon Amir; Guylaine Beaudry; Alex De Visscher; Robert Soroka; Ron Stern; Jean-Philippe Warren

Non-voting members: Philippe Beaugard; Paul Chessser, Isabel Dunnigan

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 2:17 p.m.

1.1 Approval of Agenda

R-2019-4-4 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda of the Open Session be approved.*

1.2 Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of May 17, 2019

A correction will be brought to the Minutes to indicate Department of Education in lieu of Department of English in the first paragraph of item 8.3 on page 5.

R-2019-4-5 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of May 17, 2019, be approved as revised.*

2. Business arising from the Minutes not included on the Agenda

Dr. Carr apprised Senators that the follow-up presentation by the Chair of the Concordia University Foundation is scheduled for the November Senate meeting.

3. President's remarks

During the course of his remarks, the President commented that the summer had been very active on both campuses, noting that the University had hosted an impressive number of successful academic and non-academic activities, including summer schools, camps, workshops, festivals and events aimed at engaging students, faculty, staff, alumni as well as members of the Montreal community.

Dr. Carr was pleased to underline that Concordia had made a significant leap in the Center for World University Rankings (CWUR), rising 144 spots to 575th of more than 20,000 universities ranked worldwide. He also apprised Senators of recent fundraising activities including his visit to Hong Kong to attend the 20th anniversary gala of that alumni chapter to raise funds for student scholarships and to support the comprehensive campaign.

He updated Senators on recent awards and research and funding grants as well as the following appointments:

- France Bigras, Associate Vice-President, Information Systems and Chief Information Officer
- Alex Aragona, Executive Director, Application Portfolio Management and Chief Information Security Officer
- Daniel Therrien, Executive Director, Strategic Business Units Compliance and Support
- Donna Goodleaf, Interim Senior Director, Indigenous Directions
- Eunice Bélidor, Director, FOFA Gallery

The President spoke of the status of some infrastructure projects. He also reminded Senators about the ongoing mandatory sexual violence awareness and prevention training across the University, noting that the training video, developed by the Sexual Assault Resource Centre in collaboration with KnowledgeOne, has been adopted by several other post-secondary education institutions in Quebec and in other provinces. He also noted that the deadline for completing the training is October 4, 2019.

He concluded his remarks by encouraging Senators to participate in Homecoming, held from September 17 to 24, the President's Welcome Events, held on September 17 on the SGW Campus and September 19 on the Loyola Campus, and the 30th edition of the Shuffle on September 27.

4. Academic update (Document US-2019-4-D2)

As complimentary information to her written report, Dr. Whitelaw congratulated Guylaine Beaudry who will be inducted into the Royal Society of Canada (RSC) and Alice Ming Wai Jim who will be inducted into the RSC's College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists.

She also informed Senators that on October 21, 2019, federal election day, the University will remain open all day and all classes, laboratories, academic activities and services will continue as normally scheduled. All of the information is also posted on the University website.

CONSENT

5. Committee appointments (Document US-2019-4-D3 - revised)

R-2019-4-6 *That the committee appointments, outlined in Document US-2019-4-D3 revised, be approved.*

6. Academic Programs Committee: Report and recommendations (Document US-2019-4-D4)

6.1 Undergraduate curriculum proposals - Faculty of Arts and Science

6.1.1 Department of Education (Document US-2019-4-D5)

6.1.2 Department of Political Science (Document US-2019-4-D6)

6.1.3 Department of Sociology and Anthropology (Document US-2019-4-D7)

6.1.4 Simone de Beauvoir Institute and Women's Studies (Document US-2019-4-D8)

R-2019-4-7 *That the undergraduate curriculum proposals in the Faculty of Arts and Science be approved.*

6.2 Undergraduate curriculum proposals - Faculty of Fine Arts - Department of Creative Arts Therapies (Document US-2019-4-D9)

R-2019-4-8 *That the undergraduate curriculum proposals in the Faculty of Fine Arts be approved.*

6.3 Undergraduate curriculum proposals - John Molson School of Business - Department of Accountancy (Document US-2019-4-D10)

R-2019-4-9 *That the undergraduate curriculum proposals in the John Molson School of Business be approved.*

6.4 Graduate curriculum proposals – Faculty of Arts and Science – Department of Education (Document US-2019-4-D11)

R-2019-4-10 That the graduate curriculum proposals in the Faculty of Arts and Science be approved.

6.5 Graduate curriculum proposals – Faculty of Fine Arts – Department of Creative Arts Therapies (Documents US-2019-4-D12 and D13)

R-2019-4-11 That the graduate curriculum proposals in the Faculty of Fine Arts be approved.

6.6 Graduate curriculum proposals – Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science –Department of Mechanical, Industrial and Aerospace Engineering (Document US-2019-4-D14)

R-2019-4-12 That the graduate curriculum proposals in the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science be approved.

REGULAR AGENDA

7. Annual report of the academic hearing panel (Document US-2019-4-D15)

Me Sullivan presented the highlights of the report, which is provided annually for information purposes in accordance with the requirements set out in Article 94 of the Academic Code of Conduct and responded to questions.

8. Update on Fall Reading Break

Dr. Whitelaw noted that following a presentation by the undergraduate students at the March 2019 Senate meeting, the President had asked her to put together a working group to look into the feasibility of instituting a Fall reading week. While this working group is not a committee of Senate, she assured Senate that it has full representation from students, faculty and key administrative staff from the relevant units.

She noted that three meetings had been held during the summer. Discussions were based on the premise that students can benefit from such a break, further to which two potential approaches have been identified:

1. Begin the Fall semester before Labor Day. Consideration needs to be given to the additional costs of this option, especially for international students, as well as student orientation activities, etc. The earliest possible date to start the semester in any given year would be August 28.
2. Move to a 12-week term: While there are many precedents for this, this option needs to be considered from a pedagogical standpoint as well as the accreditation requirements of certain programs, and the group is still gathering research on this issue.

Dr. Whitelaw concluded by apprising that next steps include consulting students, faculty and staff, which includes adding a question in the upcoming CSU referendum, and that the earliest possible date to implement would be for Fall 2021.

9. Report and recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review Senate Eligibility Requirements (Document US-2019-4-D16)

The President recapitulated the background leading to the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review Senate Eligibility Requirements (the “Committee”) and invited its Chair, David Morris, together with Committee members Mikaela Clark-Gardner and Sandra Gabriele, to address Senate.

A one-page document entitled *2018-19 Ad Hoc Committee to Review Senate Eligibility Requirements* was distributed to Senators, with a line by line walkthrough of the recommended changes to article 64 b) along with brief explanations of the proposed changes. This document, complimentary to the full reasoned report included under Document US-2019-4-D16, was provided for clarity during the discussion and vote.

Prof. Morris gave a brief review of the context and mandate of the Committee. He provided a synopsis of the Committee’s reasoning and deliberations, noting that the majority recommendation is based on principled as well as pragmatic reasons, as follows.

Under the current By-Laws, students may only serve on Senate if they are registered in a program and in at least one course for each of the Fall and Winter terms and are in acceptable academic standing. Supported by the Committee’s research, he provided a detailed explanation on how the acceptable standing requirement can lead to unfair and inequitable results, which could cause one student being able to correct their standing situation and become eligible to serve, while another with a very similar situation might not.

In light of the foregoing, the Committee recommended a revision to substantially preserve the *in program* path, while adding a new path for eligibility, not based on current academic standing, but on acquired academic experience, namely the requirement to have completed 9 credits, in the case of undergraduate students, and 6 credits, in the case of graduate students in the previous academic year, and also being enrolled in 6 credits in the current academic year. The point was made that this would also assess overall academic ability, and that students in failed standing, who may not register in courses, would remain ineligible to serve on Senate.

The foregoing deliberations on this new path to eligibility led to the Committee discussion on the possibility for allowing a limited number of independent students to serve on Senate. Prof. Morris reminded Senate that independent students are enrolled in courses for credit but are not enrolled in a program. He summarized the Committee’s reasoning for proposing that a limited number of independent students (up to two) be allowed to serve on Senate, in recognition of the perspective they can bring, other than that of being in a specific program. Additionally, this would result in Senate being a governing body inclusive of a diversity and variety of student experiences and in

alignment with the University's strategic directions. Prof. Morris also made the point that allowing for the appointment of two independent students would close the door on a longstanding recurring issue.

While stating the view that students should be trusted to appoint their own representatives, Ms. Clark-Gardner said that the undergraduate students were pleased with the compromise. She added that the CSU has its own appointment process which is not solely based on academic standing. She assured Senators that the CSU would not appoint independent students to the Academic Programs Committee.

Prof. Gabriele conveyed her support for the path change with respect to academic standing. However, as the Chair of the Academic Programs Committee, she explained why she was unable to support the recommendation of allowing for the appointment of independent students to the University's highest academic body.

Following the presentation of the report, a discussion ensued, during which Prof. Morris responded to some questions of clarification regarding the current composition of Senate regarding the allocation per faculty basis of seats among the 12 undergraduate students and the reasons for proposing up to two independent undergraduate students.

The main arguments in favor of the proposal are summarized as follows:

- Independent students have opportunities to engage and learn through other students and can also offer a different perspective because of greater exposure to areas of the University.
- The importance of having a diversity of student experiences was emphasized, in keeping with some of the strategic directions, namely *Go Beyond*, *Mix it Up* and *Take Pride*.
- The CSU vets all its appointees. It is not in the CSU's best interest to send unmotivated representatives. Students can have other exceptional qualities that are not reflected by their grades.
- Concordia is the only university in the top 15 comprehensive category imposing a GPA requirement.
- Students on Senate should be representative of the entire student body, not just academically-exceptional students.

The main arguments against the proposal are summarized as follows:

- Changes were made a few years ago to avoid lifelong student Senators. Other changes to eligibility have been made throughout the years. Senate should stop considering changes to rules simply because someone asks. This institution is bigger than any individual. Instead of changing the system, Senate members should fit the system.
- Students are here to learn, not to become members of Senate. Those who are having academic difficulties should leave their place to others.
- Senate is not a purely democratic body where anyone can be appointed.

Other concerns are summarized as follows:

- The current drafting of the proposal does not limit the number of independent graduate students, which is problematic. There should be none. It was indicated that this had not been specifically addressed, since independent student representation had been solely an undergraduate student issue over the past 15 years. Further to this intervention, a graduate student Senator indicated that the GSA would like to have the option to appoint independent graduate students to Senate. It was also specified that the CSU has two seats reserved for independent students on its council - one executive and one other council member - but that the GSA has none on its council.
- Some Senators questioned the interpretation of “completed”. It was clarified that a student who fulfills a course according to the stated requirements has completed it. That said, it was agreed to tweak the wording so that it read “successfully completed”. Another point was raised that the grade of “C” is required in some GCS pre-requisite courses to be able to take another GCS course. The point was made that this is not relevant in the context of determining whether or not a student has successfully complete their course for the purpose of Senate eligibility requirements.

Based on the various interventions during the discussion, it became apparent to the Chair and the Secretary that several Senators supported the first part of the proposed change to article 64 b) with respect to the academic standing component but not the second regarding the independent students.

Consequently, it was decided to conduct a vote to seek Senate’s support on the first part of the proposed changes with respect to the new path for program students. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the majority of Senators voted in favor of supporting the first part of the proposed change regarding the academic standing component.

The vote was then conducted to seek Senator’s support that no more than two undergraduate students and no graduate student be appointed to Senate. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the majority of Senators voted in favor of supporting the aforementioned proposal.

The final wording of article 64 b) will be reworded to reflect the outcome of both votes and incorporated the resolution as follows.

R-2019-4-13 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was resolved that Senate recommend to the Board of Governors that it amend article 64 b) of the By-Laws to read as follows:

Article 64

- b) Students elected to Senate shall be registered in at least six (6) credits in the then-current academic year and shall meet one of the following requirements:*

- i) be in acceptable standing in their undergraduate program or in good standing in their graduate program; or*
- ii) have successfully completed, in the previous academic year, a minimum of nine (9) credits in the case of undergraduate students or six (6) credits in the case of graduate students.*

Notwithstanding the above, no more than two (2) undergraduate students Senators and no graduate student Senator may be independent students.

The credits specified in this article shall be taken at Concordia University.

Registration, credits and standing shall be verified by the Secretary of Senate at least twice a year, normally in September and January.

Upon graduation, any student elected to Senate ceases to be eligible and may no longer serve on Senate.

10. Question period

In response to a question from Ms. Rolland, Dr. Whitelaw said that Donna Goodleaf will continue to serve as the Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogical Advisor in the Centre for Teaching and Learning while serving as Interim Senior Director, Indigenous Directions in the Office of the Provost. She added that the search for the latter position is underway and that it is expected to be filled by January.

11. Other business

There was no other business to bring before the meeting.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:27 p.m.



Danielle Tessier
Secretary of Senate