

**MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION
OF THE MEETING OF SENATE**

Held on Friday, March 19, 2021, at 2 p.m.
via Zoom Video Conferencing

PRESENT

Voting members: Graham Carr (*Chair*); Md Foysal Ahmed; Adewunmi Ajike; Ali Akgunduz; Shimon Amir; Nicholas Bailey; Leslie Barker; Matthew Barker; Elizabeth Bloodgood; Catherine Bolton; Christopher Brett; Sally Cooke; Frank Crooks; Anne-Marie Croteau; Selvadurai Dayanandan; Mourad Debbabi; Alex De Visscher; Effrosyni Diamantoudi; Linda Dyer; Mary Esteve; Mehdi Farashahi; Elizabeth Fast; Ariela Freedman; Annie Gérin; Vince Graziano; James Hanna; Fiona Harrison-Roberts; Safwan Hye; Debra Irabor; Hannah Jamet-Lange; Isaiah Joyner; Lorie Kloda (*Acting for Guylaine Beaudry*); Colin Long; Sarah Mazhero; Christopher Moore; Catherine Mulligan; Helena Osana; Virginia Penhune; Gilles Peslherbe; Duraichelvan Raju; Pascale Sicotte; Reza Soleymani; Robert Soroka; Ron Stern; Alexander Stojda; Kelly Thompson; Guylaine Vaillancourt; Anne Whitelaw; Paula Wood-Adams; Radu Zmeureanu

Non-voting members: Philippe Beauregard; Paul Chesser; Denis Cossette; Stéphanie de Celles; Tom Hughes; Candace Jacobs; Frederica Jacobs

Also attending: Shelina Houssenaly; Marias Paraschivoiu

ABSENT

Voting members: Sri Divya Doppalapudi; Samantha Leger; Praneetha Reddy

Non-voting members: Michael Di Grappa; Isabel Dunnigan; Nadia Hardy

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m.

1.1 Adoption of the Agenda

R-2021-2-1 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda of the Open Session be approved.*

1.2 Adoption of February 19, 2021 Minutes

R-2021-2-2 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of February 19, 2021.*

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

There was no business arising from the Minutes not included on the Agenda.

3. President's remarks

The President conveyed the following to Senators:

- As of March 8, students may book spaces, up to 6 per room, for social-distancing activities on both of our campuses, as a countermeasure to the isolation experienced by students, faculty and staff.
- In newly released QS World University Rankings, Concordia appeared in 15 subject rankings, advancing in five of those subject areas over last year. Our best ranked subject is Art and Design, which is among the world's top 100 and second in Canada.
- He apprised Senate of several awards, fellowships and prizes received by recent graduates, students and faculty members.
- The Concordia Institute of Aerospace Design and Innovation, in collaboration with FutureReady, launched the Leadership Agility in Aerospace student program. On March 16, panelists from Concordia, CAE, Optima Aero and Polytechnique Montréal joined to discuss opportunities in this industry.
- Concordia Library's 2020/2021 exhibition series is now underway. *Take a Moment for Representation: An Anti-Racism Series* is the Library's inaugural digital exhibition.
- The Concordia-led Landscape of Hope initiative received nearly \$430,000 to significantly expand its work researching hate speech and discrimination in Quebec.
- Concordia launched an equity census to help Concordia achieve its goal to see all members of the community not only reflected, but welcomed, included and supported in their efforts to contribute to all areas of university life.
- The Sustainability Living Lab, a flagship Concordia initiative, was launched through a partnership with the Sustainability Action Fund (SAF) for the Sustainability Living Labs Funding Program. The University will be contributing \$40,000 towards projects, which will be matched by the SAF.

- Concordia Hospitality's Food Services and Aramark will participate in an event titled "*Cuisine Solidaire*" with *La tablée des chefs* in March, with the goal of preparing 1,000 meals to distribute to local shelters.
- The Task Force on Anti-Black Racism hosted a workshop called *Allyship as a Practice* on March 17. The workshop was intended for faculty and staff, to help them understand allyship and understand anti-Black racism.
- The University is currently planning for the fall, while monitoring the evolving public health situation, with the objective of significantly increasing in-person teaching and activities while also continuing to deliver some courses online. Departments are working to establish priorities and a more extensive use of our scheduling options. The intention is to finalize by early May, so that students, faculty and staff can plan accordingly. Registration numbers are very good, and we are anticipating a robust summer enrollment. That said, the public health situation is fluid but trending in positive direction. It is encouraging but we need to plan based on the information available now.

4. **Academic update** (US-2021-2-D1)

Dr. Whitelaw has no additional information to her written report.

CONSENT

5. **Academic Planning and Priorities report** (US-2021-2-D2)

This report was provided for information.

6. **Academic Programs Committee – Report and recommendations** (US-2021-2-D3)

6.1 **Undergraduate curriculum proposals – Faculty of Arts and Science**

6.1.1 **Department of Theology** (US-2021-2-D4)

6.1.2 **Department of Education** (US-2021-2-D5)

R-2021-2-3 *That the undergraduate curriculum proposals in the Faculty of Arts and Science be approved.*

6.2 **Graduate curriculum proposals – John Molson School of Business**

6.2.1 **Master's programs – Co-op** (US-2021-2-D6)

6.2.2 **Master of Science (Finance)** (US-2021-2-D7)

6.2.3 **Master of Science (Administration, Decision Sciences and Management Information Systems) Option** (US-2021-2-D8)

R-2021-2-4 *That the graduate curriculum proposals in the John Molson School of Business be approved.*

REGULAR**7. Proposal regarding Fall Reading Week (US-2021-2-D9)**

Dr. Whitelaw conveyed the background which led to today's proposal, including a presentation to Senate by the CSU in March 2019.

The objective of this proposal entails scheduling a one-week reading break which would benefit students and faculty, during the week of the Thanksgiving holiday. Although implementation could be achieved by starting classes in August before Labor Day, the recommendation is to move to a 12-week teaching semester, for both the winter and fall semesters.

For students, the benefits of a break from taking classes include time to catch up on coursework, accommodating students who wish to travel home to visit family, significant mental health benefits, such as lowering anxiety and stress, thereby creating conditions for improved student success.

For faculty members, the benefits of a break from teaching include time to catch up on teaching activities, such as course preparation and grading, providing intensive research time in the middle of the semester, supporting writing of grant applications during high season, facilitating the planning of out-of-town academic outreach activities, thereby providing a more flexible work environment.

Dr. Whitelaw made the point that adopting this proposal would also result in an additional amount of time between the end of the fall term and the beginning of the winter term. She spoke of the practices at other Canadian and Quebec universities, several of which have a full fall reading week and 12-week terms.

She informed Senate of the work done by the Fall Reading Week Working Group, created in 2019 with wide representation, and that their discussions led to the following proposals, with strongest support for Option 1:

- Option 1: Move to 12-week teaching semesters (fall/winter/summer) and introduce a week-long reading break in the week of Thanksgiving.
- Option 2: Keep the existing 13-week semester with a week-long fall break around Thanksgiving and begin classes before Labor Day, at the earliest August 28 of any given year.

The advantages identified for Option 1 would be:

- Maintaining the start of the semester after Labor Day;
- Delaying the start of the winter semester by a week, thereby allowing similar benefits for the winter semester of an additional week between end of fall and start of winter; and

- Refocusing teaching and learning in terms of learning outcomes rather than contact or credit hours.

The challenges of Option 1 consist in:

- Course content and delivery may need to be adjusted or updated;
- Accredited programs may need to adjust their programs to fulfill accreditation body requirements;
- Internships may need some adjusting from a scheduling standpoint;
- Perceptions that we are teaching “less” will need to be addressed; and
- Refocusing attention on “learning outcomes” and “student academic activities” rather than “credit hours” will be key.

Option 2 would offer the advantage that there would be no change to the delivery of our existing 13-week term, with the following drawbacks:

- Increased costs to students for rent, health insurance for international students with an August start of the term;
- Very short break at the end of the second summer term;
- Reduced opportunities for orientation and other pre-semester activities; and
- Reduced co-op experience and summer employment if the fall semester starts before Labor Day.

Dr. Whitelaw outlined how the proposed plan to offer 12-week teaching would address the concerns and satisfy the requirements of accredited programs and internships. She concluded her presentation by noting that wide consultation had been done with the Faculties, that calendar and course development will occur from summer 2021 to summer 2022, which will allow the appropriate work to be done for implementation in the fall 2023 term.

Following this presentation, a discussion ensued, during which Dr. Whitelaw responded to questions of clarification.

Several Senators, including students, faculty members and Deans, spoke in favor of the proposal.

Prof. Osana voiced her opposition to the proposal and conveyed the concerns of the Department of Education, arguing that Concordia already has less contact hours than similar programs at other universities. Further reducing the contact hours could be problematic for those students who would want to transfer credits to other institutions. She also spoke of potential issues with accreditation and explained how reducing the term would negatively impact internships, thereby placing students at a disadvantage.

Responding to the above comments, Dr. Whitelaw said that the concern about transferring credits had been raised with the Registrar, who indicated that

transferability of credits would not be a problem. With respect to the pedagogy, she agreed to disagree, making the point that the focus should be on what happens in the classroom and not on the amount of time. She added that the fall 2023 implementation will allow the time to find solutions for potential issues, such as accreditation and accommodating internships.

While acknowledging that this would be a major shift, she reiterated that the two-year implementation timeline is important since it will allow to work out the kinks.

R-2021-2-5 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was resolved that Senate approve the implementation of a Fall Reading Week and resulting adjustments to the length of the Fall and Winter terms, effective as of the Fall 2023 term, in accordance with Document US-2021-2-D9, and more specifically:*

- *The Fall term which will be comprised of 12 weeks of classes or instructional activities and a one-week reading break which will take place during the week of the Thanksgiving Holiday; and*
- *The Winter term which will be comprised of 12 weeks of classes or instructional activities to be symmetrical with the Fall term.*

8. Question period

Responding to a query from Prof. Dyer about whether the results of the equity survey would be released, Dr. Whitelaw answered that the survey was done in conjunction with the Human Resources Department but she would get back to her.

Mr. Joyner asked if students would continue to be involved in the Fall Reading Week Working Group. Dr. Whitelaw replied that students need to be involved in all parts of the process.

In preparation of an eventual return to in-person classes in the fall and referring to the ventilation in the Hall Building, Prof. Esteve wondered if instructors will be vaccinated before September. Dr. Carr clarified that the ventilation is running at a normal capacity in all campus buildings except for the annexes on Mackay and Bishop streets. The government's current vaccination strategy is by age group but is piloting other initiatives. The University is very actively advocating with the federal government for a vaccination strategy regarding international students.

9. Other business

There was no other business to bring before the meeting.

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:51 p.m.



Danielle Tessier
Secretary of Senate