

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

Friday, December 10, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.
via Zoom video conferencing

PRESENT

Voting Members: Graham Carr (Chair), Shimon Amir, Leslie Barker, Matthew Barker, Guylaine Beaudry, Elizabeth Bloodgood, Catherine Bolton, Lovina Angela Brown, Boutaina Chafi, Queenie Hui Jing Chen, Demetre Christopoulos, Sally Cooke, Anne-Marie Croteau, Alexandra Dawson, Selvadurai Dayanandan, Alex De Visscher, Mourad Debbabi, Larry Deck, Effrosyni Diamantoudi, Riya Dutta, Linda Dyer, Mary Esteve, Mehdi Farashahi, Ariela Freedman, Annie Gérin, Marina Ghali, Nicolka Gorel, Abdelwahab Hamou-Lhadj, Hannah Jamet-Lange, Moshe Lander, Eduardo Malorni, Peter Morden, Catherine Mulligan, Satinder Pal Singh, Gilles Peslherbe, Duraichelvan Raju, Jasmine Ramcharitar-Brown, Lourdu Reddy Allam, Rosemary Reilly, Pascale Sicotte, Reza Soleymani, Robert Soroka, Craig Townsend, Guylaine Vaillancourt, Jean-Philippe Warren, Deeva Wazir, Anne Whitelaw, Shaina Willison, Paula Wood-Adams, Radu Grigore Zmeureanu

Non-voting members: Philippe Beauregard, Denis Cossette, Stéphanie de Celles, Michael Di Grappa, Isabel Dunnigan, Nadia Hardy, Tom Hughes, Candace Jacobs, Frederica Jacobs, Émilie Martel

Also attending: Richard Courtemanche, Cody Hyndman, Karan Singh, Melodie Sullivan, Celeste Trianon, Lisa White

ABSENT

Voting members: Joanna Berzowska, Prady Cassandra Ngouma Wa, Kelly Thompson

Non-voting members: Paul Chesser

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 2:09 p.m.

Dr. Carr requested Senators to not use the public chat feature on Zoom, unless they needed to communicate with the Secretary of Senate, S. Housseny, which they could do so directly using the private chat feature.

1.1 Approval of the Agenda

R-2021-8-1 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda of the Open Session be approved.

1.2 Adoption of October 8, 2021 Minutes

R-2021-8-2 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of October 8, 2021, be adopted.

1.3 Adoption of November 12, 2021 Minutes

R-2021-8-3 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of November 12, 2021, be adopted.

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

In relation to a question asked at the last Senate meeting regarding the issuance of Concordia's food services contract, M. Di Grappa informed Senate that the current contract was going to expire on May 31, 2022 and that the University would be going through the process of selecting a new provider. M. Di Grappa outlined that, with a contract worth \$20 million in gross sales over the next four years, the University needs to ensure that the selection process is fair, competitive and transparent, and open to qualified food services providers capable of meeting the requirements set by the University. M. Di Grappa mentioned a few key requirements, such as the provider's capacity to offer high quality nutritious food and daily meal plans for up to 1000 students in residence that are affordable as well as its capacity to incorporate the principals of sustainability in their daily operations. Additionally, he mentioned that the provider would also have to demonstrate experience and expertise in the delivery of these services as well as the financial capacity to undertake a contract of this magnitude.

M. Di Grappa further informed Senate that given the changed landscape since the pandemic, there was a smaller pool of providers. He apprised Senators that the University will be inviting several qualified companies, including two that are Québec based, one fully Canadian owned as well as the three largest in Canada in the food services industry. He reported that the CSU and the Concordia Food Coalition asked the University to consider a Manitoba based company, and the University had reduced the annual sales threshold requirement to allow for the company to participate; however, the company ultimately decided not to submit a bid, as they didn't have the capacity for such a contract. M. Di Grappa further elaborated that other important considerations would be that the provider source local food, have in place a waste management program, be committed to customer service and demonstrate a commitment to sustainability and corporate social

responsibility in their practises. He also noted that regardless of the company selected, the University would be able to meet its sustainability goals.

3. President's remarks

The President's remarks are summarized as follows:

- Dr. Carr began with an update on the COVID situation: as of December 7, four new cases had been recorded from the previous week; these were individuals who had developed symptoms while on campus or tested positive within 48 hours of having been on campus, however none of these cases were attributable to contact or activities while on campus.
- Dr. Carr shared news with Senate of a new Rhodes Scholarship awardee, Sabine Plummer, a first Concordia student in a decade and the 11th Concordian to be awarded this great honor. He apprised Senate that S. Plummer, an undergraduate student in chemistry, with a minor in multidisciplinary sciences and art history, is one of two from Québec who has been awarded the scholarship for this year and is going to Oxford University in the fall. He mentioned that S. Plummer was also a recipient of an NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award and played a key role in establishing Concordia's Stronger Than Stigma chapter, which aims to destigmatize mental health and offers resources.
- Dr. Carr also shared the news of Aiden Cyr, an undergraduate student in the School of Community and Public Affairs who is doing work in First People's Studies, becoming the first Concordian to win the prestigious Schwarzman Scholar Award, which is about cultivating global leaders for the 21st century. He noted that this award will allow A. Cyr to pursue masters-level research at Tsinghua University in Beijing, the top university in Asia and ranked by Times Higher Education in the top 20 world-wide.
- Dr. Carr congratulated other graduate awardees:
 - Zhengchen Cai, a 2021 PhD graduate in Physics, earned a Student Research Excellence Award from the Society for Functional Near-Infrared Spectroscopy for their research on blood flow activities of the human brain.
 - Paola Marino, a master's student in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, won the People's Choice Award from Science Exposed, the annual competition from NSERC to celebrate the best student science photography in the country.
- President Carr informed Senate that Concordia Stinger Ambre Mah-Fifi was named to the women's rugby first all-Canadian team at the U SPORTS Gala in Kingston, Ontario. He mentioned that A. Mah-Fifi is a third-year Film Animation student and has served as a team captain of the Stingers this year.

- He also extended congratulations to the men's rugby team who won the consolation title at the National Championships held at Queen University two weeks ago, and who finished 5th overall in Canada.
- Dr. Carr informed Senate that November 17 marked the launch of the University's first Indigenous research centre, the Indigenous Futures Research Centre, which is co-directed by Heather Igloliorte and Jason Edward Lewis and supports the University's Indigenous Directions Action Plan by serving as a destination for those committed to research on Indigenous communities, scholarship and practice worldwide.
- President Carr informed Senate that Concordia's Next-Generation Cities Institute celebrated its one-year anniversary on November 26 and has a new space on the 14th floor of the ER Building. He noted that the Institute is also home to the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Smart, Sustainable and Resilient Communities and Cities.
- Dr. Carr informed Senate that the renovations to all of University's space in the ER building were now complete, offering brand new facilities to the Departments of Computer Science and Software Engineering; Geography, Planning and Environment; Simone de Beauvoir Institute; Creative Arts Therapies, as well as several university research units, including EngAGE – the center on aging. The President noted that as more and more students, faculty and staff have been returning to campus this fall or will do so in the beginning of January, they will discover the impressive transformations that have taken place in the ER and Hall buildings downtown and in the new Applied Science Hub at Loyola. Dr. Carr thanked Facilities Management for their incredible work during the pandemic to complete these repairs.
- President Carr shared with Senate that, for the second year in a row, Concordia was ranked in the Top 50 Graduate Schools for Entrepreneurship Studies (ranked 45th) by the Princeton Review and that Concordia was the only Canadian university included on the list.
- Dr. Carr shared news about the President's Media Outreach Awards and Newsmaker Virtual Celebration, which took place on December 1. He reported that these awards honoured newsmakers from 2020-2021 and 2019-2020 for promoting both their work and Concordia in the media, and that Rémi Quirion, Québec's Chief Scientist, joined the event.
- Dr. Carr informed Senate that in-person convocation ceremonies will be starting on January 18, 2022, with additional events scheduled in February, where the University will be welcoming graduates from spring 2020, fall 2020 and spring 2021 as their ceremonies were suspended due to the pandemic.
- Dr. Carr informed Senate of the \$1 million dollar gift from the Calgary based Flanagan Foundation on December 1: the donation is aimed to support the

operations of Concordia's Social Justice Centre. He explained that the Centre was launched in 2019 with seed funding of \$200,000 from the Flanagan Foundation and the goal of the Centre is to investigate the systemic causes and effects of inequity and the ways that institutions and practices can better deliver economic, cultural, political, racial, gender and environmental justice.

- As part of the University's commitment to addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Dr. Carr reported on the University hosting the SDG Voluntary University Review launch event on November 29. He reported that an outstanding panel of internationally recognized experts, featuring: Éliane Ubalijoro (Executive Director of Sustainability in the Digital Age and Global Hub Director in Canada for Future Earth); John McArthur (Senior Fellow and Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at the Brookings Institution); Margaret Biggs (Chairperson of the International Development Research Centre); and Sarah Mendelson (Distinguished Service Professor of Public Policy and Head of Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College) participated in the event.
- Dr. Carr thanked members of the community who contributed to the annual successful Centraide Campaign which raised \$218,000, surpassing the goal of \$200,000. When factoring in matching gifts, he informed Senate that the total will exceed \$225,000. Dr. Carr reminded Senators that it was possible to donate to the campaign until December 31. He also made an appeal to Senators to consider giving to the Student Emergency and Food Fund.
- Dr. Carr concluded by thanking the community for the collective effort in observing the public health protocols, wished students the best for their exams and final assignments, and thanked faculty and staff for their outstanding efforts in the past months. He noted that the January semester would see close to 75-80% courses delivered in-person and more non-class-based activities. He wished everyone a good, healthy and relaxing holiday season.

4. Academic Update (Document US-2021-8-D1)

Dr. Whitelaw took the opportunity to echo the President's thoughts on the work community members had done. She also wanted to draw attention to the Teaching and Learning consultation mentioned in the academic report, informing Senators that the consultation had been launched and will continue in the new year. Dr. Whitelaw noted that this consultation was an opportunity for faculty and students to talk about teaching and learning, including specific approaches to teaching and learning. She encouraged everyone to visit the Teaching and Learning website for more information.

CONSENT

5. Committee appointments (Document US-2021-8-D2)

R-2021-8-4 That the committee appointments be approved.

6. Academic Programs Committee – Report and recommendations
(Document US-2021-8-D3)

R-2021-8-5 That the Academic Programs Committee - Report and recommendations (Document US-2021-8-D3) be approved.

7. Library Committee Report (Document US-2021-8-D4)

This report was submitted for information purposes.

REGULAR

8. Undergraduate curriculum proposal – New Minor in Quantitative Finance and Insurance (Document US-2021-8-D5)

Dr. Sicotte introduced the item, noting that the new minor in Quantitative Finance and Insurance was aimed at students pursuing an undergraduate degree outside of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics. Dr. Courtemache noted that the program is meant to help improve quantitative skills and could be interesting to students in Economics, Political Sciences and other areas. Dr. Hyndman underlined that this minor builds on strengths of the department’s actuarial science and financial mathematics programs and provides avenues for students to explore these disciplines, which are currently in high demand.

R-2021-8-6 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the curriculum proposal for the New Minor in Quantitative Finance and Insurance (Document US-2021-8-D5) be approved.

9. Progress report of the working group on Pass/DISC (Pass/Fail)
(Document US-2021-8-D6)

Dr. Carr informed Senate that after the CSU’s presentation on the Pass/DISC earlier in the fall, a working group was struck to provide a report to Senate and more information to be able to vote on the motion that was before the Senate. He noted that, as agreed by the working group, the joint presentation aims to provide the different points of view that were considered and is not meant to provide Senate with any recommendation.

H. Jamet-Lange and E. Malorni presented first and conveyed to Senators that given the continued effects of the pandemic, the students still felt that the continuation of the Pass/DISC option would provide them with the support they need. They informed Senate of the by-election that was held and the results demonstrating the undergraduate student community’s support for this option.

Dr. Whitelaw followed by presenting why there was reluctance to continue the option for a 3rd year. One of the reasons she mentioned was the lack of a GPA calculation for two full years, which resulted in the absence of an AGPA. She also pointed out the decline in numbers seeking assistance under the Skills for Success program, which showed that

students who needed the support were not getting the help they need. She apprised Senate of requests received from external universities and employers seeking to convert the Pass/DISC to a letter grade. Given the foregoing, she conveyed that the working group had proposed that the late DISC option be extended to all faculties and that this recommendation had been accepted by all faculties for immediate application; the option to withdraw would not impact the GPA and that there would be no impact on the full-time status of international students in case of such withdrawal.

A long discussion ensued during which some Senators spoke in favour of maintaining the Pass/DISC option, given the continued affect of the pandemic on students and the community at large, while many other Senators supported the return to the regular grading format, and making available other requisite support services from what had emerged as proposals by the working group.

R-2021-8-7 Upon motion moved and seconded, the motion did not pass.

Whereas the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing;

Whereas the mental health of students is still negatively affected despite the return to campus;

Whereas student's ability to succeed is still heavily affected by the impacts of the pandemic;

Whereas Concordia announced recently that students are able to discontinue their course up until the last day before the exam period for this current academic year which is a first step in supporting students who are struggling under high workload;

Whereas some students may not be able to use the late discontinue option as it might affect subsequent immigration processes or loans, as well as having financial impacts;

Whereas in a survey conducted by the CSU, a majority of student respondents asked for the return of Pass/DISC (also often referred to as Pass/Fail) as a means to alleviate stress and anxiety;

Whereas in the recent CSU Byelections, 93.8% of voters voted yes to the question "Do you believe Concordia University should implement the pass/fail option for this academic year and until the end of the pandemic?";

Whereas Concordia has stated its commitment to accessibility, addressing the diverse needs of students, and to listening to and working with students, as presented at the October Senate meeting; and

Whereas the mental health of our students has been consistently deemed an important topic to be addressed and prioritized by the administration;

That a Pass/DISC ("Pass/Fail") option be implemented for the 2021-22 academic year.

29 Senators voted against the motion and 15 in favor of the motion.

10. Presentations and motion regarding proposed Bill 2 (Document US-2021-8-D7)

C. Trianon, a trans rights advocate with the Centre for Gender Advocacy, made a presentation on the impacts of the new Bill 2 (*An Act respecting family law reform with regard to filiation and amending the Civil Code in relation to personality rights and civil status*) being brought by the Québec government and how the proposed family law reform would impact trans rights. C. Trianon explained the implications of Bill 2 and how it was going to impact rights of trans people, as the Bill required people to undergo surgery if they wish to change their sex on the birth certificate.

H. Jamet-Lange also spoke to the impact this would have on the students at the University, and that it was important for the University to be a safe and supportive space. H. Jamet-Lange informed Senate that in a by-election held by the CSU, students voted in favor of opposing Bill 2.

L. White, Executive Director of the Equity Office, made a presentation on the work and the role of the Equity Office and the University's continued commitment to removing barriers, and implementation of anti-discrimination practices and policies. L. White shared some initiatives that had been underway to support trans and non-binary community members, including: work towards an Equity policy, a new Equity Advisor to support student experience at the University, creating a resource package for LGBTQ+ community members, which would include on-campus resources to bring forward concerns and complaints, inclusive language project in collaboration with the Innovation Lab and equity in the classroom sessions, aimed at addressing inclusion practises with respect to gender identity and expression.

Following the presentations, a Senator requested clarification if the Senate was the appropriate forum to bring this item for discussion, as this was not related to an academic matter. Dr. Carr informed Senators that Senate had previously voted on a motion against Bill 21 and that the Senate Steering Committee had approved that this motion be brought before Senate. He also noted that the motion, if passed, spoke to the position of the Senate and not the University.

R-2021-8-8 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved:

Whereas Concordia University's Mission, Vision and Values statement expressly refers to:

- *Valuing the openness and respect necessary to provide opportunities to a highly diverse student and faculty population;*
- *Diversity at Concordia being interpreted broadly and embracing diversity in ethnicity, gender, language and accessibility; and*
- *Enabling faculty, staff and students to make a progressive impact on their world in ways that respect and engage the uniqueness of each individual;*

Whereas Concordia University is committed to promoting a healthy, secure, respectful and sustainable learning environment and workplace;

Whereas Concordia has often shown support for trans students and the Centre for Gender Advocacy, a Concordia student fee-levy group, has played a leading role in fighting for trans rights in Montreal and Quebec for many years;

Whereas Quebec Justice Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette has introduced Bill 2, An Act respecting family law reform with regard to filiation and amending the Civil Code in relation to personality rights and civil status ("Bill 2");

Whereas members of the Concordia community have expressed concerns that as drafted, certain provisions contained in Bill 2 could have the effect of:

- *Violating principles of self-determination, bodily autonomy, privacy, liberty and equality;*
- *Discriminating against and harming trans individuals; and*
- *Creating additional obstacles for trans individuals.*

It was unanimously resolved that Senate reaffirms the unifying values of Concordia University as an open, inclusive, highly diverse, respectful, secure, sustainable, accessible, and progressive university which is profoundly dedicated to these values as well as to recognizing the intersectionality of our community members;

Concordia University further commits to supporting its trans students, faculty, and staff; and

Senate objects to any actions that infringe upon those values or that commitment.

11. Question period

There were no questions asked during question period.

12. Other business

There was no other business to bring before the Open Session.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Shelina Houssenaly

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Secretary of Senate