

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

Friday, December 15, 2023,
following the Closed Session of Senate
in the Applied Science Hub Amphitheatre,
7141 Sherbrooke Street West (Room HU-125) Loyola Campus
and via Zoom video conferencing

PRESENT

Voting members:

Graham Carr (Chair)	Mourad Debbabi	Xavier Ottenwaelder
Angelica Antonakopoulos	Larry Deck	Robert Padmore
Leslie Barker	Effrosyni Diamantoudi	Mireille Paquet (zoom)
Matthew Barker (zoom)	Mehdi Farashahi	Deep Patel
Sabine Bergler	Ariela Freedman (zoom)	Mahshid Rahbari (zoom)
Dominque Bérubé	Annie Gérin	Rosemary Reilly
Amy Buckland	Bonnie Harnden (zoom)	Pascale Sicotte
Alexandrah Cardona	Steve Henle (zoom)	Ahmed Soliman (zoom)
Sally Cooke (zoom)	Arnav Ishaan (zoom)	Sofiène Tahar (zoom)
Roy Cross	Dany-Ariel Ishimwe (zoom)	Craig Townsend
Anne-Marie Croteau	Michael Lecchino (zoom)	Roberto Viereck-Salinas
Fabienne Cyrius	Harley Martin	Anne Whitelaw
Niraj Dayanandan	David Morris (zoom)	
Selvadurai Dayanandan	Catherine Mulligan	

Non-voting members: Philippe Beauregard (zoom), Paul Chesser (zoom), Stéphanie de Celles, Michael Di Grappa (zoom), Isabel Dunnigan (zoom), Frederica Jacobs, Stefana Nita (zoom), Carlos Santana (left at 2:53 p.m.), Olivia Ward (zoom)

Also attending: Wayne Brake, William Cheaib, Richard Courtemanche, Saba Din (zoom), Riya Dutta, Amy Fish, Sandra Gabriele, Lisa Ostiguy, Andrew Ryder, Melodie Sullivan (zoom), Aisha Topsakal, Lisa White

ABSENT

Voting members:

Beverley Best	Mehdi Kharazmi	Véronique Pepin
Theresa Bianco	Raghulkanna Lakshmanan	Ian Rakita
Marina Ghali	Moshe Lander	Melissa Spiridigliozzi
Charles Rohinth Joseph	Christopher Moore	Radu Grigore Zmeureanu

Non-voting members: Denis Cossette, Nadia Hardy

1. Call to order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

1.1 Approval of the Agenda

R-2023-7-4 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda of the Open Session be approved.

1.2 Adoption of November 3, 2023, Minutes

R-2023-7-5 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of November 3, 2023, be adopted.

CONSENT

- **Tribunal Pool/Committee Appointments** (Document US-2023-7-D2)

R-2023-7-6 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Tribunal Pool and Committee appointments be approved.

- **Committee reports** (Document US-2023-7-D3)

These reports were provided for information only.

- **Academic Programs Committee – Report and recommendations**
(Document US-2023-7-D4)

R-2023-7-7 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the report and recommendations of the Academic Programs Committee be approved.

- **Revisions to the Policy on the Conferral of the Title of Distinguished Professor Emeriti or Distinguished Librarian Emeriti (US-3)** (Document US-2023-7-D5)

R-2023-7-8 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that, upon recommendation of Senate Steering, Senate approve the revisions to the Policy on the Conferral of the Title of Distinguished Professor Emeriti or Distinguished Librarian Emeriti (US-3), as outlined in the attached documents.*

REGULAR

- **Business arising from the Minutes not included on the Agenda**

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

- **President's remarks**
- Dr. Carr noted that the end of the term is one week away. Fall 2023 was a term that saw many challenges, notably the trifecta of the war in the Middle East crashing onto our campuses, the Québec government's announcement of increases to out-of-province and international tuition, and the acknowledgement – following the final calculations of registration numbers – that the University's deficit situation was more problematic than previously forecasted.
- He began by addressing the aftermath of the war in the Middle East and the continued need to maintain calm and respect on campus, with the continued right to assemble peacefully. He noted that the University is employing formal and informal measures under the Code of Rights and Responsibilities, as needed. A very delicate balance must be established given the diversity of views, both on Concordia's campuses and on other campuses around Canada. Dr. Carr also pointed out that Concordia's physical location makes it vulnerable to being used as a backdrop for protests. In recent weeks, there have been incidents where individuals have entered University premises and behaved in ways that contravene University codes, and, in those cases, Campus Safety and Prevention Services officers have either escorted the individuals from the building or in two cases, sought the support of the SPVM to do so.
- Dr. Carr expressed concern over the widespread sense of hurt over the tensions on campus stemming from the conflict in the Middle East. Many are confronting a sense of powerlessness to act, and with it – perhaps naturally – feelings of anger and the desire to finger point and blame. It is never acceptable – at Concordia or on any other campus – for community members to experience a sense of physical insecurity or a feeling of being unable to fully express one's views or display one's identity. The main message, however, is that it is equally the case that the solution to address this problem must be a collective effort. Dr. Carr called on all members of the University community to be ambassadors of empathy and respect.

- In speaking to student leaders, leaders of the University's unions, and University managers and directors, Dr. Carr has implored everyone to commit to the cause of making the campus whole again. Being doubly sensitive to what we say is crucial, as words and actions have consequences.
- Dr. Carr recognized that the University is caught up in external pressures, factors that cannot be controlled. He noted the need to find a way to navigate through these challenges. Several faculty members have expertise in conflict resolution and are being consulted in brainstorming actions and solutions. Conversations are underway seeking to identify initiatives - perhaps panels, symposia, listening circles with both internal and external experts and community members - to help the University community move forward. He reiterated the need to find ways to carry out difficult conversations on campus and invited senators to propose constructive avenues to encourage this to happen.
- It is also important to understand the role of universities in society. The university has enormous convening power, for the good of the country, city and province where we live and work and contribute.
- Dr. Carr affirmed his belief and hope that Concordia can make a positive contribution to the challenging times we find ourselves in, asserting that an overwhelming majority of the University community has no tolerance for intolerance. The recent events on campus have unfortunately caused the University to be cast in a negative light, and it is our duty to collectively push back against the narrative of caricaturing Concordia.
- Turning to the budget, Dr. Carr thanked all Department Chairs and other members of Senate who sent questions to the Budget Review Working Group and who attended the budget conversations led by D. Cossette and A. Whitelaw these last two weeks. Since the Quebec government's original October announcement on the increase in tuition, there has been an ongoing evaluation of what budgetary decisions need to be taken. He added that the student enrolment growth business model that Concordia and all other Québec universities currently rely on no longer corresponds to current student mobility patterns and thus must be revisited.
- Dr. Carr noted that, having been in a deficit situation for three consecutive years, Concordia is required to submit a deficit reduction plan to the government mapping a return to budget equilibrium in the next five years. The *Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur* has in principle approved the University's proposed plan and the plan also received Board approval the previous day.
- Noting the announcement from Minister Déry the previous day regarding tuition and francisation targets for anglophone institutions beginning in 2024 and 2025 respectively, Dr. Carr confirmed that beginning in Fall 2024, tuition for newly admitted out-of-province undergraduate students and students in course based masters programs will increase from \$9,000 to \$12,000 across the board and that none of the increased fees collected will be coming to the University. Newly

admitted international students in undergraduate and course-based masters programs will see their tuition fees regulated after being de-regulated in 2019. While the university will now receive grants for these students, the government will be clawing back \$17,000 per student resulting in a loss of between 5,500 and 6,000 in revenue for the university per student. Rather than increasing tuition for international students to compensate for the lost revenue, the university has taken the decision that new students will pay the tuition that was already advertised for 2024-25, as approved by the Board.

- The requirement to francise students will take effect for incoming students in Fall 2025. Originally, the leaders of the anglophone universities had proposed a target of 40% francisation when they presented their proposal to the Premier, but the government announcement unveiled a new target of 80% francisation for “non-Québécois” students. These unrealistic targets are setting the anglophone universities up for failure.
- While there is a lack of clarity from the government on the details, the University is already witnessing a drop in out-of-province applications of ~20%, and a 30% drop in international applications.
- The University will be developing targeted communications to students from the rest of Canada to explain the new tuition rules and to underline our value proposition. Concordia will also be focusing on recruitment within Québec and in francophone countries such as France and Belgium. It will be important to establish a new narrative that presents a Concordia education as a passport to opportunity for the future, and the support of our community, our Board, and our alumni will be critical for anchoring these values.
- Dr. Carr concluded his comments on the recent government announcement by acknowledging the petition submitted to the National Assembly in protest of the changes to the university funding formula. With over 33,000 signatures collected, this was the largest petition submitted to the National Assembly in 2023. He thanked everyone who rallied to the cause for their work and support.
- Dr. Carr went on to share some of the amazingly positive things that have been happening at Concordia. On November 28th, Concordia celebrated 1,200 of our newest graduates as they crossed the stage at convocation. Joining them at Place des Arts were three honorary doctorate recipients: Edward Rosenthal, BA 74, for his contributions to innovation in the agricultural industry; Farah Alibay, an aerospace engineer who promotes inclusion in STEM fields; and Anita Marangoly George, a business executive and leader of a sustainability fund for climate solutions in India.
- On the topic of sustainability, Concordia placed within the global top 100 universities in the 2024 QS Sustainability Rankings, in recognition of the University’s actions to tackle environmental, social and governance issues. Together with McGill and Université de Montréal, Concordia is one of only three Quebec universities to be in the top 100 ranking.

- Creative writing graduate Sarah Bernstein, BA 09, won the Scotiabank Giller Prize for her novel *Study for Obedience*. The prize is the biggest in Canadian literature, valued at \$100,000.
- Karim Zhagib, Professor of Chemical and Materials Engineering and the CEO of Voltage, was named a personality of the year by *l'Actualité* magazine for his position as a global leader in battery development, electrification and the green transition.
- Quebec's 2024 Rhodes Scholar-elect is recent Department of Journalism graduate Bogdan Lytvynenko. This is the second Rhodes Scholar for Concordia in three years - a testament to the calibre of our student body. At a recent breakfast with Dr. Carr, Lytvynenko explained that the reason he chose Concordia was because of his experience at Open House, so great credit to faculty and staff who contribute to these key events.
- Concordia aerospace engineering student Marion Thénault won aerials gold at the women's World Cup in Ruka, Finland, on December 3rd. Thénault, from Sherbrooke, Quebec, previously won Bronze at the Olympic games in Beijing in the inaugural Olympic mixed team aerials event.
- A Concordia student run literary journal, *Headlight Anthology*, won the *FORCES Avenir* award in the Arts, Literature and Culture category. The journal's three editors are Master's students in the Creative Writing program.
- Last week, Concordia celebrated 28 varsity athletes as Academic All-Canadians and Academic All-Stars. Emmy Fecteau, captain of the women's ice hockey team, was awarded the Joe and Ben Weider Athletic Leadership Award for academic success, exemplary achievements in sport and community contributions. Fecteau is a remarkable person; a francophone from La Beauce who is specializing in Teaching English as a Second Language. Together with their teammates and the other students noted in this report, they are wonderful ambassadors for what Concordia contributes to Quebec society.
- Those stories, these successes, are a reminder of the positive difference that Concordia can make in individuals' lives which is, after all, the core of our mission, and one that we carry out admirably. Dr. Carr concluded by encouraging everyone to keep the faith and remain committed to the ideals and the mission of the University.

2. Academic update (Document US-2023-7-D6)

A. Whitelaw noted that there was nothing to add to the written Academic Update that had been circulated with the meeting documentation. A. Whitelaw did make note that, while the formal announcement will follow, the CUFA collective agreement had received its members' ratification and also approval of the Board. She offered congratulations to the great work of the negotiating team.

3. Annual report of the Office of Rights and Responsibilities (Document US-2023-7-D7)

Aisha Topsakal presented the report and began by providing an overview of the work of the Office of Rights and Responsibilities during the reporting period from May 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023. The Office received 372 new cases, which was slightly more than the previous year. 32 files were carried over from the previous year. Of the total files, 69% required consultation, 11% were referred to Student Tribunals, and 10% were Student of Concern files. Fewer members have filed formal complaints; however, the complexities of files continue. More and more requests have been coming into the Office for support for students who are still reeling from the isolation that was caused by the pandemic. The Office consistently worked with other offices like the Ombuds Office, the Equity Office and other services to ensure the best coordination of services that were offered to the community.

Harassment was the most cited matter that came to the Office. Throughout the reporting year, the Office's priority was to equip the community with the tools to deal with issues. A. Topsakal acknowledged the support and work at department levels, where de-escalation was always undertaken before a matter was brought to the office.

A. Topsakal then provided a few examples of the files that had come to the Office. One dossier related to a student who was looking to act in a manner that could have been detrimental to them. Campus Safety was alerted, and they were able to locate the student and bring them to medical services and the Office helped pair them with a social worker. In another matter, a staff member complained of psychological harassment by a manager. There was an investigation and the manager received a disciplinary letter and was mandated to complete training. On a final matter, a student was being followed by an ex-boyfriend. The Office was able to inform security, ban the ex-boyfriend from campus, and provide accompaniment to the student in following up with the SPVM.

A. Topsakal noted that, while the previous months had overall been difficult for the community, the number of complaints received was not at the high level that would be anticipated. The Office continues to work with all services and is constantly trying to make their presence known so that community members know where to turn when they need services.

4. Update from the Ombuds Office

As an update to the annual report presented to Senate earlier in the year, Amy Fish began by speaking about the role of the Ombudsperson. A. Fish then provided an update following the incidents on campus in early November prompted by the conflict in the Middle East. The Ombuds Office had received about 41 requests, 2 of which came from students, some from parents and 28 from individuals unknown to Concordia, many of whom were from outside of Montreal. The Ombuds Office responded to all and offered meetings to the students and parents, but no meeting offers were accepted.

The Ombuds Office remains in consistent contact with the Dean of Students, the Equity Office and the Office of Rights and Responsibilities and is constantly trying to find ways to offer additional tools to the community, so that they can access the office's services.

5. Credit/Non-credit (Document US-2023-7-D8)

A. Whitelaw presented this item. She had first presented this proposal in 2021, and, following review and approval by the Faculty Councils and the Academic Programs Committee of Senate, an alternative grading policy for non-program courses was being introduced. This change will allow students to take a course outside of their disciplinary field without the worry of the final grade negatively impacting their GPA if they don't succeed in the course. This option is already in place in other Canadian universities and internationally.

To a question, A. Whitelaw explained how this was different from the Pass/Fail option and offered guidance on how the notation could be requested by students.

She also clarified that the decision to change the credit/no credit notation to a letter grade could be taken before the DISC deadline.

R-2023-7-9 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that, on recommendation of the Academic Programs Committee, Senate approve the implementation of the credit/no credit notation for non-program courses, to be effective for the 2024-25 Academic year.

6. 3MT competition presentation

E. Diamantoudi introduced Riya Dutta, a graduate student in the Gina Cody School of Engineering who won the regional and then the Canadian competition of 3M thesis. R. Dutta then went on to represent Canada at the 3MT competition in the United States, where they placed among the top 12 finalists of a total of 900 institutions.

Following this introduction, R. Dutta presented their 3M thesis presentation "Are Hand Sanitizers Racist?".

7. Question period

One of the Senators asked if a public opinion survey had been conducted to assess the responses of the general population to the government's policy on tuition increase. Dr. Carr confirmed that the University had not done so, however he complimented the tireless work of the University Communications team and others to keep the issue alive in the media for over 9 weeks, since the government's first announcement in October. More and more people are speaking up about the policy.

8. Other business

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

9. Adjournment

Dr. Carr wished everyone a wonderful holiday season. The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

K. Singh
Karan Singh
Secretary of Senate