

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION
OF THE MEETING OF SENATE

Held on Friday, February 12, 2016, at 2 p.m.
in the Norman D. Hébert, LLD Meeting Room
(Room EV 2.260) on the SGW Campus

PRESENT

Voting members: Alan Shepard (*Chair*); Ali Akgunduz; Anjali Agarwal; Amir Asif; Benoit-Antoine Bacon; Guylaine Beaudry; Patrice Blais; Stéphane Brutus; Philippe Caignon; Ana Cappelluto (*Acting on behalf of Rebecca Duclos*); Saul Carliner; Graham Carr; Mikaela Clark-Gardner; Kira Cormier; Richard Courtemanche; Frank Crooks; Ricardo Dal Farra; David Douglas; Charles Draimin; André Furlani; Sandra Gabriele; Lana Galbraith; Vince Graziano; Khushboo Handa; Norman Ingram; Maidina Kadeer-Ozbek; Lea Katsanis; Gordon Leonard; Lucinda Marshall-Kiparissis; Marion Miller; Aloyse Muller; Monica Mulrennan; Alex Ocheoha; Virginia Penhune; Benjamin Prunty; Rosemary Reilly; André Roy; Yousef Shayan; Johanne Sloan; Ted Stathopoulos; Sofiène Tahar; Terry Wilkings; Paula Wood-Adams

Non-voting members: Joanne Beaudoin; Philippe Beaugard; Roger Côté; Isabel Dunnigan; Bram Freedman; Frederica Jacobs; Patrick Kelley, Rachel Marion, Lisa Ostiguy; Bradley Tucker

ABSENT

Voting members: Stephen Brown; Effrosyni Diamantoudi; Mariana Frank; Eliza Griffiths; David Morris; Nicholas Mouzourakis; Jithin Nair; Harald Proppe

1. **Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:06 p.m.

1.1 **Approval of Agenda**

R-2016-2-1 *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 January 15, 2016

R-2016-2-2 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of January 15, 2016 be approved.*

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

Prof. Shepard's remarks are summarized as follows:

- Concordia was recently recognized as one of Montreal's Top 30 Employers for 2016.
- A new Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) in Aerospace Engineering has received final approval by the Government of Quebec.
- A number of research grants have been awarded, including \$4 million grant in aeronautics.
- Phase 2 of the Webster Library Transformation project is nearing completion.
- Admissions Information Day will be held tomorrow, February 13, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., in the atrium of the EV building.
- Regarding the departure of the Chief Financial Officer, privacy issues as well labor laws must be respected and therefore he cannot disclose any details of the mutual agreement arrived at by both parties. He assured Senators that the utmost care and diligence were taken in the process and decision-making and reiterated his commitment to continue to be a careful steward of the University's funds.
- The statement discussed in the last Closed Session meeting will be released shortly, once the Minister is back in office.
- A recent article in *La Presse* relating a discussion held at a meeting of the Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI) contained a number of inaccuracies. The President was not present at that meeting but explained the context in which the discussion was held. He conveyed his philosophy that sensitivity and care should be taken with respect to increasing tuition fees in deregulated programs.

Following his remarks, the President responded to questions and comments.

At the President's invitation, Mr. Tucker updated Senators on the status of the SIS, noting that functionality continues to improve and users are becoming familiar with new ways of doing things. He spoke of new features that have been developed based on user feedback. The course search feature has been revised for ease of use. Taking into account the necessity to respect a familiar model that is simple to grasp and can fit on a mobile application, the designation of "shopping cart" is being changed to "course cart", based on student input. Work is also ongoing to improve the grade submission and tracking process.

4. Academic update (Document US-2016-2-D1)

The Provost provided the highlights of his written report.

5. Report of Standing Committees

5.1 Academic Planning and Priorities (Document US-2016-2-D2)

5.2 Finance (Document US-2016-2-D3)

No questions were asked in connection with these reports.

6. Committee appointments (Document US-2016-2-D4)

R-2016-2-3 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the committee appointments, outlined in Document US-2016-2-D4, be approved.*

7. Research Committee

7.1 Recommendation for University recognition of a research unit: Centre for Applied Synthetic Biology (CASB) (Document US-2016-2-D5)

Dr. Carr provided the background and context leading to the Research Committee's recommendation that CASB be granted recognition as a research unit, noting that this centre will become the first and only centre in Canada specifically focused on synthetic biology, a cornerstone of the fourth industrial revolution.

R-2016-2-4 *Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that, on recommendation of the Research Committee, Senate grant the university-recognized status, in the category of emerging research centre and emerging infrastructure platform, to the Centre for Applied Synthetic Biology (CASB), in accordance with the Policy on Research Units (VPRGS-8), as outlined in Document US-2016-2-D5.*

7.2 Proposal to create the Distinguished University Research Professor Award (Document US-2016-2-D6)

Concerns were raised that the process as proposed could generate ill feelings and cause low morale, more specifically with respect to the eligibility criteria, the two-tiered selection process and the lack of compensation, which all seem to be different from practices at other Canadian universities. The point was also made that recipients of the award may feel that granting too many of them would diminish its value. For those reasons, it was suggested to review what is being done at other universities and that this proposal should go back to the Research Committee for further study.

Responding to those concerns and additional questions, Dr. Carr noted that the goal of this award is to recognize outstanding performance and also to instill pride in the achievements of members of the University. He explained that an award of this nature should be open to all individuals holding the rank of full professor and that the

suggestion to also insist on additional years of services would create two classes of full professors. Unlike many other universities, Concordia has a robust and proven system to determine outstanding and sustained research performance at the University, enriched by having an initial review by Faculty Research Committees which are most familiar with standards of excellence in their domains, before a final institution-wide review the University Research Committee, which is made up of research chairs. The various review committees are sensitized to the issue of gender equality, particularly at the rank of full professor.

While some universities do offer compensation, others do not. In contrast to many Canadian universities, Concordia also offers CURCs which provide compensation. The title offered by Concordia is meant to be strictly honorific, in recognition of the highest possible status. The ultimate goal is to instill pride in the University. Dr. Carr acknowledged the concern that the credibility of the award not be diluted by giving too many at any one time. The Research Committee had also discussed this matter. Its sense was that the number of awards to be offered in future years was modest, and that it would not be practicable to set a quota on the number of awards, particularly given that there is no mandatory retirement in Quebec. Dr. Carr agreed that this aspect of the proposal should be monitored going forward, and that it could be adjusted accordingly.

R-2016-2-5 Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was resolved that, on recommendation of the Research Committee, Senate approve the establishment of the Distinguished University Research Professor Award, as set out in Document US-2016-2-D6.

8. 2015/2016 budget and budget model (Document US-2016-2-D7)

In his introductory remarks, Dr. Bacon apprised Senators that over 70 presentations on the budget have been given during the past three years, specifying that today's is the same one which was presented to the Faculty Councils in December. The first part deals with the budget for the 2015/2016 year, approved by the Board of Governors last May, which, following two cuts totalling \$7.7 million, projects a deficit of \$8.2 million. He noted that most Quebec universities will incur deficits. The second part of the presentation outlines the key modification to the budget model, which strives to achieve a balance between the University as a federation and the various Faculties and sectors that need to have more control over their destiny.

Mr. Kelley showed the impact of the budget adjustments by MEESR on specific grants on the university network, resulting in a decrease of \$6.2 million in revenues for Concordia in 2015/2016. He provided details regarding the cuts to the University's budget since 2012/2013, resulting in a decrease of \$36.6 million out of an operating budget of approximately \$400 million. He reviewed the details with respect to the core assumptions used in preparing the budget as well as some statistical data in relation to the evolution of FTEs, net revenues, salary mass and expenses by type, etc. Mr. Kelley spoke of the budget factors and then showed the revenue and expense projections, resulting in a proposed budget showing a deficit of \$8.2 million for 2015/2016.

The second part of Mr. Kelley's presentation focused on the evolution of the budget model. He explained that in the past, budget allocations were directly tied to revenue generation. This model was changed about seven years ago to be based on historical allocations and needs. These models no longer serve the University well and therefore a new budget model has been put in place, based on the following the six basic principles:

- Alignment with University and sector priorities
- Rewards for meeting pre-agreed targets
- The Faculty that provides the teaching receives the funding
- Efficiency gains will be shared by units that achieve them
- Teaching should happen where it is best suited
- The University remains a federation

Mr. Kelley explained that the three main levers of the modified model were: extra revenues generated would be shared fairly and transparently, cost reductions would lead to fair and transparent sharing as well, and monies would be made available to fund great ideas, in an open and transparent bidding process.

He concluded the presentation by underlining that this model attempts to strike the right balance between rewarding growth and efficiencies and recognizing that sectors are not fully independent but part of a federation. It is difficult to implement a new model in a period of fiscal compressions and instability and, in particular, when the government itself is looking at a new model.

During the course of the presentation, Dr. Bacon and Mr. Kelley responded to questions of clarification from Senators.

9. Strategic directions update

The President reported that that the planning process in on track. He informed Senators that a roundtable discussion will occur at the March meeting to provide feedback on some possible priority actions in connection with the nine strategic directions.

At Prof. Shepard's invitation, Me Freedman conveyed how the fundraising efforts are aligned with the academic priorities. He emphasized that cooperation between the advancement team and the academic sector has had very positive effects in terms of fundraising results.

10. Question period

10.1 Responses to written questions regarding the Luc Beauregard Centre (Document US-2016-2-D8)

In response to follow-up questions from the authors of the written questions, Dr. Carr provided a detailed account of the background and context of this issue which was brought to the attention of the University on July 24, 2015. While the digital era allows for

lingering misperceptions, he made the point that the lingering perceptions should be the following:

- The University took the matter extremely seriously, acted immediately and swiftly to protect its reputation, acknowledged institutional responsibility and is working with the Director of the Centre to ensure that a similar situation does not arise in the future.
- The University is committed to protecting its reputation and to allowing free exchange of view and ideas. The author of the study explicitly stated that he was expressing his personal views, not those of the University. Concordia personnel generate thousands of publications annually, ranging from scholarly articles to op-eds, opinion pieces and expert reports. Some of this work addresses topics that are controversial or contested.
- Academic work is subject to different kinds of vetting processes depending on the funding sources and/or place and nature of the publication. Depending on the nature of the study, the University's responsibility is to ensure that appropriate processes are followed in the awarding and administration of internal or external funding, including compliance with Tri-Council protocols where applicable. Assessment of the intellectual merits of individual works is more appropriately done through peer review or other forms of expert vetting.

11. Other business

The President apprised Senate that the search for the Provost will be commencing as soon as the committee's membership is complete.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.



Danielle Tessier
Secretary of Senate