



US-2005-3

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION
OF THE MEETING OF SENATE

Held on Friday, April 1, 2005, immediately after the Closed Session
in Room SP 110, Loyola Campus

PRESENT

Voting members: Mr. M. Al-Ken; Ms. A. Beck; Prof. T. Byrnes; Dean J. Chaikelson; Prof. A.-M. Croteau; Prof. M. Doyle; Prof. A. Dutkewych; Dean N. Esmail; Prof. J. Etezadi; Prof. J. Grant; Mr. B. Hamideh; Prof. A.M. Hanna; Prof. E. Jacobs; Prof. R. Kilgour; Dr. F. Lowy; Dean E. Sacca; Prof. A. Satir; Prof. H. Shulman; Dr. M. Singer; Mr. A. Slater; Ms. J. St-Germain; Dean J. Tomberlin; Prof. R. Tremblay; Prof. C. Trueman; Prof. C. Vallejo; Dr. T. Vo-Van

Non-voting members: Mr. W. Curran; Prof. M. Danis; Mr. L. English; Ms. L. Healey; Mr. A. McAusland; Dr. J. W. O'Brien (*Speaker*)

ABSENT

Voting members: Prof. A. Al-Khalili; Prof. W. Bukowski; Ms. K. Childs; Ms. M. Etezadbrojerdi; Mr. B. Farrington; Ms. M. Gruber; Dean C. Jackson; Mr. R. Luppicini; Prof. C. MacKenzie; Mr. G. Papadakis; Mr. C. Schwartz; Prof. D. Vivian

Non-voting members: Mr. M. Di Grappa; Me P. Fréreau; Dr. R. J. Oppenheimer; Dr. R.O. Wills (*Deputy Speaker*)

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. O'Brien at 2:26p.m.

2. Approval of the Agenda

R-2005-3-5 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Hamideh, Doyle), it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda be approved.*

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of March 4, 2005

Prof. Vallejo requested that her comment regarding the proportionality of full-time faculty members be noted under item 6 and Prof. Croteau asked that her question with respect to presidential search be noted under item 11.

R-2005-3-6 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Hamideh, Croteau), it was unanimously resolved that the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of March 4, 2005 be approved, subject to the above-noted revisions.

4. Business arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the Minutes.

5. Five-year academic plan (Document US-2005-3-D3)

Dr. Singer stated that the document forwarded to Senate sets a clear academic direction for the future and identifies the seven challenges that Concordia faces to achieve its objective to become one of Canada's leading universities. The plan also lays out the strategic decisions that must be made to address each challenge and includes measures and targets in order to gauge the progress. Dr. Singer briefly commented on each challenge. He conveyed SCAPP's recommendation to Steering Committee that the document be tabled at Senate so that it be sent for review and comments by the Faculty Councils and the Council of the School of Graduate Studies and brought back to Senate for final approval at its next meeting.

R-2005-3-7 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Singer, Chaikelson), it was unanimously resolved that, upon recommendation of the Senate Committee on Academic Planning and Priorities and Senate Steering Committee, the five-year academic plan be tabled for information and forwarded to the Faculty Councils and the Council of the School of Graduate Studies for input and feedback by April 28, 2005 at the latest, and that the final version of the five-year academic plan be submitted for approval by Senate at its meeting of May 6, 2005.

6. Report from the Academic Programs Committee (Document US-2005-3-D4)

6.1 Major undergraduate curriculum changes – Faculty of Arts and Sciences (Document US-2005-3-D5)

R-2005-3-8 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Chaikelson, Beck), it was unanimously resolved that the major undergraduate curriculum changes in the Faculty of Arts and Science, set out in Document US-2005-3-D5, be approved as recommended by the Academic Programs Committee in Document US-2005-3-D4.

6.2 Minor undergraduate curriculum changes – Faculty of Arts and Science (Document US-2005-3-D6)

Dr. O'Brien noted that minor undergraduate curriculum changes are forwarded to Senate for information purposes only.

6.3 Major undergraduate curriculum changes – Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science (Document US-2005-3-D7)

Dr. Singer prefaced the discussion by stating that the proposed changes to the University writing skills requirement in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science had been referred to Steering Committee, given the divergent views of the Faculty and the Academic Programs Committee (APC) with respect some of the amendments proposed by the Faculty. While recognizing that APC is mandated by Senate to recommend policy regarding the University Writing Test (UWT), this can not be construed as limiting the Faculty's right to raise issues at Senate.

Thus, in order to facilitate the discussion, Steering Committee suggests that the motion should be divided into two parts, the first to approve the new course (ENCS 272) proposed by the Faculty as an option to satisfy the requirements, a proposal which has the support of APC. The second motion would be to eliminate the other options currently available to students in the Faculty, a proposal which APC does not support.

Senate was amenable to grant speaking privileges to Dr. William Lynch and Dr. Terry Fancott, Associate Deans in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, as well as Dr. Danielle Morin, Vice-Provost, Academic Programs and Chair of APC.

Approval of a new course (ENCS 272) as an option to satisfy the University writing skills requirement

Dean Esmail indicated that enrolments were down by 20% in the Faculty for the second year in a row and that McGill was gaining ground on Concordia. He said that the word was out among CEGEP students not to come to Concordia because of the awful UWT. While conveying that he was not against the UWT, Dean Esmail stated he was opposed to its content and the way it is conducted. He noted that 50% of CEGEP applicants fail the UWT. Thus, the Faculty should have the right to provide an adequate alternative.

Dr. Trueman said that the content of the new course, ENCS 272, would address issues relevant to engineers and focus on the writing skills required in their profession. Dr. Fancott added that the Faculty introduced the UWT in 2001 as a compulsory test to be taken within the first thirty credits of the program, which resulted in a phenomenal failure rate for all students, including those whose mother tongue was English. He opined that ENCS 272 followed by ENCS 282, which concentrates on referencing, composing and structuring reports, is a well focused sequence of courses and the most appropriate for ENCS students who have a four-year intensive program. In his view, the level of proficiency required to pass the UWT far exceeds the technical writing skills required for the profession of engineering.

Dr. Morin mentioned that the new course had been amply discussed at APC. In her opinion, the failure rate of the UWT is a reflection of the fact that the English language proficiency required at the University is at a higher level than that of Cegep. However, she did recognize that some changes need to be made to the current system, which has resulted in APC establishing an ad hoc committee to consider fundamental questions regarding

UWT and the issue of language proficiency in general. In the meantime, as for Journalism students who can meet the UWT requirement by passing JOUR 201, a core course relevant to their field of study, ENCS students could also meet their requirement by completing ENCS 272. Dr. Morin conveyed APC's support for the creation of ENCS 272 as another option for ENCS students.

Prof. Byrnes gave the reasons why he felt that the ENCS 272 was not pedagogically viable. Dean Chaikelson disagreed with Dr. Fancott's assessment of the level of proficiency required to pass the UWT. However, she noted that the A&S was also unsatisfied with the UWT and the current sequence of courses and had concerns with respect to international students. Dean Tomberlin stated that JMSB did not have a problem with the UWT and was surprised at the tone of the discussion.

A vote on the motion to call the question moved by Mr. Hamideh and seconded by Mr. Al-Ken passed with a 2/3 majority, further to which the vote was taken on the first main motion:

R-2005-3-9 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Esmail, Trueman), it was resolved by a majority that that Senate approve the new course entitled Composition and Argumentation for Engineers (ENCS 272) as an option to fulfill the University writing skills requirement for students in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science. The obtention of a grade of "C-" or better in ENCS 272 or the successful completion of its challenge exam will be deemed sufficient to meet the University's writing skills requirement.*

Approving the course ENCS 272 as the official option to satisfy the University writing skills requirement for students in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science

Dean Esmail conveyed the proposal that the requirement to obtain a grade of "C-" or better in ENCS 272 or to successfully complete its "challenge exam" be the official option available to students in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science to meet the University writing skills requirement. Many Senators opined that the "official option" really meant the "only option".

Dean Esmail mentioned that the Faculty had debated the manner in which it can resolve the short-comings of the language proficiency skills of CEGEP applicants. However, the Faculty should not be penalized for the inefficiencies of third parties. He reiterated that Concordia cannot compete with other Montreal institutions which do not have the same rigid writing skills requirement. Dr. Fancott said that ENCS 272 was specifically designed for engineers and brought added value. While ENCS 272 would be the Faculty's official option, students could make requests to satisfy the requirement via other options but this would not be advertised. While the Faculty could encourage students to take ENCS 272, Dr. Morin stated APC's view that all options should be left open to students, which would entail ENCS 272 being added to the current list of options rather than listing ENCS 272 as the "official" option with reference to all other options being removed from the calendar.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which several Senators, including the Provost, Deans, full-time and part-time faculty members and students spoke against the proposal. While most speakers agreed that a review of the UWT was advisable, they did not feel that eliminating the other options was beneficial to students. On the contrary, they stated that the more options the better. It was also noted that all options should be made readily available, which would not be the case if this is not clearly marked in the calendar and students have to make a special request via the Student Request Committee. To counteract the alleged negative publicity which is hindering enrolment, it was suggested to spread the word regarding the new ENCS 272 option.

A vote on the motion to call the question moved by Prof. Vallejo and seconded by Prof. Croteau passed with a 2/3 majority, further to which the vote was taken on the second main motion as follows:

It was moved by Dean Esmail, seconded by Dr. Trueman, that Senate approve that the requirement to obtain a grade of "C-" or better in ENCS 272 or to successfully complete its challenge exam be the official option available to students in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science to meet the University writing skills requirement. However, the motion was defeated by a majority.

7. Renaming of the General Engineering and Computer Science Studies Unit to the General Studies Unit (Document US-2005-3-D9)

R-2005-3-10 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Esmail, Trueman), it was unanimously resolved that, upon recommendation of the Council of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, Senate recommend to the Board of Governors the approval of the renaming of the General Engineering and Computer Science Studies Unit (GENCS) to the General Studies Unit (GSU), as set out in Document US-2005-3-D9.*

8. Revisions to the membership of the Council of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science (Document US-2005-3-D8)

R-2005-3-11 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Esmail, Hamideh), it was unanimously resolved that, upon recommendation of the Council of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, Senate recommend to the Board of Governors the approval of the revisions to the Council of the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, as set out in Document US-2005-3-D8.*

9. Remarks from the President

Dr. Lowy apprised Senate that, following a close vote, the Evolution slate had won the recent CSU election. He praised the CSU on how it had conducted the election. He also commended the CSU's decision not to compromise the end of the term by choosing not to participate in the unlimited student strike.

The President spoke of the remarkable ceremony held last evening at the Loyola Chapel during which 390 graduates of Loyola College received honorary Concordia degrees. He specified the great interest manifested by the Loyola graduates, in that another 400 of them could not be accommodated at the ceremony but will be receiving their diplomas by mail. A similar event is planned for graduates of Sir George Williams University on June 8 at Place des Arts.

With respect to item 10.3, Dr. Lowy apprised Senate that the notice to the community regarding the date of the open meeting will be forwarded next week.

10. Items for information

10.1 Progress report from the Advisory Search Committee for a Dean of Fine Arts

Dr. Singer reported that the Advisory Search Committee had received some comments pursuant to the public meetings of the four short-listed candidates. Comments will be

accepted until the deadline of Monday at noon. The Committee is scheduled to meet next Wednesday. The objective is to present a recommendation to the Board of Governors at its meeting of April 28.

10.2 Progress report from the Advisory Search Committee for a Dean of Arts and Science

Dr. Singer apprised Senate that the process was coming to completion. The Advisory Search Committee had met yesterday and had decided which individual it will be recommending to the Board of Governors at its meeting of April 28. Dr. Singer noted that the Committee had received over 50 letters of input from the community, which included thoughtful and thorough comments which proved helpful the Committee.

10.3 Progress report from the Advisory Search Committee for a President and Vice-Chancellor (Document US-2005-3-D10)

Dr. O'Brien referred Senators to the written report submitted under Document US-2005-3-D10.

11. Question period

In response to a query from Ms. St-Germain regarding the timing of the construction of the JMSB building, Dr. Singer replied that this was the highest space priority. However, both Dr. Singer and Mr. English stated that the University has yet to receive any funding from the government and that construction will not begin until funds are received.

Mr. Al-Ken wondered how raising fees for international students was compatible with the goals stated in the academic plan with respect to increasing international student enrollment. On the one hand, with respect to fees charged to JMSB international students, Dean Tomberlin responded that students currently enrolled are not paying more than they had originally expected to pay and that the increase has been phased in gradually. Only those students enrolled in September will be paying a higher fee.

On the other hand, Dr. Singer indicated that the overall problem rests with the government's current policy on international student fees and that deregulation and privatization do not necessarily signify that fees would increase. Dr. Singer explained how fees are currently collected and opined that the issue is not necessarily increasing tuition but rather modifying the way it is collected and handled.

12. Other business

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

13. Next meeting

The next meeting of Senate will be held on Friday, May 6, 2005, at 2 p.m.

14. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Danielle Tessier
Secretary of Senate