

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION  
OF THE MEETING OF SENATE

Held on Friday, October 7, 2011, immediately  
following the Closed Session meeting  
in the Norman D. Hébert, LL.D. Meeting Room  
(Room EV 2.260) on the SGW Campus

PRESENT

Voting members: Prof. A. Akgunduz; Mr. N. Burke; Prof. J. Camlot; Dean G. Carr;  
Prof. J. Chaikelson; Mr. H. Cheikhzen; Dr. L. Dandurand; Prof. M. Debbabi; Prof. D.  
Douglas; Dean R. Drew; Prof. A. Dutkewych; Prof. L. Dyer; Mr. A. Filipowich; Prof. J.  
Garrido; Ms. L. Gill; Dr. D. Graham; Prof. J. Grant; Mr. B. Hamideh; Dean A. Hochstein;  
Prof. N. Ingram; Mr. J. Kelly; Prof. F. Khendek; Prof. B. Layne; Prof. G. Leonard; Dean B.  
Lewis; Dr. F. Lowy; Ms. M. Manson; Mr. G. Morrow; Ms. H. Nazar; Prof. B. Nelson; Prof.  
C. Nikolenyi; Mr. M. Nurujjaman; Prof. M. Peluso; Prof. G. Rail; Prof. R. Reilly; Prof. C.  
Ross; Prof. F. Shaver; Prof. M. R. Soleymani; Mr. R. Sonin; Prof. R. Staseson; Prof. T.  
Stathopoulos; Prof. J. Turnbull; Dean C. Wild; Mr. C. Wilson

Non-voting members: Mr. P. Beauregard; Dr. D. Boisvert (*Speaker*); Mr. R. Côté; Me B.  
Freedman; Mr. P. Kelley; Me D. McCaughey; Ms. L. Stanbra

ABSENT

Voting members: Mr. G. Beasley; Mr. P. Gill; Prof. J. Lewis; Prof. M. Magnan; Mr. K.  
McLoughlin; Ms. T. Salameh; Mr. D. Shakibaian; Prof. W. Sims

1. Call to order

The Speaker called the meeting to order at 2:13 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

R-2011-7-5 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Chaikelson, Reilly), it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda of the Open Session be approved, with the removal of item 6.1 from the Consent section to the Regular section, and that items 3 to 6 (not including item 6.1) be approved or received by consent.*

CONSENT

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of September 9, 2011

R-2011-7-6 *The Minutes of the Open Session meeting of September 9, 2011 were approved by consent.*

4. Committee appointments (Document US-2011-7-D3)

R-2011-7-7 *The committee appointments, set out in Document US-2011-7-D3, were approved by consent.*

5. Reports of Senate Standing Committees

5.1 Academic Planning and Priorities

The report of the September 22 meeting will be submitted at the next meeting.

5.2 Finance (Document US-2011-7-D4)

This report was provided for information.

5.3 Library

5.4 Research

The committees have not met since the last meeting.

6. Report and recommendations of the Academic Programs Committee (Document US-2011-7-D5)

6.2 Major undergraduate curriculum changes - Faculty of Arts and Science

6.2.1 School of Canadian Irish Studies (Document US-2011-7-D7)

6.2.2 Simone de Beauvoir Institute (Document US-2011-7-D8)

R-2011-7-8 *The major undergraduate curriculum changes in the Faculty of Arts and Science, detailed in Documents US-2011-7-D7 and D8, were approved by consent, as recommended by the Academic Programs Committee in Document US-2011-7-D5.*

REGULAR

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

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

6.1 Major undergraduate calendar changes - Office of the Registrar

6.1.1 Student Record/Transcript (Document US-2011-7-D6)

In response to a query, Vice-Provost Dyens indicated that the change in language with respect to the failed assessment, previously included only on the student's record, has been toned down to be more neutral since this information now also appears on the transcript. He noted that the approval of the changes to the text of the undergraduate calendar is required following the transcript changes approved by the Faculty Councils and Senate earlier this year.

In response to another question, Ms. Stanbra explained that previously the final GPA only included the courses taken towards the degree requirement. For the sake of clarity, it has been decided to use the cumulative GPA as the final GPA.

R-2011-7-9 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Wild, Peluso), it was unanimously resolved that the major undergraduate calendar changes detailed in Document US-2011-7-D6, be approved, as recommended by the Academic Programs Committee in Document US-2011-7-D5.*

#### 8. Remarks from the President

Dr. Lowy said the External Governance Review Committee (EGRC) recommendations must also be considered in the overall context. He recalled that he had agreed to return to Concordia last February because it was in crisis and he was prepared to help but also because where the University is going. While it is important to attend to the cause of the difficulties, this should not allow us to be distracted from what we are here to do. We should deal with the causes and consequences but not focus on them.

In this vein, Senate is key. However, it is weak and needs to be strengthened. It is difficult for a body such as Senate to react properly because of its size. The Board was equipped to act because it has its Executive Committee. Senate has its Steering Committee but is its mandate broad enough? Senate needs to think about the unresolved issues, including the mission of the University, bicameralism and the specific changes proposed by the EGRC, and find the appropriate mechanism to do so, whether it is by using an existing committee or establishing a new one.

#### 9. Discussion and feedback on the 2011-2016 Academic Plan (revised consultation draft dated August 24, 2011) (Documents posted at <http://provost.concordia.ca/academic-planning-budgets-and-facilities/academic-planning/documents-and-resources/>)

The Speaker indicated that a committee of the whole discussion will be held on the revised consultation draft of the academic plan.

Dr. Graham prefaced the discussion by noting that the objective of today's discussion to inform the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee, the Academic Plan Working Group and the Academic Plan Steering Committee of Senate's reaction to the draft plan with a view to finalizing the plan so that it can be presented for approval at the November Senate meeting. He noted that the Academic Plan Working Group worked during the spring and summer to review and digest over 400 pages of comments and redraft the plan in light of that feedback. He underlined the unprecedented collaboration and

consultation that had characterized the plan's development and opined that the plan is better as a result thereof. The fundamental change from the previous iteration is the increased amount of funding for the initiatives which has risen from \$12 million to \$25 million and which is attributable to additional revenues predicated mainly on increased enrolments in graduate programs over and above those originally projected, as well as on certain provisions in the Quebec budget.

A round of consultations was held in September with the four Faculty Councils, the Council of the School of Graduate Studies and that of the School of Extended Learning as well as meetings with the Libraries, some departments and individuals. The overall message is that the plan has considerably improved and people are pleased with its content. Dr. Graham acknowledged that some irritants will inevitably remain for all of us but that there is a great deal of benefit for Concordia in the plan overall and that he is hoping that Senate will support the plan by approving it at the November meeting.

Comments expressed during the ensuing discussion are summarized as follows:

- Congratulations to the Office of the Provost and all the working groups. This is an amazing improvement and is inclusive of elements raised in other forums. Appreciated receiving the summary of the FA Council discussion and would like to see the reports from the other Faculty Councils before the next Senate meeting.
- Will the plan be approved and in effect for the next five years or is it an interim plan until the arrival of the next President? Will the new President have a veto power? Why are we pressed to approve this now?
- Takes issue with the characterization that there is near consensus on the plan. Many graduate students have concerns about Objective 1 which is a basic part of the plan, in that the objective of attracting top graduate students who have funding does not address the issues of the current graduate students. Moreover, how will undergraduate students benefit from this plan? The fundamental problematic addressed by the EGRC is the mission which is the source of all problems and needs to be defined. The tension of accessibility versus the aspiration to be a top tier university needs to be addressed. Also, there is no mention of meeting financial need in the plan.
- With respect to Objective 2.2.2, while money will be saved in the budget, this can be interpreted as cutting back on programs and a concern was stated about a lack of criteria to determine which programs would be eliminated. Regarding Objective 5.4.2, if we are maintaining the same amount of students while increasing graduate students, where will the cuts to the undergraduate students be made? There is no concrete proposal in this regard.
- The History Department agrees that the plan has improved immeasurably since last year, but the concern about the notion of measurement remains since the current mechanisms used are not useful or meaningful to the Humanities, Fine Arts and part of the Social Sciences. Lurking in the background is the notion of core indicators defining internal resource allocations.

- How will the higher costing of programs affect space? How can we move forward not knowing? Moreover, while the plan does address experiential learning, we have a top rate business school and the plan is silent on the notion of experiential learning specific to business students and entrepreneurship.
- Provost is actively seeking ways to measure humanities while some are will not be measurable. What safety net do we have should some areas of research be at a disadvantage? How does the plan compensate or acknowledge that?
- The question of measurement resonates closely for students. There is less quantitative data and it is more difficult to interpret. The plan needs to be fleshed out. Refers to the website of *Research Infosource* and points out that the “s” is Research is a dollar sign. The quality of programs is not based solely on money.
- JMSB Council strongly supported the academic plan, subject to some concerns such as the perception of the plan when a new president takes office and how the implementation will be carried out.
- A concern was expressed with regard to Objective 1.2.2 regarding research initiatives about how will the department cover the remission and who will take over the courses. There are a lot of operational questions regarding Objective 4.1.2.
- Thinks of the academic plan in the plural since there are some areas where there is dissension on the underlying principles while others are enthusiastically embraced. The plan should be divided.
- Was on Working Group as A&S representative and agrees that some parts of the plan are vague, such as Objective 2.2.2, because it was felt that it was not up to them to define to tightly the criteria since there are a lot of diverse programs. Moreover, the plan does not spell out signature areas which will need to be developed to implement the plan in order to allow flexibility to each Faculty to take their own paths.
- The plan resonated well with the ENCS Council and by and large everybody was on board. Some comments were made regarding the need to work towards metrics, with the understanding that metrics are easier to use in ENCS.
- A concern was stated that the plan might be too comprehensive if we attempt to do everything as laid out. How can we achieve all the objectives at the same time?
- The SGS Council was supportive of the plan. Graduate education by definition is about attracting excellent students. The Academic Plan's emphasis on expanding graduate studies does not take anything away from undergraduate education. The arts and humanities are highly valued at Concordia. The concern about developing appropriate metrics for the Humanities exists nationally. The last iteration of the science and technology policy of the Government of Canada was widely criticized for

failing in this regard. There is increasing sensitivity to these concerns and steps are being taken to address them as the policy undergoes revision.

- Pleased that Senate has taken the leadership role to suggest how resources ought to be used in strategic priorities. The FA Council discussed the plan extensively. There was a broad consensus and the summary forwarded to Senate was reflective of the discussion.
- Disagreement with how excellent graduate students are defined in the plan. Should not be based on their ability to gain funding but rather on their ability in general, their diversity and life experience. Wants to see more about our values as opposed to metrics, a cap on money spent on external consultants, improvement on student evaluations and clarification on the retention rate.
- The implementation of the roll-out of the timeline in phase 1 regarding Objective 3.4.3 will entail heavy department involvement.
- The plan fails to acknowledge the role that student organizations serve at Concordia. These are fundamental to student experience and ways should be considered to support those organizations.

Dr. Graham thanked Senators for their level of engagement and thoughtful comments. With respect to the timing of the approval of the plan, he agreed that the EGRC report stated, on the one hand, that the first job of the next President is to achieve a plan while, on the other hand, it says that the University should move forward with the plan without delay. However - and Steering Committee of Senate also espoused this view - so much work has been invested in the academic plan that it would be a terrible mistake to suspend the plan until the arrival of the new President. There is nothing outlandish or unusual in the plan. It would be catastrophic for a new President to overturn the plan, especially if it is endorsed by Senate and the Board.

He noted that our values are set out in the Strategic Framework which contains a high-level aspirational statement. We all cherish culture in many ways but students come to Concordia because of program quality which is essential to any academic plan. With respect to the retention rate, we do have good data but we fall down on completion because students are stressed financially or otherwise, so providing more support to students is crucial.

With respect to measurement, Dr. Graham noted that we are using the best tools available. *Research Infosource* is publicly available data that we do not pay for, and we also use data from CAUBO; he is thrilled that the History Department has embarked on the pilot project which has been put in place in order to find appropriate measurement mechanisms for those disciplines.

Reallocation remains a major point of concern for all, and there is no intention that it will be imposed by senior administration. Rather, common criteria will be developed. Dr. Graham noted that attracting graduate students with funding will allow the allocation

of additional funds to deserving graduate students who do not enjoy external funding. He is sensitive to the implementation concerns expressed and assured Senate that we will not try to do everything at the same time and every group of actions will need an implementation team. He concluded by saying that as an institution we need to be more vocal about our academic mission and getting our academic priorities to centre stage.

10. Recommendations of the External Governance Review Committee (Document US-2011-7-D9)

10.1 Follow-up from last meeting

Dr. Lowy apprised Senators that a joint meeting of Steering Committee and the Executive Committee of the Board was held on September 19, further to which it was agreed to form a Joint Board/Senate Committee, including four members designated by the Executive Committee and four members designated by Steering Committee, to discuss the issues raised by Senate at the September meeting.

The Joint Committee met twice, and except for the undergraduate student representation on the Board, all issues raised by Senate regarding the changes to the By-Laws proposed by the Board's Ad Hoc Governance Review Committee were resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. The Joint Board/Senate Committee report was received by the Board on September 28 and forwarded by Ms. Tessier to Senators on that date.

It was also agreed that continued discussions are desired between the Board and Senate regarding bicameralism and the other recommendations contained in the External Governance Review Committee (EGRC) report which have not yet been addressed.

10.2 Committee-of-the whole discussion regarding recommendations pertaining to Senate

During the committee of the whole discussion, comments were made on the following recommendations, summarized as follows:

Recommendation 22 (composition of Senate)

The report does not address whether the staff members would be voting or non-voting members. Some Senators felt that making them voting positions would create unforeseen complexities, while others felt that staff should have the right to be present but not vote on academic decisions. Other Senators were supportive of adding the staff members, given that they are relevant to the academic health of the University, provided that the current proportional representation of faculty and students is maintained.

Recommendation 23 (terms of office)

Senate is a democratic body and no one who wishes to participate should be excluded. Limited terms would create renewal and therefore allow more faculty members to participate, thereby ensuring that we have fresh ideas and increased engagement of faculty members.

Recommendation 24 (professional development program)

Some members were not clear on how this recommendation could be implemented and felt that we need to be sensible since not all recommendations have the same weight.

Recommendation 25 (amendment to the Charter to establish Senate in its own right)

Some Senators were of the view that we can begin the process of reinforcing Senate and create bicameralism without opening the Charter, while others opined that this is the most important recommendation and we should try to implement it in whatever way possible.

### 10.3 Implementation

A motion was moved by Dr. Lowy, seconded by Dr. Graham, to direct APPC to consider the recommendations pertaining to Senate and bring forward recommendations on their implementation at the December Senate meeting.

A discussion ensued, during which several Senators noted that APPC is currently dealing with several dossiers and risks to be overburdened. Therefore, this mandate should be taken on by an ad hoc committee to be established by Senate and comprised of the four Senators who served on the Joint Board/Senate Committee with the addition of one undergraduate student. However, others felt that APPC would be the appropriate body since it has broad representation and has a track record of looking into these types of issues, and that APPC together with the four Senators who served on the Joint Board/Senate Committee would be more appropriate.

The amendment to Dr. Lowy's motion to establish an ad hoc committee as described hereinabove in lieu of APPC, moved by Ms. Gill and seconded by Mr. Morrow, was defeated by a majority. The addition of the four Senators who served on the Joint Board/Senate Committee to APPC was considered as a friendly amendment to the main motion by the mover and the seconder, further to which the following resolution was adopted:

*R-2011-7-10 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (Lowy, Graham), it was resolved that the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee, together with the four Senate members appointed to the Joint Board/Senate Committee, be directed to consider both the letter and spirit of the External Governance Review Committee recommendations pertaining to Senate, being guided in that consideration by today's discussion in committee of the whole, and to bring forward recommendations on their implementation for consideration at the Senate meeting of December 9, 2011.*

## 11. Items for information

### 11.1 November 10 Student Day of Action

Ms. Gill apprised Senate of the upcoming province-wide Day of Action which will be held on November 10. This day is of paramount importance for students who will be called upon to protest against the proposed tuition hikes. Thus, few students will be attending classes on that day. While not wanting to impinge on the academic freedom of



instructors, she urged them to be lenient with students and to find constructive ways with respect to deadlines and evaluative exercises so that student not be penalized.

## 12. Question period

### 12.1 Response to question submitted by Ms. Gill (Document US-2011-7-D10)

A motion was moved by Mr. Filipowich and seconded by Prof. Peluso that classes in the winter term begin no earlier than January 4.

The Speaker cautioned Senate that this was an administrative matter which could result in potentially significant implications.

Those who were in favor of the motion invoked the huge financial burden of travelling to return for January 3, which is very detrimental to students. Other universities, such as Université de Montréal and UQAM, and the banking institutions do not return on January 3. It is an issue of sustainability. Moreover, starting classes on January 3 is in violation of the CUPFA and CUFA collective agreements and also of the University's own Policy HR-12 regarding paid holidays which states that the University operates in accordance with prevailing business practices. The cost to students is not only financial but academic since less than ¼ of students typically show up for class on January 3, and this has an impact on the rest of the term. There is no magical number, but perhaps this should be looked into for the long term. The cost to students is immense and University administration should plan its dates in accordance with the known elements.

While being understanding and supportive of the request, Ms. Stanbra explained the logistical problems of changing the dates at this point when they have been posted for thirteen month, alerting Senate that all the consequences of such a change would need to be evaluated.

Mr. Côté mentioned that while it was possible to make changes, this should be reviewed after a fulsome consideration of the implications. The setting of the academic calendar involves many logistical issues. Comparing the start date of other institutions would be best done in consideration of the entirety of their semester schedule and not just the start date. Other schools may have different semester durations, start dates for summer semesters and length of exam periods. For example, at McGill some Faculties begin the fall term before Labor Day. He suggested the issue be reviewed and that Senate consider the implications.

Some Senators were favorably inclined but recognized that they needed more information before making a decision, further to which a motion to table this item until the next Senate meeting, moved by Prof. Ingram and seconded by Dr. Graham, was approved by a majority.

## 12.2 Other question

Prof. Khendek wondered why Concordia had declined the invitation to participate in a recruitment fair recently held at his child's high school (Collège Notre-Dame) and asked who and how are decisions made to attend such fairs.

Mr. Côté replied that recruitment responsibilities at the University are shared between the central recruitment office and the Faculties. The University Recruitment Planning and Coordination Committee reviews the recruitment visit plan to coordinate activities so as to optimize the recruitment outreach and not overlap needlessly at events. Concordia participates in CEGEP site visits and also invites CEGEP counselors to meetings on campus to liaise with them. Mr. Côté could not answer the specifics of the Collège Notre-Dame event but said that he will look into it and provide Prof. Khendek with the background.

At 5:37 p.m. the Speaker adjourned the meeting upon noticing that quorum was lost.



Danielle Tessier  
Secretary of Senate