

**Minutes from a Meeting of the Concordia Council on Student Life
Held on January 23, 2015
Loyola AD-308, 10am**

PRESENT: Mr. Andrew Woodall (Chair), Ms. Lauren Broad (Secretary), Ms. Gemma Acco, Ms. Anna Barrafato, Ms. Kate Soad Bellini, Mr. Patrick Boivin, Ms. Claudie Boujaklian, Ms. Katrina Caruso, Mr. Gordon Dionne, Mr. Steve Houde (replacing Mr. Darren Dumoulin), Ms. Crystal Harrison, Mr. Daniel Houde, Ms. Kenza Iraki, Mr. Adrian Longinotti, Dr. Lisa Ostiguy, Ms. Dale Robinson, Ms. Stephanie Sarik, Dr. Cameron Skinner, Mr. Bradley Tucker, Mr. James Tyler Vaccaro.

ABSENT WITH REGRETS: Ms. Marie-Josée Allard, Ms. Mary-Ann Jirjis, Mr. Howard Magonet, Dr. Brad Nelson, Mr. Rohit Patil, Ms. Tanya Polleti, Mr. David Thirlwall, Ms. Lorraine Toscano.

ABSENT: Mr. Charles Bourassa, Mr. Ian Campbell, Ms. Sharon Hunter, Ms. Leisha LeCouvie.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair called the meeting to order. Ms. Robinson moved to approve the agenda. Dr. Skinner seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed the Council to the first CCSL meeting of the New Year. He recalled that there had been significant structural changes in the Student Services sector. Mr. Woodall recalled that the Aboriginal Student Resource Centre (ASRC), the Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC) and the Concordia University Student Parents Centre (CUSP) were now all under the Dean of Students Office. The Student Success Centre (SSC) was still in its beginning stages, however the new Director would be in place by mid-April. The current interim Director was Ms. Joanne Locke. The SSC will hold the New Student Program, career management programs, expanded writing support programs, and a new Next Generation Skills program still under development. While there remained some questions around the implications of these changes on the sector, the Chair was hopeful that by September there would be a more clear understanding of the new structure.

In the current semester, the university had embarked on a Strategic Directions process, working with the Concordia community to determine what it envisions for its students, staff and faculty in future years. Pending approval from the Board of Governors and Senate, individual units at the university will move forward on the priorities of the university community. The Chair said that there were several ways to engage in this process, one of which was through issue-based committees, of which there are eight. Mr. Woodall encouraged members to visit the website dedicated to the Strategic Directions process to find out more information on guest speakers, idea cafés and other ways to get involved. An upcoming event was on January 28th: guest speaker Mr. David Ward, former president, University of Wisconsin-Madison and former president, American Council on Education, will be at Concordia to speak about why universities should innovate.

The Chair noted a few items of interest to the Council. Mr. Woodall congratulated Mr. Magonet and his team at Counselling & Development for the success of the Re-Discover Concordia Fair that took place on January 13, 2015. Mr. Woodall reminded the Council that the Alternative Spring Break was preparing for the upcoming week in February, when groups would be volunteering in one of three locations: Montreal, the Laurentians and New Orleans. There will be a showcase in March for the public to hear from participants about their experiences. The Chair reminded Council members of the Co-Curricular Record (CCR) and hoped that everyone would encourage students to use it as a tool to get recognition for their involvement in student life at the university.

Mr. Tucker provided an update to Council members on the new Student Information System (SIS) that would go live on January 26, 2015. The current SIS system was shut down the day before in order to begin the conversion process. He was pleased to report that planned activities were running ahead of schedule and everything appeared to be going very well.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

3.1 Approval of the Minutes from the Meeting of October 24, 2014

Mr. Vaccaro moved to approve the minutes from the meeting of October 24, 2014 and Ms. Robinson seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

3.2 Approval of the Minutes from the Meeting of November 21, 2014

Ms. Harrison moved to approve the minutes from the meeting of November 21, 2014 and Mr. Vaccaro seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

4.1 Business Arising from the Minutes of October 24, 2014

There was no business arising from the minutes.

4.2 Business Arising from the Minutes of November 21, 2014

The Chair reminded the Council that the Concordia University Small Grants Program (CUSGP) was a fund that all Vice-President offices, the President's Office and the Dean of Students Office contributed to in support of student initiatives, for up to \$1,000. The members of the CUSGP committee did not feel that they had enough knowledge of student initiatives at the university to be making decisions on which projects to support. All offices agreed that they wanted to continue to support the program financially, however a more well informed committee should allocate the funds. Mr. Woodall stated that the program would continue in one form or another, as it provided funding for expenses such as travel to conferences, an expense not funded by other sources at the university, such as the CCSL Special Projects Fund. The amount that each office will contribute annually will likely be about \$5,000. These funds may come through CCSL in the future, however no final decision had been made on how they would be dispersed and by whom.

5. REPORTS AND ITEMS OF INFORMATION

5.1 Sub-Committee Membership

The Chair reported that there remained several vacant positions on the CCSL sub-committees. The CCSL Special Projects sub-committee needed one faculty member (not necessarily from CCSL). Dr. Ostiguy said she would follow up again with the faculty deans, as well as the Concordia University Faculty Association (CUFA). The CCSL Awards sub-committee was in need of a chair and one undergraduate student, both members of CCSL. Ms. Iraki volunteered to join the awards sub-committee.

5.2 Student Services and Recreation & Athletics Budget Preparations

The Chair reminded the Council that the 2015-2018 budget for Student Services and Recreation & Athletics (R&A) was being developed. At the November 2014 CCSL meeting, Dr. Ostiguy had discussed the possibility of having a question on a referendum ballot requesting an increase in the Student Services fee of \$0.90 per credit and for R&A of \$0.25 per credit. This would be an entirely new process for the Concordia Student Union (CSU) with many unknowns remaining on how the question could be put forth to students. Mr. Woodall hoped that the Council could discuss ideas of how to inform students about the services they have access to, regardless of whether or not an increase was possible. He also wondered how or if CCSL could play a role in informing students.

A lengthy discussion ensued about how the Council could promote Student Services and R&A without campaigning for an increase in their fees. The Council agreed that it was important for students to know what is available to them, as most students are not aware of the vast array of services they can access. They felt that this was important at all times, so that students would be well informed before any referendum question was even proposed. Several student representatives believed that the average student would not be supportive of an increase in the fees, as they do not know what services they are paying in to. The overall sentiment from the Council was that an increase in the fees, which would be equivalent to inflation over the years, was understandable and fair.

One suggestion of how to inform students was to have a descriptive chart or list on the Concordia website when students go online to pay their tuition. Information of what services the fees go towards could be very clear as students make their payment. Mr. Tucker explained that there is a tuition calculator available online that provides details of where the money is going, however the difficulty was knowing how to get students to use the tools already available to them. The point was made that students do not know what each office within Student Services offers.

The student representatives emphasized the importance of reaching out to students and putting the information in their hands, rather than expecting them to investigate for themselves. It was believed that the sector needed to catch the attention of students in new and creative ways, using many different venues, such as videos, social media and informational packages distributed to new students. The Council agreed that it would be important to know what kind of promotional materials had already been created and to be sure they were being used effectively. It was agreed that widespread, visible promotion of the services was key, especially as students begin their university career.

Another recommendation was to get the faculty and department associations to assist in promoting the sector. It was recognized that these associations have a captive audience at their fingertips and they could easily reach many students with a newsletter or other forms of communication. It was proposed to have workshops at the faculty association retreats at the beginning of each semester on the various services available. It was noted that the faculty council meetings would be an ideal venue to speak about the services available to students.

The question was raised as to whether or not an increase in the Student Services and R&A fees would lead to an increase in services, or if it would simply allow the sector to maintain its current services. The Chair replied that there were already new configurations to the sector, as seen with SARC, ASRC and CUSP now falling under the Dean of Students Office. Consolidating in some areas would allow the sector to maintain its services, however with the current budget constraints, any possibility of improving or increasing services would be difficult to imagine. The Council considered what might happen without an increase in the fees and what would be the reaction from the university community if some services were lost or reduced. Ms. Robinson spoke of her experience in Counselling & Development, explaining that it was already difficult to maintain the quality of service to students with limited resources. She acknowledged that there were only so many ways that the department could adapt without compromising the quality of service.

The Chair asked the student representatives if they felt that it would be difficult to find a student who would be willing to openly support an increase in the Student Services and R&A fees. Mr. Vaccaro said that the average student would probably not see it negatively, however this person might fall under some criticism. Ms. Harrison stressed the importance of making any promotion of the sector strictly informational and not a way to push an agenda. The Council questioned if it would even be possible to start a “Yes” campaign, and if so, what would be the process.

The Chair noted that any proposed fee increase would be ill received if students were not well informed and if the sector were not able to justify why an increase was necessary. Mr. Woodall thanked the Council members for a very thoughtful discussion.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Motion to Add the Director of the Student Success Centre to CCSL

The Chair referred to the motion that had been sent to the Council prior to the meeting for review. He explained that the motion to add this new position would not replace the currently vacant position of the Director of Health Services. The Council might have to consider the ratio of students to non-students in the future, however parity would not be disrupted with this motion. Mr. Vaccaro asked what the number of voting students to voting non-students was and the Chair confirmed that it was ten to ten.

Ms. Bellini moved to approve the following motion, seconded by Mr. Longinotti:

Given that there is a new department in Student Services called the Student Success Centre (SSC); and

Given that the SSC includes units previously under Counselling and Development (New Student Success, Learning Support and Career Services) as well as a new unit called: Next Generation Skills; and

Given that this new department will have a Director; and

Given that the addition of this position as a voting member to CCSL does not upset the balance of equity between student and staff representation on CCSL;

Be it resolved that the position of Director of the Student Success Centre or his/her delegate be added to CCSL as a new, permanent, voting member.

For: 13

Against: 0

Abstentions: 1

The motion passed.

6.2 Points of Interest

The Chair reported that the CCSL Special Projects sub-committee hoped to have an update for the Council at the next meeting on the discussion of what to do with the unused funds from previous years.

Mr. Woodall said that the Economics Students Society had recently defeated the Political Science Student Association in a debate, and that this type of event was a wonderful example of how to get students involved in a fun and educational way. The Chair also said that the Concordia Association for Students in English recently held a workshop on how to get a job with an English degree, a simple and inexpensive idea, but one that was surely appreciated by students. These were two examples of student involvement that Mr. Woodall hoped would be encouraged and spoken about by Council members.

Ms. Acco informed the Council that the School of Community and Public Affairs Association were having a full day of workshops on March 7th, in light of Women's Day on March 8th. The association will reach out to high school and cepeg students as well to attend the workshops focused on women and girls' issues.

Dr. Ostiguy was happy to report that despite the budget challenges ahead, the university had renewed its commitment to 75 undergraduate research awards, a program that had proved to be very beneficial for students in the past.

The Chair noted that the School of Community and Public Affairs, the Aboriginal Student Resource Centre (ASRC) and the First Peoples Studies program were working together to organize events for the First Voices Week taking place from January 26th–30th. He encouraged the Council to find out more through the ASRC Facebook page and the Concordia website.

The deadline for CCSL Special Project applications is February 6, 2015 at 5pm.

There will be three distinct awards celebrated at this year's CCSL Awards Night: the CCSL Outstanding Contribution Awards, the Volunteer Recognition Awards and the Community Engaged Scholar Awards. The deadline to submit a nomination for any of the awards is February 13, 2015 at 5pm.

The Chair recalled two upcoming speaking events that would be part of the Strategic Directions process. January 28th from 11am-12pm, Mr. David Ward, former president, University Wisconsin-Madison, will be at Concordia to discuss "Why Should Universities Innovate?" and Mr. Randy Bass, Vice-Provost for Education, Georgetown University, will be speaking about "What is Next-Generation Learning?" on February 5th.

Mr. Woodall said that the CSU would host the “Have a Heart Fair” about housing and engagement on February 17th in the LB Atrium. Residence Life, the International Students Office and the Dean of Students Office will be present as well. On February 18th, the Dean of Students Office is hosting the “Get Involved Fair” in the LB Atrium. Mr. Vaccaro noted that the “Get Involved Fair” was very good the year before, however it was missing a visible location. He hoped that there would be more publicity for the fair in the upcoming weeks to encourage students to attend.

Mr. Vaccaro informed the Council that the Commerce & Administration Students Association (CASA) had a 5 à 7 in the VAV Gallery. He thought it was very interesting to have business students holding their event in an art gallery. Mr. Vaccaro enjoyed seeing the cross-faculty merging.

Ms. Robinson announced the upcoming events under Counselling & Development: February 11th from 10am-3pm on the Mezzanine in the Hall building, “A Fair of the Heart” will provide students with advice on communication, conflict resolution and maintaining healthy relationships; March 6th from 10am-2pm in H-440, the “Stress Clinic” will allow students to speak individually with a counsellor to create their own stress reduction plan; and March 11th from 10am-3pm in the EV Atrium, “Let’s Talk Mental Health” will help students improve their mental health and overall sense of well-being.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on March 6, 2015 at SGW H-769 from 10am-1:30pm. The next meeting has been extended until 1:30pm to allow time for presentations of the Special Project requests of over \$5,000.

8. TERMINATION OF MEETING

Ms. Caruso motioned to terminate the meeting. Ms. Acco seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.