

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION
OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Thursday, January 27, 2022, at 4 p.m.
via Zoom video conferencing

PRESENT

Governors: Helen Antoniou (Chair), Kenneth Brooks, Graham Carr (President and Vice-Chancellor), Jarrett Carty, Gary N. Chateram, Gina P. Cody, Roy Cross, Selvadurai Dayanandan, Pat Di Lillo, Kim Fuller, Rana Ghorayeb, Claude Joli-Coeur (Vice-Chair), Eduardo Malorni, Claudine Mangen, Frédérica Martin (Vice-Chair), Georges Paulez, Philippe Purreaux, Suzanne Sauvage, Robert Soroka, Ted Stathopoulos

Also attending: Philippe Beauregard, Sylvie Bourassa, William Cheaib, Paul Chesser, Denis Cossette, Michael Di Grappa, Nadia Hardy, Frederica Jacobs, Karan Singh, Lisa Ostiguy, Anne Whitelaw, Paula Wood-Adams

ABSENT

Governors: Françoise Bertrand, Adriana Embiricos, Caroline Jamet, Odile Joannette, Shalini Peruka

Alternate Governor: Lauren Perozek

Non-voting observer: Jonathan Wener

1. Call to order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. and reminded the Governors that the Open Session meeting was being recorded and would be posted on the website for one week, following the meeting. The Chair went on to welcome back Governors Claudine Mangen and Jarrett Carty, who were returning to the Board.

The Chair briefly reminded the Governors of the key elements for an orderly conduct of the meeting on Zoom.

1.1 Approval of the Agenda

Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously RESOLVED:

R-2022-1-1 That the Agenda be approved, including the items on the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT

2. Approval of December 16, 2021 Minutes

R-2022-1-2 That the Minutes of the meeting of December 16, 2021, be approved.

3. Requests for the use of Concordia logo (BG-2022-1-D1)

R-2022-1-3 That, subject to the conditions set out in the Policy on the Use of Concordia University's Name, Logo and Related Insignia, and the Governance of its Visual Character and Digital Presence (SG-4), the Board of Governors approve the request to use the Concordia logo by La Tranchefile.

4. Finance Committee recommendations regarding the revisions to the Travel and Conference Policy (CFO-3) (Document BG-2022-1-D2)

R-2022-1-4 That, on recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Board of Governors approve the revisions to the Travel and Conference Policy (CFO-3).

REGULAR

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

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

6. President's report (Document BG-2022-1-D3)

As complementary information to his written report, Dr. Carr's remarks are summarized as follows:

- Dr. Carr began by welcoming everyone to the new calendar year and noted that the start was different from what had been hoped for. The continued challenges related to the Omicron variant was impacting the winter term plans for all universities.
- Dr. Carr informed the Board that unfortunately the convocation ceremonies that had been planned for January and February had to be cancelled and will have to be rescheduled.
- Dr. Carr shared with the Board that Dr. Venkatesh (Department of Art Education) has had their UNESCO Chair in Prevention of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

renewed for a four-year period. He explained that the Chair promotes new pedagogical approaches to encourage critical thinking in schools, communities and public policy contexts aiming to counter the spread of violence and terrorism.

- Dr. Carr also advised the Board that Concordia had been awarded five new Canada Research Chairs, all to women, in fields ranging from feminist film studies to computational biophysics, health and synthetic biology. He noted that these Research Chairs allowed the University to recruit emerging stars from major programs and these five candidates will come to Concordia from the United States, Canada and India.
- The President informed the Board that on February 10, Daniel Lamarre, the former CEO and now Executive Vice-Chair of the Board of Cirque du Soleil, will be in conversation with Dr. Leroux, Associate Dean Research in Faculty of Arts and Sciences and a widely published specialist on circus studies, about what performance will look like in a post-pandemic world.
- Dr. Carr informed the Board on the return-to-campus plans. He underlined the fact that the University recognized the physical and emotion toll that the situation is causing. He mentioned that following the delivery of a safe and effective fall semester, the community was looking forward to resuming most of the University's activities in person in the new year. Dr. Carr explained that the appearance of the Omicron strain disrupted the University's plans and the University had adapted to the changed reality.
- Dr. Carr acknowledged that there were highly divergent and deeply held views on the issue: while some students, faculty and staff have demanded the delivery of the entire semester to be done remotely, others have expressed frustration at the delay in returning to in-person activities. Dr. Carr informed the Board, that as it had been the case since the beginning of the pandemic, the University based its decision making on a core matrix of factors, namely:
 - government directives;
 - public health protocols and advisories;
 - information received from the community both privately and through countless meetings with heads of faculty, staff and student unions, with deans, department chairs, managers and directors;
 - exchanges of information that happen several times a week with other universities in Québec and on a regular basis with institutions in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada;

- the desire to balance compassion for very particular individual circumstances with the need to implement approaches that are fair, equitable and consistent for the community as a whole;
 - the University's commitment to fulfilling its academic and research mission;
 - the desire to support both a vibrant student experience and to make the campus as safe as possible for all;
 - a willingness to make adjustments as necessary should circumstances warrant; and
 - an assessment of the evolving situation as it pertains to Concordia's reality.
- Dr. Carr outlined that the decisions that are to be taken, must be done so recognizing that there is a measure of uncertainty and unpredictability. With the foregoing in mind, the President touched on four points: 1) how the University decided to deliver the start of the semester academically; 2) how the University was addressing health and safety concerns; 3) how the University was providing academic accommodations and supports for the benefit of both students and faculty; and 4) how the University was approaching the question of return-to-campus work for different types of staff personnel.
- Dr. Carr explained that in December, Concordia was the first University in Québec to announce that it would begin the winter semester mostly online. In light of government announcements, he noted that modifications were made, and remote teaching was scheduled to continue until February 3. He pointed out that the government of Québec had been very clear and consistent that education is an essential service, and that in-person student experience was to be prioritized. He reminded the Board that the government had earlier wanted in-person teaching to start by January 17, and no later than January 31. He noted that some universities began in-person teaching on January 17 or will start on January 24 and that Concordia's approach with Université de Montréal and UQAM was to delay as much as it was allowed by the government. Dr. Carr reported that most Universities in Ontario and British-Columbia have also announced they will be resuming between January 31 and February 7.
- The President confirmed to the Board that the University had kept the government advised of all decisions and rationales all along and they were fine with the University's approach.
- He explained why Concordia chose the February 3 start date for the resumption of in-person teaching, namely:
 - To allow a significant buffer period to reduce stress relating to the return to in-person activities.

- To provide the community for a month of predictability, so that faculty members could deliver courses and students would be able to continue to learn in an online environment.
 - To allow University employees to seek their vaccine booster as they qualified for privileged access since higher education is considered an essential service.
 - To allow the University to view how other university experiences have been.
 - To allow international students to arrive by January 19, in accordance with government requirements, and give them a buffer period to isolate and get vaccinated should that be required for them.
 - To coincide the beginning of in-person courses with the beginning of an academic week, so on a Thursday.
- Dr. Carr clarified that the campuses are open. He indicated that research was ongoing, people have access to their offices and all essential services are functioning on campus. He noted that this past week, 2000 students have been accessing the Vanier and Webster Libraries and that since the beginning of term, more than 20,000 students had used the libraries.
 - On the health and safety measures, Dr. Carr reiterated to the Board that the University continues to follow the protocols of public health, which proved to be effective last fall. Regarding the obligatory wearing of masks, he informed the members that, in accordance with the *Institut national de santé publique du Québec* guidelines, procedural masks are considered fully adequate to the overwhelming majority of activities on campus and will be made available to all faculty, students, staff personnel and visitors entering university buildings. Individuals who want to wear N95 masks are free to do so, however Environmental Health and Safety had flagged some concerns about the effectiveness of such masks if worn without being properly fitted. Regarding air quality, Dr. Carr noted that the University has already undertaken a number of measures to ensure proper ventilation in buildings where most of teaching takes place.
 - Dr. Carr noted that compliance was also a collective responsibility. He mentioned that if the last semester was any guide, the overwhelming majority of the University community will comply because individuals are committed to their own welfare, and they want the return-to-campus to be successful.
 - Dr. Carr expressed that beyond health and safety, there are several other factors that should be in place to best support students and faculty as the University tries to create the best possible conditions for a successful term. He noted that under the leadership of the Office of the Provost, and with great input from the faculties, student associations, the Student Success Center and the Center for Teaching and Learning, the University had developed, a truly impressive suite of supports and generous set of

accommodations. He provided many examples of the supports and accommodations in place, such as:

- A guide to help faculty members support continuous learning in the pivot from remote to in-person, including resources to enable them to make course materials more readily available for students who miss class.
 - Significantly increase in the number of TA's in all the faculties to support faculty members in the technical delivery of their course material.
 - Late DISC option up until the exam period for all students.
 - Introduction of the new short-term absence policy to give students flexibility when they are faced with unexpected situations so that they can be absent for a two-day period without providing medical documentation.
 - Protocol to allow faculty members to pivot to remote teaching for short periods of time when, due to exceptional circumstances, they cannot be physically present to deliver classes.
 - Process for faculty to request accommodation to teach remotely for the winter term.
- Dr. Carr spoke of the University's efforts to ensure constant communication with all stakeholders via various forums and platforms. He gave the examples of meetings with Inter-Union Council, with graduate and undergraduate student associations, and with Senate last Friday, where an open discussion was held with Senators on the return-to-campus.
 - Dr. Carr noted that like every other university, unfortunately, there were students at Concordia who have not been able to take a course in person in two years. He noted that the approach that the University had taken was prudent and measured and that there had been a generous timeline created for the community to prepare its transition back to in-person.
 - Some Governors echoed the President's views. Governors thanked the President for a thorough presentation with well-reasoned arguments.

7. Other business

There was no business not included on the Agenda.

8. Adjournment

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Shelina Houssenaly

Shelina Houssenaly
Secretary of the Board of Governors