

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

Thursday, October 27, 2022, at 4 p.m.
Room GM 410 (Board of Governors meeting room) SGW Campus

PRESENT

Governors: Helen Antoniou (Chair), Francis Baillet, Kenneth Brooks (attended remotely), Graham Carr (President and Vice-Chancellor), Jarrett Carty, Gary N. Chateram, Gina P. Cody (attended remotely), Daniel Cross, Selvadurai Dayanandan, Pat Di Lillo, Adriana Embiricos, Kim Fuller, Rana Ghorayeb, Fawaz Halloum, Caroline Jamet (attended remotely), Claude Joli-Cœur (Vice-Chair), Claudine Mangen (attended remotely), Frederica Martin (Vice-Chair), Paul John Murdoch (attended remotely), Philippe Pourreaux, Duraichelvan Raju, Ted Stathopoulos, Cathy Wong (attended remotely)

Non-voting observer: Jonathan Wener (attended remotely)

Alternate Governor: Nassim Boutalbi

Also attending: Philippe Beauregard, Dominique Bérubé, Howard Bokser (attended remotely), Sylvie Bourassa, William Cheaib, Paul Chesser (attended remotely), Denis Cossette, Michael Di Grappa, Amy Fish, Nadia Hardy (attended remotely), Frederica Jacobs (attended remotely), Lisa Ostiguy, Melodie Sullivan, Aisha Topsakal, Anne Whitelaw

ABSENT

Governors: Françoise Bertrand, Robert Soroka

1. Call to order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

The Chair informed Governors that the Board meetings this year will be held in-person, with the option to connect remotely. She added that the Observer Room has been re-instated for people who wish to watch the proceedings of the Open Sessions.

1.1 Approval of the Agenda

The Chair advised that the agenda item 3.1 was going to read as follows:

'Hi-Lites of the External Auditor's report'. The document for this agenda item was updated, following the Audit Committee meeting of October 20, 2022.

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

R-2022-9-1 That the Agenda be approved, including the items on the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT

2. Approval of September 29, 2022 Minutes

R-2022-9-2 That the Minutes of the meeting of September 29, 2022, be approved.

3. **Hi-Lites of the External Auditor's report** (Document BD-2022-9-D1)
4. **Unaudited interfund transfers for the year ended April 30, 2022**
(Document BD-2022-9-D2)
5. **Unaudited draft consolidated financial statements for the year ended April 30, 2022**
(Document BD-2022-9-D3)
6. **Unaudited Système d'information financière des universités (SIFU) for the year ended April 30, 2022 - Informations nécessaires aux fins d'analyse de l'octroi de la subvention conditionnelle - Annexe 19** (Document BG-2022-9-D4)
7. **Membership of the Advisory Search Committee for the Dean of Graduate Studies**
(Document BD-2022-9-D5)

These reports were for information only.

REGULAR

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

There was no other business to bring before the meeting that was not included on the Agenda.

9. President's report (Document BG-2022-9-D6)

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

- Before sharing some announcements and good news, G. Carr addressed the events in Iran as he did at the beginning of the last Senate meeting, noting that Concordia has a large cohort of Iranian students, staff, faculty, and alumni who enrich the University community. Protests in Iran have continued for more than 40 days. G. Carr condemned the events in Iran on behalf of the Concordia community, noting that he is appalled by the violence against women and disruption to education taking place there. In light of these events, Concordia's International Students Office has been providing support to Concordia's Iranian community and senior administration has requested that reasonable accommodations be made for Iranian students who may be experiencing emotional and/or financial distress as a result of the current events in Iran. The University will continue to monitor the situation closely on behalf of Concordia's Iranian community.
- G. Carr thanked the Board members who attended the dinner for fall honorary degree recipients and for attending the fall Convocation ceremonies. He noted that there was a great slate of hon doc recipients: Fibbie Tatti, Reshma Shetty, and David Fung. In addition to participating in fall convocation, each hon doc recipient gave time to the University community, meeting with students and staff. It was a joy and a privilege to welcome these honorary degree recipients into the University community.
- The first in-person Open House since the pandemic took place this past Saturday. There was an online component as well. The event was a great success – hallways were packed, and there was significant online attendance as well – particularly from prospective students from Africa. G. Carr thanked all who made Open House possible. The success of Open House indicates that the Concordia brand is strong.
- He went on to share some disappointing news: Fall 2022 registration did not meet the target - flat growth was projected, but there was in fact a 1-2% decline in enrolment. The decline experienced at Concordia mirrors current university registration statistics throughout Québec. G. Carr pointed out that Concordia would need to take a different approach to recruitment within Québec, including increased collaboration with francophone Québec CEGEPs. The state of the economy also has an impact – historically, registration declines when there is a labour market shortage, and it increases when unemployment is up. Thus, the current labour market shortage is certainly a factor. One university that has bucked this trend is the University of Laval, who has made significant investments in increasing online education offerings. In the US, there has been a 1.5% absolute decline in university registration, and this decline has been steady over the last couple of years. This is a wake-up call for higher education.
- Since the last Board meeting, the Québec election had taken place. G. Carr welcomed the new Minister of Higher Education, Pascale Déry. He said he was looking forward to the first meeting with Minister Déry, likely in the context of BCI. He was also happy to report that BCI had a new President in Daniel Jutras. Dr. Carr has now become a member of the BCI Executive.

- Last week, Concordia hosted Lorna Magara, the Chairperson of the Makerere University, one of the oldest universities in Uganda. This visit was a great opportunity to discuss possible collaborations with that institution.
- The University has recently received another major gift from J. Sebastian van Berkom \$1M, bring the total gift from him to about \$4 million in support of the Van Berkom Investment Management Program. J. Sebastian van Berkom is a Concordia graduate and has been a loyal supporter of the university for years. His gifts enable JMSB students to gain experience that they would not be able to acquire at any other business school in Canada and his generosity has been transformative for many.
- G. Carr reminded the Board that tomorrow was the launch of the Taskforce on Anti-Black Racism's final report. He thanked the dozens of students, staff, faculty, alumni, and members of the black community who volunteered to generate the report. The Taskforce delivered the final report under difficult circumstances in the midst of the pandemic, meeting more than 100 times to develop the report. When the report is unveiled tomorrow, some immediate actions that will be taken in response to the recommendations therein will also be announced. G. Carr reminded all Board members that they received an invitation to the launch and are welcome to attend virtually or in-person tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

There were no questions to the President's remarks.

10. Annual report from the Ombuds Office (Document BG-2022-9-D7)

A. Fish, the Ombudsperson, presented highlights of the annual report, including some key statistics. To illustrate the type of concerns and issues the Ombuds Office deals with on a regular basis, A. Fish provided three examples of common scenarios.

A. Fish was pleased to inform the Board that there were no major problems throughout the year and underlined the University's commitment to openness and fairness. While the number and complexity of files had changed since the pandemic started, there were signs that the number of complaints would fall back to pre-pandemic levels. As of the previous year, 83% of the files were of students and the rest were of staff and faculty. Faculty files were up this year, as faculty members have been encouraged to contact the Ombuds Office.

A. Fish noted that potential students can also contact the office if they believe that there was unfair treatment. The Ombuds Office does not suggest changes to the outcome of a file, but providing assistance to the community helps community members. She thanked the Board for renewing her mandate.

Members thanked A. Fish for the report and the work of the Ombuds Office.

11. Annual report from the Office of Rights and Responsibilities (Document BG-2022-9-D7)

A. Topsakal began by noting that she was happy to be presenting the report in-person. She noted that since August 2021, in-person services were being offered, but more people have preferred remote meetings. With 357 e-requests, 37 files carried forward from the previous year, they had 394 active files. She noted that bulk of the files were consultation related to students and staff, with 17% being files dealing with difficult situations and 11% related to student of concern. A. Topsakal explained that student of concern was identified when a student's behavior was a potential threat to themselves. She went on to share some examples of the complexity of files that her office deals with. The information in the examples had been changed to protect confidentiality.

One of the members asked if the complexity of cases was also affected with the concerns around mental health of community members. A. Topsakal noted that there are resources at the University to support community members who are in need of support when dealing with mental health issues.

12. Other business

There was no other business to bring before the meeting.

13. Adjournment

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

K. Singh
Karan Singh
Secretary of the Board of Governors