

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

Thursday, September 26, 2024 at 4 p.m.  
Room GM 410 (Board of Governors meeting room)  
SGW Campus

**PRESENT**

**Governors:**

Helen Antoniou (C)	Adriana Embiricos	Paul John Murdoch
Theresa Bianco	Kim Fuller (zoom)	Kareem Rahaman
Graham Carr (P and Vice-C)	Shahir Guindi	Robert Soroka (zoom)
Jarett Carty (V.C)	Shoshana Kalfon	Ted Stathopoulos
Gary N. Chateram (zoom)	Catherine Loubier (zoom)	Roula Zaarour (zoom)
Pat Di Lillo	Miranda Melfi	

**Alternate:** Ali Salman

**Also attending:**

Philippe Beauregard	Faye Diamantoudi	Pascal Lebel
Paul Chesser (zoom)	Michael Di Grappa	Anne Whitelaw
Denis Cossette	Frederica Jacobs	

**ABSENT**

**Governors:**

Ken Brooks	Caroline Jamet	Raymond Paquin
Rana Ghorayeb	Claude Joli-Coeur (V.C)	

**1. Call to order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

**LEGEND:**

C: Chair

P and Vice-C: President and Vice Chancellor

V.C: Vice Chair

### 1.1 Approval of the Agenda

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

R-2024-7-1 *That the Agenda be approved, including the items on the Consent Agenda.*

### CONSENT

### 2. Approval of June 20, 2024 Minutes

R-2024-7-2 *That the Minutes of the meeting of June 20, 2024 be approved.*

### 3. Evaluation Committee for the Dean – Faculty of Arts and Science (Document BG-2024-7-D1)

R-2024-7-3 *That, the Board of Governors ratify the membership of the Evaluation Committee for the renewal of the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science, as per the Policy on Employment and Remuneration of the Academic Deans and the University Librarian (BD-17).*

### 4. Report on compliance with EHS and safety regulations (Q2-2024 Report) (Document BG-2024-7-D2)

This item was for information only.

### REGULAR

### 5. 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.

### 6. President's report (Document BG-2024-7-D3)

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

- Dr. Carr informed the Board that the University had experienced some disruption for about half an hour the previous day when approximately 150 protestors – likely both internal to and external to the community -- mostly masked, entered some of the University's buildings and the tunnel, attempted to block traffic on Guy Street, and ultimately, in at least one case, ended up in a confrontation in the Guy-Concordia metro station with SPVM officers.
- As September 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> had been designated for walkouts on different Canadian university campuses, the SPVM were on standby near the campus in case there were tensions, and they responded quickly when the incident occurred.

- First, the protestors entered the atrium of the Hall building and, from there, some protestors briefly went on to the Learning Square and John Molson building. As a security precaution, the University briefly closed some of the buildings, while allowing individuals inside to leave if they wished.
- Dr. Carr applauded the outstanding work of Campus Safety personnel in responding to the incident, particularly those who assisted individuals with reduced physical mobility to leave the Learning Square while protestors were present.
- There were no reports of any classes being cancelled outright but, obviously, if protestors are making noise, entering classrooms, etc., it is highly disruptive and intimidating for students, faculty and staff, many of whom understandably feel victimized by the circumstances.
- Dr. Carr also reported that, unfortunately, one of the University's Campus Safety agents was physically assaulted by protestors when she attempted to stop an individual who was committing vandalism by spray painting graffiti in the tunnel. The SPVM has arrested three of the protestors for criminal acts.
- He noted that the overwhelming majority of people in the University community and in civil society more generally are disgusted that criminal acts, assault, vandalism and graffiti have occurred on Concordia's campus. Similar behaviors have unfortunately also occurred at other campuses. The previous day's events came on the heels of earlier protests on September 12<sup>th</sup>, when groups of masked individuals attempted to disrupt classes at McGill and Concordia, and where the SPVM intervened.
- The University is aware that some groups have been warning on social media of future disruptions, including during the week of October 7<sup>th</sup>. And the University takes these warnings very seriously. The University is also witnessing other behavior that is deliberately designed to be provocative, intimidating, physically and emotionally aggressive, harassing towards individuals and groups, willfully destructive of property, and that seems designed to discredit and bring harm to the reputation of the University. Dr. Carr noted that this is unacceptable.
- He spoke of the community's responsibility to stand up and speak out against such actions and to call out behaviors that are at odds with Concordia's values and mission. Ironically, the previous day's disruption occurred while one of the working groups of the STRIVE task force on identity-based hatred and violence was beginning its community consultations. These incidents confirm the need for an initiative like STRIVE.
- Another reason why these incidents are so upsetting is because they attempt to cast a shadow over the beauty and transformative opportunity of the University experience, and to deliberately yank attention away from the extraordinary contributions of the University by Concordia's students and faculty for our society, which is what motivates the vast majority of us in the first place.

- Having disagreements is normal in society and at a University; however, as a community, such events cannot be allowed to take away from the positive work that is happening at the University, which includes contributions from students and researchers, staff, alumni and community partners.
- Last week, the University celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Homecoming celebrations took place with full houses for many events at the department, faculty and university-wide level.
- The annual Shuffle raised \$220K for student support last Friday. This Shuffle march demonstrates what Concordia is all about: people volunteering time and energy, sponsoring friends and relatives, walking the walk to raise money to support student success.
- The previous Saturday saw a fantastic turnout for the homecoming football game.
- Dr. Carr also had the opportunity to speak to many alumni over the course of the four days of Homecoming, including a number who were either part of the first Concordia graduating class or the first cohort of new admissions. Alumni came from across Canada, the US, and beyond, and seemed very excited to see how much Concordia has grown and changed.
- Dr. Carr then noted some outstanding achievements by the University: the Bloomberg Global Rankings of MBA programs were released last week and the John Molson School of Business, for the first time, was ranked second in Canada, behind Western's Ivey School, but ahead of HEC and Desautels. Big congratulations to our colleagues at JMSB, as the Bloomberg rankings are among the most watched and celebrated in the field.
- On Monday, the Swedish communications giant, Ericsson, signed an agreement with Concordia by which the University became the first university in North America and only the seventh in the company's history to be recognized as a Tier 1 research partner for the research work and training in AI, Cybersecurity and the development of 5 and 6G networks undertaken through collaborations between Concordia and Ericsson.
- And on Wednesday, a story in *La Presse* noted the \$40M investment that the CFREF initiative, Volt-Age, is making to recruit 250 PhD students in support of our R&D on electrification at the University, and partner universities – Dalhousie, TMU, Calgary.
- Finally, earlier in September, Concordia became the first university in Québec to offer full tuition waivers to Indigenous and Inuit students from anywhere in Québec as part of the University's quest for reconciliation and to stay true to its accessibility roots. This announcement has been extremely well received by Indigenous and Inuit communities and has gotten widespread, positive media coverage.
- Concordia recently introduced a pathway program to support Indigenous students wanting to pursue STEM-related academic programs, but for whom it is sometimes

difficult to get appropriate qualifications. The University is trying to do as much as possible to address gaps that traditionally prevent access.

- In early September, three new honorary doctorate recipients were announced ahead of fall convocation, taking place on October 15<sup>th</sup>. They are each remarkable individuals and inspiring thought and business leaders:
  - **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw**, the founder of Biocon, based in Bangalore, India, a true trailblazer in biotechnology and a model of women in leadership in global entrepreneurship;
  - **John Sicard**, a graduate of Concordia, founder of the Ottawa-based company, Kinaxis, and one of the world's foremost experts, luminaries, entrepreneurs in supply chain management; and
  - **Douglas Sanderson**, an Indigenous professor of Aboriginal Law at University of Toronto, and co-author author of the extraordinarily powerful book, *Valley of the Birdtail: An Indian Reserve, a White Town and the Road to Reconciliation*.
- Dr. Carr concluded his remarks by commenting that all these outstanding achievements at Concordia cannot erase the profoundly negative impact of the Québec government's tuition policies and the Québec and federal immigration policies on student recruitment.
- As reported to the Board of Governors at their retreat in late August, the worst-case predictive scenarios with regard to the rest of Canada registrations and international student declines have come true. The University has recorded a 25% decline in new registrations from the Rest of Canada, a 10% decline in new undergraduate international registrations, and a significant decline in master's program registrations. These numbers are a direct result of the Québec government's new tuition policies.
- In the case of international student enrolment, the situation was subsequently aggravated by federal policy announcements announcing reduced caps for the future, and, most recently, also extending the caps to apply to PhD students and spouses (which had not previously been the case).
- These are very challenging times for much of the higher education sector in Canada with a record number of universities - including Concordia, unfortunately - staring at significant deficits and reeling from policy decisions that are aggravating the challenges faced. Declining student enrolment remains the fundamental challenge in a very difficult time for the University. Dr. Carr thanked Board members for their ongoing support during this challenging time.

Board members had questions about providing data to the government related to declining registration. Dr. Carr confirmed that the numbers are made public, and the government's tuition policy is directly responsible for the projected reduction of revenues to the tune of \$15M.

## **7. Annual Report from the Ombuds Office (Document BG-2024-7-D4)**

University Ombudsperson, A. Fish presented the Ombuds Office's annual report. The electronic version of the report will be circulated to the Board in the coming weeks.

In 2023-24, the Ombuds Office treated 625 files – up from 416 in the previous year. 100 were outsider jurisdiction. The increase in files is owing to the office's increased visibility, given that since the pandemic, preventative consultations have been offered.

This year, there were 68 investigations, compared to 69 during the previous year. 72% were student files, 20% faculty and staff. Most of the investigations are around fairness and application of University policies.

The Ombuds Office presented some minor recommendations

- When a student is not happy with their grade: They can apply for grade re-evaluation and the participation grade is not included. In a matter related to a graduate student, their weekly participation and course grade were combined. Faculty agreed with the Office's recommendation that the participation and assignment grades should be presented separately.
- Clarity of communication on undergraduate withdrawal from a Co-op program: In case of a withdrawal, students should be able to reapply and complete their internship. While, in this case, the student had been treated fairly, it was noted that clear communication around the withdrawal and re-application process would be helpful.
- Improved communication on student fees: Two years ago, single-course international student didn't understand the fees they were required to pay. Even when clarification was provided, they couldn't pay due to financial constraints. They applied for financial support, but a student award fell through. Normally, the period of taking on files is no later than 3 months, but in this case, the file was still taken on by the Ombuds Office and, while the student ultimately couldn't secure the student award, it was recommended to improve communication around fees owed.

There were some questions from members around the management of whistleblowing complaints and harassment complaints. The Secretary-General responded to these questions and provided some information about the mandates of the Ombuds Office, the Office of Rights and Responsibilities and Human Resources, in relation to harassment complaints.

## **8. Other business**

There was no other business brought before the Open Session.

**9. Adjournment**

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

*K. Singh*  
Karan Singh  
Secretary of the Board of Governors