

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING
OF THE OPEN SESSION OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
AND OF THE CORPORATION**

Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 4 p.m.
Room GM 410 (Board of Governors meeting room)
SGW Campus

PRESENT

Helen Antoniou (C)	Darshan Vishnu Dorugade	Miranda Melfi (zoom)
Theresa Bianco	(zoom)	Paul John Murdoch
Ken Brooks (zoom)	Adriana Embiricos	Kareem Rahaman
Graham Carr (P and Vice-C)	Kim Fuller (zoom)	Rahul Ravi
Jarrett Carty (V.C)	Shahir Guindi	Robert Soroka
Gary N. Chateram (zoom)	Claude Joli-Coeur (V.C)	Ted Stathopoulos
Daniel Cross (zoom)	Shoshana Kalfon	Roula Zaarour
Pat Di Lillo (zoom)	Catherine Loubier (zoom)	

Alternate: Ali Salman

Non-voting observer: Gina Cody (zoom)

Also attending:

Philippe Beauregard	Michael Di Grappa	Frederica Jacobs
William Cheaib	Tim Evans	Aisha Topsakal
Paul Chesser	Julie Fortier (zoom)	Anne Whitelaw
Denis Cossette (zoom)	Nadia Hardy	

ABSENT

Governors:

Rana Ghorayeb	Caroline Jamet
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LEGEND:

C: Chair

P and Vice-C: President and Vice Chancellor

V.C: Vice Chair

1. Call to order

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

She noted the arrival of the new Vice-President, Research, Innovation and Impact, Tim Evans, and welcomed him to the meeting.

1.1 Approval of the Agenda

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

R-2025-1-1 That the Agenda be approved, including the items on the Consent Agenda.

CONSENT

2. Approval of December 12, 2024 Minutes

R-2025-1-2 That the Minutes of the meeting of Open Session of December 12, 2024 be approved.

3. Use of Concordia's Name (Document BG-2025-1-D1)

R-2025-1-3 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) and its related Procedures Handbook, the Board of Governors approve the following request to use the Concordia name:

- 1. Concordia Student Music Club; and*
- 2. Concordia Undergraduate Astronomy and Astrophysics Student Club*

4. Membership of the Board of Governors Standing Committees (Document BG-2025-1-D2/CORP-2025-1-D1)

This report was for information only.

5. Renewal of Internal Member of Board of Governors and the Corporation (Document BG-2025-1-D3/CORP-2025-1-D2)

R-2025-1-4 That, Darshan Vishnu Dorugade, representing the graduate students, be renewed to the Board of Governors and the Corporation for a term beginning on February 6, 2025, and ending on June 30, 2025.

REGULAR

6. 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.

7. Annual report from the Office of Rights and Responsibilities (Document BG-2025-1-D4)

The Director of the Office of Rights and Responsibilities, A. Topsakal, presented the report, which was included in the meeting documentation. She apologized for the slight delay in bringing the report to the Board of Governors, given that the office is small and continues to deal with a large volume of requests.

In summary, she noted that the previous year was a difficult year for the University given campus tensions stemming from the conflict in the Middle East. The ORR has been working closely with the Dean of Students Office and the Equity Office regarding campus climate.

To illustrate the work of the Office, A. Topsakal provided an example of a complaint received from one student about another student who had threatened to hurt them at a student protest. After consulting with the ORR, the complainant opted to make a formal complaint. A hearing was held, the panel listened to both students, and ultimately, the defending student was sanctioned.

Student of concern files represent the most difficult cases as they involve serious mental health issues and threats to personal safety. In one case, a student in residence had threatened suicide. The Office helped the student contact their parents (who reside in a foreign country), helped the student make arrangements for a leave of absence, and connected them to other support resources.

There has been an increase in incidents of incivility over the previous year. This trend is not unique to the University. The number of consultations has gone up to 442 compared to 404 in previous year – an increase of 10%. However, the data collection doesn't include a measure of complexity of the consultations – one file could involve only one phone call, while another file could involve multiple meetings over several months.

8. President's report (Document BG-2025-1-D5)

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

- Dr. Carr began noting that many developments had occurred since the Board meeting in December. He started by welcoming the new Vice President, Research Innovation and Impact, Tim Evans.
- He then went on to express his shock and extreme disappointment at the vandalism that took place the previous evening at McGill University. He noted that Concordia has experienced vandalism as well, and he trusts that the Governors join in him condemning these actions and expressing solidarity with McGill. He condemned the actions in no uncertain terms and emphasized that such acts have no place in our society.
- He then turned to some points of pride for the University, congratulating the organizers of the John Molson School MBA International Case Competition, which

held its successful 43rd edition in January, welcoming 32 teams from 15 countries. The John Molson School undergraduate students finished third overall and second in the competition for the academic cup in the *Jeux de commerce* case competition a few weeks prior.

- Also, congratulations to the students from Gina Cody School and the John Molson School of Business who organized successful *ConU Hacks* event last weekend, drawing more than 1000 students from across North America to what has become a must-attend event in the global hackathon circuit.
- As always, many thanks to all of the volunteer judges and coaches who help students make these events a success. In particular, he expressed appreciation for Governor Ken Brooks who played that role so well for so many years with the MBA case competition.
- Dr. Carr then extended congratulations to seven of the University's Stingers hockey players-- four from the men's team, three from the women's - who were part of Team Canada at the Federation of International University Sports World University Games in Torino, Italy, where Canada won gold in men's hockey and silver in women's hockey. He also recognized Marion Thénault, an aerospace undergraduate student who recently won a bronze medal in the World Championships for aerial skiing.
- This year's edition of the Wild Talks, an annual Faculty of Fine Arts speaker series named in honor of former dean, Catherine Wild, which invites acclaimed artists and performers to reflect on their work. Organized in collaboration with Advancement and Alumni Relations to celebrate the University's 50th anniversary, this year's event featured the acclaimed contemporary photographer and filmmaker, Ed Burtynsky, in conversation with Zoë Tausignant, a Concordia graduate and curator of photography at the McCord Stewart Museum, as this year's keynote for the annual in celebration. It was a sold-out event with 650 attendees in H110. The event was a great marker for the 50th anniversary celebrations and a huge congrats to Dean Gérin, P. Chesser and their teams for making this happen.
- As February marks Black History Month, Dr. Carr noted that the first of a kind academic program and a first for Québec - the Minor in Black and African Diaspora Studies in the Canadian Context - is set to begin in September 2025. The creation of the program flows from the recommendations of the President's Task Force on Anti-Black Racism.
- After more than a year-long community consultation and assessment, the University recently released the findings from a Voluntary University Review examining how the University aligns with the United Nations's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how we can maximize our impact and engagement going forward. Concordia is one of the first Canadian universities to conduct such a comprehensive exercise, which documents the University's current activities related to the 17 SDGs and identifies pathways to deepen contributions to global efforts to promote equity, security, well-being and respect for planetary limits.

- Finally, Dr. Carr made note of Forbes naming Concordia as Canada's third best employer among institutions with 500+ employees. Evaluation criteria included salary, work flexibility, training programs, opportunities to advance, likeliness of employees or recently departed employees to recommend the employer. It is the second year consecutively that the University has placed near the top of a list that included 100s of both private and public sector institutions and businesses.
- Dr. Carr provided an update on legal proceedings:
 - o Just before the holiday break, the Québec Superior Court heard simultaneously the cases that Concordia and McGill brought against the Government of Québec with regard to the changes it implemented in tuition policy for rest of Canada students and the associated changes to the funding formula;
 - o the oral presentations by Concordia, McGill, and the Attorney General of Québec lasted five days;
 - o whatever the outcome, the University was very well represented by its lawyers from Power Law; and
 - o the judge demonstrated very great familiarity with the case and the matter is now in his hands. The judgement is not expected before spring 2025.
- Dr. Carr turned to the financial situation, confirming that the University remains on track to achieve the target deficit of \$34.5M for this current fiscal year. Meeting this target has been a difficult exercise, and we are accomplishing it largely by maintaining - for a third year - a full-time faculty hiring freeze (other than positions funded through a government envelope); through the closure of 69 staff positions with more to be reviewed in the remainder of this financial year; through the non-renewal of contracts; and through reduced course sections and, in some cases, increased class sizes. During this current budget year, the academic sector is reducing its expenses by 3.7% overall; while the service sector is reducing expenses by 7.8%. The challenge going forward remains daunting given the extremely negative effect that the accumulation of recent government policies are having on future recruitment.
- Dr. Carr reiterated what he shared with the Board in August of 2024 during the Board retreat: 87% of revenue into the University derives from student tuition and associated government grants. This year, the University experienced a 3.2% decline in overall headcount (which translated as 1,441 fewer students), so the continued downturn in student numbers creates instant financial troubles that persist for the next three to four years.
- The collapsing international market is a particular source of concern in terms of talent and diversity, but also financially. In 2023-24 (the last year of registrations before the government's change in regulations and before quotas were announced, and before the cold war with India reached its apex), the University derived \$54M from international students through tuition and grants; for 2025-26 the projection is about \$18M.

- Notwithstanding the hiring freeze, position closures, etc., the University's *masse salariale* (the single largest portion of the budget by far) will continue to increase by \$20-25M annually based on collective agreements that were signed over the past couple of years.
- Looking ahead to next year (FY 2025-26), the University needs to land at a \$31.6 deficit which will require additional cuts of between 4.6-7.2%. The decision has been taken – and communicated to the community that the cuts will be across the board (academic and service).
- Everyone is being asked to push to attract 1,000 new students above this year's number (including recruitment and retention), and while the goal is ambitious - especially in light of legislative changes - the University continues its recruitment efforts at CEGEPS, international high schools, and high schools in other provinces.
- The Winter Open House is scheduled for February 15, 2025. It is being organized during the same weekend as the other Montréal universities' Open Houses, where all universities are joining forces in hopes of bringing larger interest from prospective students. However, the downside of a shared Open House weekend is that all universities are competing for the same pool of students.
- The University is working on a comprehensive, real-time dashboard on applications, acceptances, confirmations, registrations that can be deployed to search data across the University, or by faculty, department and program, and includes data on how quickly files are being processed or where there are bottlenecks. Additionally, a course and program costing tool is being employed that will make it possible to identify the true relationship between revenues generated through recruitment and research, and delivery costs associated at the departmental and faculty level. This information is aimed to enable the University teams to sharpen target-setting, better assess how different units contribute to those goals, and identify where there is capacity for growth or conversely to pause new investments. These tools are also to enable the Provost, Deans, department chairs and program directors to better prepare for future recruitment cycles.
- Dr. Carr offered the illustration that although the University's research income has tripled in 10 years, the University has not fully maximized capacity for PhD supervision in all programs by comparison with other research universities and that there is interesting potential for growth and revenue generation here.
- The previous week, Moody's updated credit analysis on Concordia, which was shared with the Board and also posted on the University's website. The report gives a favorable assessment of University's overall financial health and management. It also demonstrates a clear-sighted appreciation of the disruptive impact of successive government policies on the university sector.
- On the budget targets, Dr. Carr informed the Board that he and the executive team are of the view that the University needs to change its orientation given the magnitude of

the changes that are faced which have upended so many of the budget assumptions, forecasts and planning. As such, the need is to develop a multi-year plan that simultaneously works back from 2028-29 (the date when the University is to return to budget equilibrium) to ensure that the University is taking all the necessary steps in the meantime to meet deficit reduction commitments. Simultaneously, this multi-year thinking needs to work forward beyond 2028-29 and articulate what will essentially be a new business plan for the University that reflects the new normal for funding of public higher education and that goes beyond the imperative to control costs by identifying novel sources of revenue generation.

- As the University enters the beginning phase of its next 50 years, it is also embarking on a refresh of its Strategic Directions. There is no plan to create new directions; rather, to update the existing directions after 10 years. Some preliminary input has been sought from Senate and internal conversations are continuing, so that the revised directions can be aligned with the University's budget situation.
- He concluded by noting that the University needs to communicate across the community that, while the challenges are severe, Concordia needs to be forward-thinking, and this will necessitate transforming how the University envisions what will truly be a next-generation university

9. University initiatives - Presentation on the capital campaign

Paul Chesser, Vice President Advancement, made a presentation on the University's capital campaign. The campaign has already raised \$312M to date, projected to be at \$325M by early spring.

10. Other business

There was no other business to bring before the Open Session,

11. Adjournment

The Chair declared the Open Session adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

K. Singh
Karan Singh
Secretary of the Board of Governors