

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

Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 4 p.m.
Room GM 410 (Board of Governors meeting room), SGW Campus
and via Zoom video conferencing

PRESENT

Helen Antoniou (C)	Pat Di Lillo (remote)	Catherine Loubier (remote)
Theresa Bianco	Adriana Embiricos	Vanessa Massot
Ken Brooks (remote)	Kim Fuller	Miranda Melfi
Graham Carr (P and Vice-C)	Shahir Guindi (remote)	Christine Panet-Raymond
Jarrett Carty (V.C)	Claude Joli-Coeur (V.C)	Rahul Ravi
Gary N. Chateram (remote)	Shoshana Kalfon	Robert Soroka
	Martin Lefebvre	Ted Stathopoulos

Alternate: Ali Salman

Also attending:

William Cheaib	Effrosyni Diamantoudi	Frederica Jacobs
Paul Chesser	Tim Evans	Kathleen Lizé
Michael Di Grappa	Julie Fortier (remote)	Pascal Lebel
		Aisha Topsakal

ABSENT

Governors:

Rana Ghorayeb	Mehdi Kharazmi	Paul John Murdoch
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1. Call to order

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

LEGEND:

C: Chair

P and Vice-C: President and Vice Chancellor

V.C: Vice Chair

Remote: joined via Zoom/Teams

1.1. Approval of the Agenda

R-2026-1-1 *That the Agenda be approved as presented.*

1.2. Approval of December 11, 2025 Minutes

R-2026-1-2 *That the Minutes of the meeting of Open Session from December 11, 2025 be approved.*

2. 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.

3. President's report (Document BG-2026-1-D1)

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

- Dr. Carr welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2026 and noted that it was the first Board meeting for the new CFO, Kathleen Lizé, who has been on the job for the past three weeks.
- Given the unusually frigid beginning to the year, he offered thanks to the Facilities Management personnel who had quickly responded to the power outage in the NDG area on January 24, 2026 by offering electricity savings. Hydro-Québec was appreciative of the University's work in response to the power outage, and this situation underscored the potential value of phase two of the PLAN/NET ZERO project that the University is undertaking in collaboration with *Énergir*.
- Dr. Carr briefly mentioned the ongoing leadership races in the *Parti libéral du Québec* and in the CAQ following the Premier's decision to step down early January 2026. There are still signs that the government will issue a March budget, and as a member of the BCI executive, Dr. Carr had participated in the pre-budget submission, where the focus was on the following asks: a) restoration of indexation for salary increases; b) relax restrictive policies on international student recruitment and visas; c) maintain special envelopes of funding for programs such as engineering; and d) provide funding to address the growing infrastructure needs of the sector.
- In the previous year, there was no new funding for the university sector, and there had been a warning that no new funding was anticipated for the next fiscal year either.

- The government is continuing to proceed with its legislative agenda: Bill 1 (new constitution) and Bill 9 (laïcité), as well as Bill 11 on government efficiency. Hearings on these bills are ongoing.
- The BCI has presented submissions on Bill 1, mainly focused on the need to explicitly protect academic freedom and university autonomy. For Bill 9, BCI will send a letter directly to the minister summarizing the sector's multiple concerns about implications of proposed law for members of our community, including university operations.
- For the University, the major concern is for students who need to fulfil their teaching practicums, and, if they are unable to complete their internships, how that will impact their ability to graduate. On Bill 11, the focus is to remind the government about the multiplication of compliances and other administrative reporting, which has only grown in the past few years.
- The elimination of the PEQ (*programme d'expérience québécoise*) has also been in the media, where concerns are being raised about the policy creating a negative image of the province and portraying it as unwelcoming to international students. There has been considerable concern expressed from different sectors about the impact of eliminating the PEQ. Even the Mairesse of Montréal has spoken up on the issue, as has the *Chambre de commerce du Montréal métropolitain* (CCMM). Dr. Carr has spoken to Mairesse Martinez Ferrada and head of CCMM Isabelle Dessureault to indicate the University's support for their position.
- The mayor's office is convening a table of university leaders over which the Mairesse will be presiding. It is heartening to see some willingness to work with the university sector, which is such an important piece for the city, and its economy.
- On the issuance of the *Règles budgétaires*, which were released on January 23rd, Dr. Carr reported that the ministry (not the minister) sent a one-page memo in response to the Superior Court's decision of last year, where the court had requested an explanation on differential fees. The government has announced that they will maintain the tuition increase for non- Québec students. In the memo submitted, the government's main justification for the differential fees was that Québec taxpayers should not be subsidizing fees for outsiders.
- This decision by the government is disappointing and continues a long list of decisions that show the province in a negative light for prospective students, faculty, etc. It is important to note that the government's justification doesn't take into account that Québec students don't pay a differential fee when they study in other provinces.

- The policy goes on to say that Rest of Canada students doing programs in French will pay the lower fee (effectively discriminating against the University because of disproportionate impact). These policies continue to have a devastating impact on the University's financial situation.
- Dr. Carr went on to address the latest Moody's Credit Opinion on Concordia which was issued on January 16th and discussed at the Finance and Audit Committees in January. The University's rating was downgraded from stable to negative with the long-term debt rating designated at A1 and the Baseline Credit Assessment at baa1, which is considered a moderate risk. The outlook is based on the expectation that the "University's strong financial management should enable the University to achieve its multi-year budget plan to return to balanced budgets. However, given the multi-year target for a return to balanced budgets (as calculated by the province) [Moody's does] not expect to see material improvements in the key metrics of the university until at least 2030." The report confirms that this impact of government policy on the University's finances has been devastating.
- More so, Dr. Carr noted that the *Vérificateur générale du Québec* issued a report in November on the government's management of the international student question. The report had three conclusions, all pointing out the lack of assessment of the impact of the measures, the inefficiencies in the initial selection process for qualified students, and the lack of any follow-up by *Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Francisation et de l'Intégration*. and the *Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur* on whether students who received a study permit ultimately chose to study in the province. Neither ministry has responded to the report.
- For academic year 2025-26, the overall FTEs in all cycles are marginally higher than was the case last academic year (2024-25). However, these numbers are unfortunately still lower than the numbers in any previous years. The effort will now move to translate these into registrations. This is a critical exercise given where we are in the current fiscal year, as we need to close the remaining budget deficit of ~\$12M.
- Since the last Board meeting in December, Faye Diamantoudi, Interim Provost, has met with every academic unit in the University. Dr. Carr himself has held town halls with all non-academic personnel and visited some faculty councils. The goal has been to keep all members of the community informed of the budget situation and continue to provide accurate and updated information.
- F. Diamantoudi has been focusing her meetings on how individual departments can reimagine or develop new program offerings as a means of generating new,

sustainable forms of funding for the future, while Dr. Carr's meetings with non-academic units have aimed to focus on opportunities related to revenue generation.

- The University must unfortunately reiterate that, given the current state of finances, the reality is that the measures thus far introduced are insufficient in themselves to meet the recovery targets. Moving forward, it is unavoidable that the University will have to carry out layoffs.
- Notwithstanding the University's very difficult position, in January it was announced that Forbes Magazine has once again named Concordia among the top 5 large employers in Canada. The Forbes survey is not something that institutions can ask to participate in – the University is completely at arm's length from the process. This is the 3rd consecutive year that the University has been in the top 5.
- Dr. Carr now moved to some accomplishments: six members of the University community were named to the Order of Canada on New Year's Day, including Martha Langford, who has just retired as a professor of Art History, where she was director of the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art.
- The Winter Olympic Games in Milan and Cortina will be underway soon and the University is honored to share that Concordia alumnus and assistant coach of the Stingers men's hockey team Jim Corsi was one of the torch-bearers of the Olympic flame as it made its way through Italy.
- Other names include:
 - Marion Thénault, an undergraduate student in aerospace engineering who is competing in in aerial skiing;
 - Zachary Lagha, a third-year student in Contemporary Dance who will participate in Ice Dance (with his partner, Marjorie Lajoie);
 - Emma Nonnenmacher, an undergraduate psychology student who is playing for Team France in women's ice hockey;
 - joined by Alice Philbert, a recent graduate of Concordia in Therapeutic Recreation and Business Administration (Alice was a former Stinger and Emma is a current Stinger);
 - Anton Jacobs-Webb, an undergraduate student in mechanical engineering who will play on the Canadian Men's Para-Ice Hockey team at his 2nd Olympics;
 - Caroline Ouelette, a university honorary doctorate and former assistant hockey coach of the women's Stingers who is now assistant coach of the Canadian women's hockey team;

- and Julien Brisebois, EMBA graduate and General Manager of the Tampa Bay Lightning, who is the Assistant Manager of the Canadian men's hockey team.
- Finally, Dr. Carr informed the Board that he was very privileged and honored to be invited by the Canada China Business Council, chaired by Olivier Desmarais, to attend a Canadian networking event and State Dinner in Beijing with Prime Minister Mark Carney and the Vice-Premier of China, He Lifeng.
- Only two universities were present for the occasion (University of Alberta being the other), and it was a unique opportunity to meet and interact with several ministers, government, trade, and foreign affairs officials - including Concordia graduates representing Québec in China - who hold important roles at Canada's mission in Beijing. The event is seen as a turning point in bilateral relations since 2018.
- Prime Minister Carney made a point of emphasizing the resilience and focus of Canadian organizations in the face of those bilateral challenges and the wonderful opportunity to deepen cultural ties across tourism and the creative arts, which is meaningful for Concordia given the ties that we have developed through bilateral events such as the Canada-China Film Festival and discussions with Chinese academic partners about how we can collaborate to advance research and the practice of creative arts therapies.
- Dr. Carr noted that one of the major points of bilateral agreement was around green energy transition and specifically electric vehicles, which are areas where the University has particular research strengths.
- The positive follow-ups to the trip with potential Chinese partners have been an encouraging sign.

The Chair commended President Carr and Interim Provost Diamantoudi for their outreach efforts, particularly given the difficult circumstances at hand.

4. Annual report from the Office of Rights and Responsibilities

The Director of the Office of Rights and Responsibilities, Aisha Topsakal, presented the report.

The reporting period covered May 2024 to April 30, 2025, where the office managed 507 files, which was an increase from 450 the previous year; an increase of 15%. The vast majority of the files involved confidential consultations, many of which were early interventions to address concerns before they become cases of concerns.

A. Topsakal noted that there has been a push to move to formal complaints. This trend is indicative of campus climate, and the community members contacting the office were not inclined to make informal complaints.

To illustrate the work of the Office, A. Topsakal provided three examples of cases that the Office handles, which included one case where the Office responded to instances of use of physical force and illegal activity by a member of the community, a second case related to a faculty member bullying a staff member, and a third case of a situation in a lab with a student who needed support and was put in touch with the required resources. These examples underscore the complexity of the work of the office, given the large community that it serves.

A. Topsakal thanked the Board for its support and also expressed gratitude for the privilege of serving the community.

5. Other business

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

6. Adjournment:

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:42 p.m.

K. Singh
Karan Singh
Secretary of the Board of Governors