

**MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION  
OF THE MEETING OF SENATE**

Friday, October 11, 2024  
immediately following the Closed Session  
in the Loyola Chapel  
(Room FC-110) on the Loyola Campus  
and via Zoom video conferencing

PRESENT

Voting members:

Graham Carr (Chair)	Roy Cross	Catherine Mulligan (zoom)
Duraipaandiyaan	Fabienne Cyrius (zoom)	Xavier Ottenwaelder
Anbumani Poongothai	Alexandra Dawson	Alexandra Panaccio
Angelica Antonakopoulos	Niraj Dayanandan	(attended on behalf of
Gabriela Aragon	Mourad Debbabi	Anne-Marie Croteau)
Ryan Assaker	Effrosyni Diamantoudi	Mireille Paquet (zoom)
Sabine Bergler	Ariela Freedman	Véronique Pepin (zoom)
Beverley Best	Annie Gérin	Kareem Rahaman
Theresa Bianco	Andrea Harland	Rosemary Reilly
Patrice Blais	Steve Henle	Ramin Sedaghati
Elizabeth Bloodgood	Mar Ibrahim	Anna Sheftel
(attended on behalf of	Arnav Ishaan (zoom)	Kamila Sobol (zoom)
Pascale Sicotte)	Mehdi Kharazmi (zoom)	Ayyappan Subramanian
Amy Buckland (zoom)	Michael Lecchino (zoom)	Sofiène Tahar
Robin Chemtov (zoom)	Vanessa Massot	Anne Whitelaw
Maria Chitoroaga	Maggie McDonnell	

Non-voting members: Stéphanie de Celles, Michael Di Grappa, Carlos Santana,  
Melodie Sullivan (attending on behalf of Frederica Jacobs), Olivia Ward (zoom)

Also attending: William Cheaib, Amy Fish, Kristina Huneault (zoom), Sandra Gabriele

ABSENT

Voting members:

Mohamad Abdallah	Asli Isaaq	Christopher Moore
Matthew Barker	Mia Kennedy	David Morris
Bonnie Harnden	Moshe Lander	Ian Rakita
		Ahmed Soliman

Non-voting members: Philippe Beauregard, Paul Chesser, Denis Cossette, Isabel Dunnigan, Stefana Nita

**1. Call to order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:12 p.m.

**1.1 Approval of the Agenda**

*R-2024-4-4 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda of the Open Session be approved.*

**1.2 Adoption of May 17, 2024 Minutes**

*R-2024-4-5 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of May 17, 2024 be adopted.*

**CONSENT**

**2. Registrar's report on spring 2024 graduation statistics (Document US-2024-4-D2)**

**3. Committee reports (Document US-2024-4-D3)**

These reports were provided for information purposes only.

**4. Committee, Tribunal Pool and CCSL appointments (Document US-2024-4-D4)**

*R-2024-4-6 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Committee, Tribunal Pool and CCSL appointments be approved.*

**5. Academic Hearing Panels' Annual Report (Document US-2024-4-D5)**

This report was provided for information only.

## REGULAR

### 6. Business arising from the Minutes not included on the Agenda

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

### 7. President's remarks

- Dr. Carr began by welcoming new and returning Senators for the academic year 2024-25. The academic year is well underway, and the Provost's report provides an impressive list of accomplishments. He listed three highlights:
  - Concordia became the first university in the province to offer full tuition waivers to First Nations and Inuit students from communities in Québec. This is a major step on the University's road to reconciliation and is consistent with the University's history as the first Québec university to create an Aboriginal Student Resource Center in 1992 and a First Peoples Studies program.
  - Secondly, the Swedish telecommunications enterprise Ericsson announced that Concordia would become the first university in North America to be designated a Tier 1 partner for advancing 5G and 6G research. This announcement is built on more than 20 years of partnership between Ericsson and the University's Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, now the Gina Cody School, in research and training in AI, cybersecurity, cloud computing and so on.
  - Also, the John Molson School of Business was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in Canada in *Bloomberg Businessweek's* 2024-25 rankings, placing ahead of all MBA programs in Québec.
- Dr. Carr noted that Concordia is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Celebrations started with the University's largest ever homecoming.
- Dr. Carr also thanked everyone who participated in the Shuffle and raised \$225K for student scholarships.
- One alumna who came back for homecoming this year was the Pulitzer and Emmy award-winning photographer and documentarist, Barbara Davidson (BFA 90). He noted B. Davidson's photographic essay on the upcoming US presidential election done with Ian Brown that had been published in the *Globe and Mail* this past Saturday.
- Two weeks ago, the mayor of Montréal together with the not-for-profit public art organization, MU MTL, unveiled a spectacular mural at the corner of Mackay and de Maisonneuve in honor of one of Canada's iconic photographers, and former Concordia professor in Fine Arts, Gabor Szilasi. G. Szilasi, who is in his 90s, attended as did another legendary Québécois artist and former University faculty member, Françoise Sullivan, who is now 100 years old.

- On a sadder recognition of Concordia's illustrious history, Dr. Carr acknowledged the recent deaths of three of the University's most beloved academics:
  - Steve Applebaum, former dean of the John Molson School of Business and founder of the Executive MBA and MSc programs
  - Bill Reimer, professor of sociology and anthropology, who was a leader in Canada for his research on rural communities
  - Zalman Amit, who helped create the PhD program in Psychology and was co-founder of the research Center for the Study of Behavioral Neurobiology
- Dr. Carr turned to other news. As predicted, Concordia has seen a 4.4% drop in registrations of new and returning students this year, which is unprecedented. The decline has three main components: +25% drop in new student registrations from the Rest of Canada; +10% drop in new international undergrad registrations; and a very steep decline in registrations to the University's MEng program (this last component is mainly related to geopolitical and visa problems affecting potential students from India).
- While the decline is somewhat mitigated by an increase in undergraduate registrations in the Gina Cody School and, importantly, by growth in research master's and PhD enrolment across all Faculties, the impact of the decline is severe.
- This contrasts markedly with the experience of virtually every other university in Québec, except Bishop's, as most universities saw an overall growth in registrations from all sources.
- The previous day, Jean-François Roberge, Minister of Immigration, Francization and Integration, announced a new *projet de loi* that, while short on details, is explicit in intending to significantly reduce the number of international students studying in Québec universities and CÉGEPs. Although the minister said that the bill would not specifically target anglophone institutions, it was also clear that a major part of his focus is reducing the international student population in Montréal, where Concordia University and McGill are located. Minister Roberge also made reference to language of instruction as a potential criterion.
- In light of these developments, the University's approach that the Provost and the Deans are conveying is that we need to do everything possible to improve and reorient elements of our recruitment strategy. Among other things, we need to be much more intentional and strategic about our recruitment; more expeditious, streamlined and creative in our processes for admitting students in a fiercely competitive market. Furthermore, with the increased emphasis that the government of Québec is placing on protecting the French language, we also need to pivot to be more active in recruiting from francophone markets internationally, but also here in Québec.
- Dr. Carr went on to provide an update on the litigation dossier against the Québec government, noting that in mid-July, the University sought a stay of the policies

through the Québec Superior Court. The threshold for qualifying for a stay is very high, with three criteria that must be met to be successful. The judge agreed that the University had demonstrated urgency of the situation, and that the University could prove serious immediate financial impact. However, the third criterion required the court to balance whether suspending the policies would do more harm to, in this case, the government of Québec and the whole network of universities, than not suspending the policies would do to the University.

- The judge ruled that suspending the policies in mid-July would cause the greater harm because the government had already implemented its *Règles budgétaires* and allocated funding under the new formula to all universities. The University always realized that this was a potential ruling and did not contest it.
- Instead, the University's case on the merits will be heard by the same judge, beginning the week of December 16, 2024, when McGill will also present their case. Dr. Carr noted that the best-case scenario will be a decision by perhaps February or March of 2025, which is quite expedited.
- Dr. Carr then addressed the ongoing impact of the wars in the Middle East on the University community. He noted that the current reality in the Middle East is deeply traumatic for many students, staff and faculty. He reiterated that everyone must find ways to continue to show empathy and respect, regardless of the differences that may exist. No one disputes that students and other members of our community can express themselves in a civil and respectful fashion, and Dr Carr believes that the overwhelming majority of our community intend to conduct themselves in this way.
- However, in the past few weeks, the University had become an object of actions that have gone beyond peaceful protest. Twice in the last few weeks, vandals have spray-painted graffiti, some of which could well be characterized as antisemitic, outside and inside our buildings. One member of campus safety personnel was assaulted trying to prevent such vandalism.
- While the vast majority of days on campus this semester have been calm and orderly, members of the community are understandably alarmed when the calm is broken on or in the vicinity of campus. The University continues to be concerned about intolerant behavior that is deliberately designed to be provocative, intimidating, and physically or emotionally aggressive - sometimes to the point of being harassing or even hateful - towards individuals and groups.
- Two Sunday evenings ago, a masked mob paraded along Boulevard de Maisonneuve breaking all street-level windows of the Hall building before turning down Rue de la Montagne, where they destroyed other windows of commercial establishments before being intercepted by the SPVM. This type of violent, willful destruction of property adds a further element to the equation, as it is clearly intended to intimidate our whole community and harm the image of the University. Dr. Carr expressed concern that some of these actions are perpetrated by individuals or groups with various motives

who are not part of the University or who have infiltrated demonstrations that are otherwise led by groups from within our community.

- He noted that the overwhelming majority in the University community and the city more generally are disgusted that criminal acts have occurred on Concordia's campus and other campuses. Having a downtown campus is disadvantageous and makes the University vulnerable to unprovoked attacks and the deliberate mediatization of these events.
- For instance, on October 7<sup>th</sup>, TVA and other media outlets were stationed outside the Hall building for hours in anticipation of a demonstration and counter-demonstration planned for that afternoon. There was also a very large police presence in advance of, and during those demonstrations which were happening in the midst of our campus, but outside the University's buildings on the streets and sidewalks that are municipal property. The afternoon ended up being largely peaceful, but it was nonetheless disturbing for some members of our community who were unsettled by the actions of the protesters and/or the large presence of the police. Later that evening at around 9:30 p.m., a group of demonstrators were making their way west through the downtown core and Radio-Canada chose to film and broadcast the march as it passed in front of the EV building on Rue Sainte Catherine, even though the march was in no way a Concordia University event.
- Dr. Carr asserted that that all of us in the community – not just leaders of the administration--have a responsibility to stand up and speak out against actions and to call out behaviors that are at odds with our values and mission, but also to do whatever we can to avoid provocation and prevent flash points from flaring up in what continues to be a very tense, polarized and volatile context. To this end, he acknowledged the decision of the CSU to ban all student associations from tabling in the Hall building mezzanine during the week of October 7<sup>th</sup>.
- He reiterated that, while disagreements are normal in society and in a university, as a community we cannot allow those disagreements to take forms that are disrespectful towards others and that cheapen all the great things that happen at the University every day.
- Dr. Carr spoke of the community consultations that have been launched by the STRIVE task force. STRIVE illustrates the need for all of us, as a community, to better understand and be candid about the experiences, including the negative experiences, that too many have or are living. And while the task force does its work, all members of the community continue to have a shared responsibility to promote respectful discourse on campus. He encouraged community members to participate in the survey that the task force has circulated.
- Dr. Carr noted that, while there is no immediate resolution or cease fire on the horizon in the Middle East, we all should be doing everything possible to ensure that the University community is not torn apart by the crisis, becoming collateral damage to events that are beyond our control.

- He implored everyone to muster their resources, research, teaching and learning, and the community's capacity for listening and dialogue to preserve the qualities and promote the diversity that make Concordia so great
- Following Dr. Carr's remarks, Senators commented on the tensions on campus stemming from the conflict in the Middle East.
- M. McDonnell noted that English Professor Emeritus Judith Herz had also passed away recently. Dr. Carr spoke highly of Dr. Herz and expressed his condolences.
- A. Whitelaw also noted the death of Professor Emeritus Clarence Bayne. Dr. Carr noted that Dr. Bayne was a long-time faculty member in JMSB and a strong advocate for the Black community, arts and culture in Montréal.

#### 8. **Academic update** (Document US-2024-4-D6)

Dr. Whitelaw had no additional comments to add to the report that was provided.

#### 9. **Annual report of the Ombuds Officer** (Document US-2024-4-D7)

University Ombudsperson, A. Fish presented the Ombuds Office's annual report. The electronic version of the report will be circulated to Senators 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, an international student registered for a single course and didn't understand the fees they were required to pay. Even when clarification was provided, they couldn't pay due to financial constraints. They informally asked for support from their department which was awarded on paper but never paid. The Ombuds Office was able to help them get the promised funding. This was an unusual situation, and therefore no institutional recommendations were made.

**10. APC recommendation: Information/Service: Section 11 Academic Calendar - Undergraduate Academic Dates (OOR-OOR-5585) (Document US-2024-4-D8)**

A. Whitelaw explained the changes that were being proposed as detailed in the documentation.

*R-2024-4-7 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that, upon recommendation of the Academic Programs Committee, Senate approve the changes to the message in Section 11 of the Academic Calendar (OOR-OOR-5585) as detailed in the attached documentation.*

**11. APC recommendation: New Program - Minor in Ethics and Values (AS-PHIL-5354) (Document US-2024-4-D9)**

E. Bloodgood presented the minor on Ethics and Values. There was a question about the variety of 35 courses to be available to other students and E. Bloodgood confirmed that the courses would be available across faculties.

*R-2024-4-8 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that, upon recommendation of the Academic Programs Committee, Senate approve the new program Minor in Ethics and Values (AS-PHIL-5354) as detailed in the attached document.*

**12. Strategic Directions**

Dr. Carr went through the presentation that was shared with Senators. He provided detailed information on the University's nine Strategic Directions and on the accomplishments made to date, as the University is undertaking a refresh of the Strategic Directions. He noted that this initiative coincides with the University's 50th year anniversary. The goal is not to replace the Strategic Directions, but to continue to build on the accomplishments made and determine where they can be taken further.

For the key takeaways, he noted that the Strategic Directions and specific accomplishments demonstrate the impressive success that the University has seen. In the past years, the University had put into place mapping and framing tools to create data and map activities to determine the University's direction in the future. The main focus for the refresh will be to align the Strategic Directions with the University's resources.



He noted that the University team would come back to Senate in the future to continue to engage with Senators on discussing the future shape that the Strategic Directions can take.

### **13. Question period**

Senators had questions about the strategies that McGill had put into place that resulted in such striking growth in Québec enrolment numbers this year. Dr. Carr explained that McGill's pool of admissions is different from Concordia's – there is a long list of applicants who apply to McGill on an annual basis who are not accepted, and perhaps McGill has a longer list of qualified applicants to admit.

A Senator expressed concern about the impact of recent protests on and around campus, especially on October 7<sup>th</sup>, on academic activities. The Senator described these protests as intimidating for many Jewish members of our community. There was discussion about the role of the STRIVE task force, and specifically the working group on antisemitism to urgently address these challenges. Dr. Carr pointed out that the working group on antisemitism has been very active and addressed our collective responsibility to maintain a respectful campus climate.

Another Senator asked about the requirement of SPVM presence on campus and whether increased police presence would help ensure a more secure environment on campus. Dr. Carr explained that the SPVM is the sole decision-maker with regard to the nature of its presence around or on campus, and acknowledged that increased police presence is not always experienced positively by community members.

Referring back to the strategic direction to 'go beyond,' one Senator reminded that the stated goal of that direction was 'to go the extra mile for members of our community,' a point which another Senator echoed in terms of achieving a high level of internal trust.

There were no additional questions asked during the question period.

### **14. Other business**

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

### **15. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

*K. Singh*  
Karan Singh  
Secretary of Senate