

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

Friday, November 7, 2025
Immediately following the Closed Session
in the Norman D. Hébert, LLD Meeting Room
(Room EV 2.260) on the SGW Campus
and via Zoom Videoconferencing

PRESENT

Voting members:

| | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Graham Carr (Chair) | Lina El-Bakaye | Mireille Paquet (zoom) |
| Leslie Barker | Tim Evans | Véronique Pepin |
| Saraluz Barton-Gomez | Ariela Freedman (zoom) | Isabella Providenti |
| Seif Bedair | Annie Gérin | Sina Queyras |
| Theresa Bianco | Michael Gillis | Isabelle Ranger |
| Onur Bodur (zoom) | Eléanore Handsone | Rosemary Reilly (zoom) |
| Narmine Boubasla | Andrea Harland | Aphrodite Salas |
| Amy Buckland (zoom) | Steven Henle (zoom) | Ramin Sedaghati |
| Robin Chemtov | Vanessa Massot | Anna Sheftel |
| Roy Cross | Maggie McDonnell (zoom) | Pascale Sicotte |
| Anne-Marie Croteau | Christopher Moore | Kamila Sobol |
| Fabienne Cyrius | Peter Morden | Reza Soleymani |
| Alexandra Dawson (zoom) | Catherine Mulligan | Ahmed Soliman |
| Mourad Debbabi | Muhammad Ilyas Nadeem | Preethi Srikanth (zoom) |
| Effrosyni Diamantoudi | Sanaz Naghdi | Huu Thien Tran |
| Geoffrey Dover (zoom) | Xavier Ottenwaelder (zoom) | Roberto Viereck-Salinas |
| | | Radu Zmeureanu |

Non-voting members: Philippe Beauregard, Paul Chesser, Stéphanie de Celles, Michael Di Grappa, Isabel Dunnigan (zoom), Tom Hughes, Frederica Jacobs (zoom), Brad Nelson (zoom), Olivia Ward

Also attending: Caroline Baril, Rachel Berger, William Cheaib, Richard Courtemanche, Julie Fortier, Kristina Huneault, Melodie Sullivan

ABSENT

Voting members:

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Zoe Erika-Okoye | Moshe Lander |
| Bonnie Harnden | Adam Semergian |

Non-voting member: Denis Cossette

1. Call to order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

1.1 Approval of the Agenda

R-2025-5-1 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda of the Open Session be approved.

1.2 Adoption of October 3, 2025 Minutes

R-2025-5-2 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of October 3, 2025 adopted.

CONSENT

2. Committee report (Document US-2025-5-D1)

The report was provided for information only.

3. Committee appointments (Document US-2025-5-D2)

R-2025-5-3 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Committee and Tribunal Pool appointments be approved.

4. Library Spectrum Report (Document US-2025-5-D3)

This item was provided for information only.

5. APC recommendations: Office of the Registrar – Regulation/requirement changes
(Document US-2025-5-D4)

5.1 OOR-OOR-5849: Change related to integrated paths for undergraduates

R-2025-5-4 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the change related to integrated paths for undergraduates (OOR-OOR-5849) be approved.

- 5.2. **OOR-OOR-5859:** Proposal to implement a three-graduation cycle; Spring (May), Fall (October) and Winter (February)

R-2025-5-5 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the proposal to implement a three-graduation cycle (OOR-OOR-5859) be approved.*

- 5.3. **OOR-OOR-5862:** Regulation defines eligibility and scope for awarding academic credit through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

R-2025-5-6 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the regulation defining eligibility and scope for awarding academic credit through recognition of prior learning (OOR-OOR-5862) be approved.*

- 5.4. **OOR-OOR-5875:** Modifications to procedure for students to withdraw from the University

R-2025-5-7 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the modifications to procedure for students to withdraw from the University (OOR-OOR-5875) be approved.*

- 5.5. **OOTR-OOTR-5861:** Changes to the admissions regulations; Combining the section for 'Applicants from Outside Canada' and 'Applicants from Other Canadian Provinces'

R-2025-5-8 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the changes to the admissions regulations, combining the sections for Applicants from Outside Canada and Applicants from Other Canadian Provinces (OOTR-OOTR-5861), be approved.*

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 sharing with Senate that the University's annual fall Open House had welcomed about 5,700 visitors. The numbers were a bit lower than the previous year, but that could be attributed to the fact that this was the first year when all Québec universities held their Open Houses on the same Saturday instead of dividing it over two days. The event went off successfully, and Dr. Carr thanked all volunteers, faculty, staff and students who contributed to the event's success.
- He noted that the challenge now would be to convert these interested Open House attendees into enrolments.

- Dr. Carr congratulated three more School of Cinema graduates: John-Daniel Arauz, Emma Biernat and Laura Venditti, who won a daytime Emmy in the Outstanding Main Title and Graphic Design category (for their work on “Hack Your Health: The Secrets of Your Gut”). They join Jessica Lee Gagné, Barry Julien and Antoni Porowski who were congratulated at the previous Senate meeting, which brings the total to six Concordia graduates who have recently won awards for their work in cinema and television.
- Sophie Jodoin won inaugural *Prix La Caisse en art actuel* which is valued at \$25,000 and supports mid-career artists. Five other Concordia graduates are also finalists for the Governor General literary awards.
- He congratulated Deans Gérin and Sicotte, the *Département d'études française* and *Réussir en français* who are partnering with the *Musée d'art contemporain de Baie St-Paul* to deliver a five-week studio art and French language immersion program for students in Charlevoix this spring. This is a great example of what Concordia is doing to support students to learn French or improve French language competencies. This continues to demonstrate the commitment of anglophone universities towards francisation.
- Dr. Carr spoke of the negative impact of the STM strike on the community. All universities and CÉGEPs, as well as other institutions and businesses in the city, are having to adapt to this severe disruption. While the University is encouraging instructors to maintain courses in person, they have also been given flexibility to adapt their teaching modalities for all classes, regardless of time of day, to maintain as much accessibility for students as possible. Should the strike not end before November 28th, other accommodations would be considered. The Provost Office has provided a list of resources and guidelines to help set up online or hybrid classes, including info on alternative assessment options. Dr. Carr thanked everyone for their support in adapting to the challenges caused by the strike.
- Dr. Carr extended congratulations to the new Montréal mayor elected on November 2nd, Soraya Martinez Ferrada, who is now also the mayor of the Ville-Marie borough where downtown campus is located. Stéphanie Valenzuela is the new mayor of the NDG-CDN borough (Loyola campus); Councillors Alexandre Teodoresco (Loyola) and Leslie Roberts (Peter McGill) represent the ridings, both from Ensemble Montréal. The University looks forward to working with the new university liaison once they have been appointed.
- The national university community welcomed the new federal budget which announced important investments in research, including Tri-Councils, in talent recruitment, including faculty, PhDs and postdocs. Dr. Carr noted that the new budget marked an important step in its recognition of the contributions that the university sector makes to critical to R&D priorities of government, which was encouraging.

- On the government's immigration policies, the University team, including Dr. Carr, Pascal Label (Government Relations) and Stéphanie de Celles (University Registrar) testified before the Legislative Committee of the National Assembly on the Québec government's hearings on a multi-year immigration strategy. For a change there was unanimity among universities that more needs to be done to convey a positive message around Québec and its place for international students.
- The University is continuing to monitor the intentions regarding Bill 1 (the proposed new constitution of Québec). BCI is working to deliver a position on behalf of universities, with public hearings expected in December. The primary concern is restricting universities' right to use public funding to sue the government, potential imposition of additional government oversight and controls over federal contracts (application of M30 in research), and disposition of property and infrastructure funded or partly funded by federal government.
- Dr. Carr then spoke of the registration numbers:
 - There has been an overall increase of 7,1% in terms of new student registrations compared to last year, driven by growth from Québec and, to a lesser extent, Rest of Canada;
 - However, new registrations remain far below where we were in 2022-23, the benchmark before the introduction of various federal and provincial policies;
 - Overall enrolment at the University is lower this year than last year, as registrations were in decline over the two previous years;
 - There has been a precipitous decline in international students: in 2022-23, nearly 24% of the student population (headcount) were international students; this year its at 17%: 12.2% of undergrads are international; 58% of Masters; 53% of PhD;
 - Compared to 2022-23, there are approximately 4,000 (3,971) fewer international students on campus today. The total international student population, which was over 10,000 three years ago, is now 6,500.
- If the same level of international student recruitment was maintained and government policies had not changed, the University would have generated \$34,8M in additional revenue this year.
- According to the federal budget, the number of new student visas for all of Canada will continue to decline annually to approximately 150,000 by 2028. However, the federal government will prioritize research graduate students for permits and processing.
- The Québec government, which has already announced a freeze on operating grants to universities for a second year in a row in 2026-27, also announced plans to further reduce temporary immigration by 13% between now and 2029, and to eliminate the PEQ (*Programme de l'expérience québécoise*), which had provided fast-track access to permanent residency for graduates of Québec universities.

- Salary costs remain the largest expense in the University's operating budget, representing ~72% of total costs. Most people in the community have benefited from substantial increases to their salaries as a result of the collective agreements that were negotiated last year retroactive to 2023. However, as a departure from past years, this year, the government did not compensate the University for salary increases (salaries are aligned with Government salary policy (GSP), meaning that employees would benefit from whichever was higher--the rate that was negotiated internally with the University or the GSP). This has resulted in an unfunded expense of \$12M.
- Q2 has just ended for FY 2025-26, and the University is a bit more than \$12M short of meeting its \$31.6M deficit target. This shortfall is a result of the academic sector not being able to meet the parametric budget targets of 7.2% across the board that were required to meet the deficit target. The challenge at hand is the complexities of trying to find economies and deliver the academic mission in faculties where, in most cases, somewhere between 95-97% of the operating budget is attributable to faculty and staff salaries.
- It was pointed out that the non-academic sector had consistently met its budget cut targets throughout the period of the *plan de redressement*.
- Concordia is facing the most serious challenge in its recent history. The University must meet its obligations under the *plan de redressement* (the Recovery Plan approved by the Board of Governors and the Québec government in 2023); otherwise, the University's future is at risk.
- To summarize: the University receives \$25.1M in grants from the government, but this is conditional on meeting the annual deficit targets of the *plan de redressement*. If the University fails to find the remaining \$12M this year and misses the \$31.6M deficit target, it will put the conditional grant at risk.
- The government would then have a number of options at its disposal to exert further control over the university's finances and operations – including its academic programs--up to and including placing the university 'under administration' or '*en tutelle*'. Such measures would undermine the core autonomy of the university.
- The community has no choice but to do everything in our power to preclude such an outcome.
- On the *plan de redressement*, Dr. Carr offered a short historical context:
- In 2019, the University had been in successive years of deficit - notwithstanding its growth - largely due to chronic underfunding. As the University entered Q3 in FY 2019-20, the University was on track to record a surplus;

- However, in March 2020, COVID happened, expenses skyrocketed overnight, and the University finished the fiscal year in deficit once again.
- After releasing financial statements in 2022-23, when the University was still in deficit, a restructuring plan was required and submitted in Fall 2023, which was approved by the Board of Governors and the government.
- After the plan was being approved, the government introduced policy changes in terms of funding and immigration that created an entirely new and negative conditions to comply with the approved recovery plan.
- Beginning in 2026-27, the University will need to find \$45M in savings or revenues, thus the challenges ahead will become even greater.
- The University remains committed to doing everything possible to not lay off employees in permanent positions.
- Over the past 3.5 years, the University's personnel has decreased by ~300 individuals because of non-renewal of contracts or resignations and retirements that were not replaced.
- Various measures have already been taken, including a hiring freeze, closing vacant positions, cutting back part-time contracts, non-renewal of non-permanent employees, pulling back on institutional memberships, curbed services, buying out accrued vacations, and offering voluntary retirement program for staff and faculty.
- Other painful decisions recently made have been to defer sabbaticals for next year and not to issue a call for new LTA contracts. In addition to financial considerations, the intent of these decisions is to give faculty Deans as much flexibility as possible to deliver as many course sections as possible for students.
- Increasing revenues is also an important focus, which includes the expansion of ancillary services, new academic course offerings, the development of new partnerships, doubling down on recruitment and streamlining admissions to ensure that the University remains competitive as possible in attracting new students.
- In closing, Dr. Carr reaffirmed the need to stay course as the University continues to navigate a precarious budgetary situation.

8. **Academic update** (Document US-2025-5-D5)

There were no additional updates to the report that was provided.

9. **APC recommendations:**

9.1 **Regulation change - AS-ARTSCI-5858: Department of Psychology modification of admission profile for their Neuroscience program, to include Math Vectors and Matrices** (Document US-2025-5-D6)

Dean Sicotte presented the dossier, which was a small change in the admission profile for their neuroscience program.

R-2025-5-9 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that upon recommendation of the Academic Programs Committee, Senate approve the proposed regulation changes (AS-ARTSCI-5858) as detailed in the attached documentation.

9.2 **Program/regulation/course change - FA-MUSI-5795: Introduction of additional shared foundational courses music programs** (Document US-2025-5-D7)

Dean Gérin presented this dossier. This is a second change being introduced to the music program, which is aimed to expand the focus to music production, to better prepare students for the industry. The change is also to allow for the faculty to distinguish itself in the market for music programs.

R-2025-5-10 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that upon recommendation of the Academic Programs Committee, Senate approve the proposed changes to the following Undergraduate Curriculum change (FA-MUSI-5795) as further detailed in the attached documentation.

10. **Question period**

Senators expressed various concerns and posed many questions around the impact of budget cuts, including whether there would need to be a reassessment of the optimal size of the University for its future sustainability. Some Senators and questioned whether there was need to consider downsizing administrative staff in light of the budget challenge.

There were also questions around the specific decision on LTA contracts and the decision to defer sabbaticals by one year.

Some Senators expressed the view that the negative consequences of these decisions for program delivery outweighed the anticipated cost savings.

Some of the Senators read testimonials shared by LTAs. The testimonials were personal and spoke to the long relationship that some LTAs have had with the University, the strong bond that many had developed with past and current students, and how the decision not to issue a new call for LTA contracts would affect them personally and professionally.

Some of the testimonies also spoke to the role of LTAs as ambassadors of the university in outreach to communities with whom Concordia partners, as well as to the recognition awards that the university had bestowed on some LTAs for their teaching performance.

Other Senators spoke about the impact of the non-renewal of LTA contracts on teaching and service capacity, noting that the situation could be particularly difficult for some units where there is a significant reliance on LTAs not just for teaching but also administrative activities. A particular case was mentioned of a unit where the loss of LTA teaching capacity would not be replaced by permanent faculty because there were no deferred sabbaticals in that unit.

Similar concerns were raised about the potential impact of the LTA decision for teaching capacity given that the University was in the midst of a general hiring freeze.

While recognizing the important contributions of LTA's, some Senators nonetheless expressed support for the decisions taken by the University in light of the financial emergency.

Some Senators suggested that the fact that the non-academic sector had been able to meet its budget targets, while the academic sector had not, was proof that the non-academic sector had greater room to cut in terms of salaries, operations and activities.

In response to many of these points, Dr. Carr reiterated that the extreme financial situation of the University has necessitated agonising decisions that were taken both to address immediate budget challenges but also the longer-term financial sustainability of the University.

With regard to the challenge, unit by unit, of working through the implications of the sabbatical and LTA decisions, it was pointed out that the goal was to provide deans and department chairs with as much time as possible to begin planning course schedules and teaching assignments.

In answer to a question about why the decision had been announced at this time, Dr. Carr referenced collective agreement responsibilities (specifically to process full-time faculty applications for sabbatical).

There was also a clarification that existing LTA contracts, including those of multi-year duration, will continue to be honoured. It was also pointed out that, in addition to meeting its projected expense reductions, the non-academic sector had generated significant revenue in the past years that enabled the University to meet its recovery plan targets.

There was a question about the amount of savings that would result from the non-renewal of LTA contracts and postponement of sabbaticals. It was explained that while the amount of savings for LTA contracts was estimated at roughly \$6.3million and sabbaticals \$2.5-3.5M, the net amount would only be known once the schedule of course sections to be taught by part-time faculty was finalized.

Senate was informed that the Interim Provost was going to be meeting with departments starting the next week, and travelling around the University, and all such questions would be addressed. The goal being that programs continue to be delivered, keeping costs low.

11. Other business

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

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

K. Singh
Karan Singh
Secretary of Senate