

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION
COUNCIL OF THE GINA CODY SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Friday, November 6, 2020
ZOOM

PRESENT:

Chair: Debbabi, M.

Voting members: Agarwal, A.; Akgunduz, A.; Anbuhi, S.; Arabian, M.; Athienitis, A.; Bagchi, A.; Ben Hamza, A.; Campbell, S.; Carr, G.; Contreras, I.; De Visscher, A.; El Ayoubi, C.; Fayyaz, F.; Goodarzi, B.; Gopakumar, G.; Hashtrudi Zad, S.; Kuzgunkaya, O.; Lucia, W.; Morgan, A. ; Narayanan, L.; Nazemi, A.; Ng, H.; Ormandjieva, O.; Paquet, J.; Popa, T.; Pugh, M.; Qiu, D.; Ronci, D.; Shayan, Y.; Shihab, E.; Singh, T.; Soliman, A.; Stathopoulos, T.; Thiel, S.; Vermeire, B.; Walia, J.; Youssef, A.; Zeng, Y.

Non-Voting members: Bencheikh, Z.; Edwards, J.-M.; Kraulis , I.; Pawelek, P.; Udvud, E.; Ward, M.

Observers: Allaire, V.; Clarke, A.; Fiorentino, N.; Foisy, J.; Himmo, M.; Gosselin, G.; Miatello, M.

Guests: Cheaib, W.; Mulligan, C.

REGRETS:

Voting members: Hammad, A.; Khalid, Z.; Rathore, A.; Safa, T.; Whitelaw, A.; Witte, R.

Observers: De Melo, D.; Martel, C.

1. **Call to Order of the Open Session**

The Chair called the open session of the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

2. **Adoption of the Agenda**

Motion 2020-08-01 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (A. Soliman / A. Akgunduz), it was passed that the Agenda be adopted with the following correction in item 8 b): repetitive words to be removed.

Vote: Carried unanimously

3. **Approval of the Minutes of Open Session ECFC 2020-07 – October 9, 2020**

Motion 2020-08-02 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (G. Gopakumar / A. Soliman), it was passed that the Minutes be approved as submitted.

Vote: Carried unanimously

4. President Carr's Visit

- President Carr thanked faculty and staff for all their hard work in organizing and maintaining the online delivery of the courses over past 7 months.
- Since the beginning of the fall semester, there were 10 positive COVID cases registered on-campus. They were identified as low-risk as there was no community spread. This low number is a reflection of the vigilant measures put in place.
- The university is working closely with *Santé Publique*. A series of round tables with other universities have been held since mid-August.
- The potential use of street-level university spaces for para-academic activities are being discussed due to the lack of the social dimension of remote operations during pandemic. Red-zone designation of Montreal paused these discussions.
- In terms of students' mental health and workload, it remains very challenging for them to be constantly present in an online environment. There is an increasing number of messages regarding stress and strains that the student population is experiencing.
- There are some positive signs in terms of student enrollment. This summer the university had the largest ever enrolment despite the fact that the courses were delivered online. The lowest drop-out rate during the summer was also observed. The global increase across the university is 1% in comparison with the last September. Drop rate at the DNE dead-line is 6% less than last year. Another notable data point is a shift of students from full-time to part-time status.
- Two weeks ago, the Government of Canada announced that international students will be able to travel to Canada to pursue their studies. Up until now Concordia had to put in place very rigid health protocols on how the students will be welcomed, to ensure that they are quarantined, have access to food, pharmacies, etc. The university had been in a very regular contact with the international students who are registered and abroad, as well as with the large number of students who had deferred their registration at Concordia. Even though the courses at winter term will be delivered online, students' presence in Montreal will diminish stress factors as time difference or unstable internet access.
- In terms of budget situation, there will be a serious deficit problem. Public institutions across the country are finding themselves in the same situation. It will have an impact on the decisions the university will be taking. The conversations on the space utilization in the post-pandemic period have started.
- The search process of the new dean of the GCS has begun. The selection committee schedule of meetings has been put in place.

Questions and further discussion touched on issues related to faculty and student concerns regarding online examination processes, the possibility of in-person exams, the increased number of cyber-attacks and damage it brings to the university, COVID-19 testing and tracing options.

5. Centraide Campaign

Dr. Catherine Mulligan made a presentation on the Centraide campaign, Concordia's participation in it and reminded that this year the need is even greater due to the pandemic. Social issues of the COVID-19

crisis increased the requests to the food banks and calls to the Centraide's help-line. The Greater Montreal Area has seen over 264,000 jobs losses and a 30% increase in demand at the city's largest food bank. Concordia's Centraide Campaign 2020 runs from October 19 to November 20, 2020 and aims to collect \$170,000.

Dr. Hoi Dick (Eddie) Ng and Ms. Marisa Ward explained how to support GCS participation in the Centraide campaign and announced the Steps Challenge. The challenge is ongoing from November 6 to November 16.

6. Chair's Remarks

- Mohaned Chraiti, PhD 2019 in Electrical and Computer Engineering, was selected for the November 2020 Governor General Gold Medal Award / Technology, Industry and the Environment category. Dr. Chraiti who was valedictorian last year, is currently a NSERC Postdoctoral Fellow at MIT. His supervisors are Dr. Chadi Assi in CIISE and Dr. Ali Ghayeb in ECE.
- The launch of Concordia's Next-Generation Cities Institute is currently scheduled for November 26 at 11am. The director of the institute will be Dr. Ursula Eicker from the department of BCEE.
- In terms of enrollment, despite the challenging times, GCS is at 99% of FTE.
- CODIQ has been working closely with the provincial government to secure additional funding for the engineering sector. The Quebec Government has allocated \$5M of scholarship to be distributed among nine engineering faculties. Additionally, \$13M has been allocated for new faculty positions.
- The World University ranking 2021 has been released, GCS has improved its score to a world rank of between 201-250.
- The university is contemplating a later start for the winter term. For students and faculty the winter semester would start on January 13, for staff – on January 11. This change will also affect the summer term and other dates in the academic year. The official memo will be issued soon.
- The university is working on simplifying the process for TAs for the winter term. There will be a special allocation for TAs given to Faculties who will distribute it among the Departments according to the needs. There has also been discussion to hire "super-TAs", who will be training other TAs and provide support to faculty members and students .
- VPRGS is leading a policy change on research chairs.
- The budget is in line with the projections from the last year.

7. Associate Dean Remarks

Anjali Agarwal, Associate Dean of Student Academic Services and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- Student Request Web forms have now moved online. Starting from last week, students may submit their requests using web forms.
- Drop-in zoom sessions for undergraduate students are offered by SAS every Tuesday (10-11 am) and Thursday (3-4 pm)
- SAS continues to participate in the Students Service Stations offered by the Student Success Centre. There were a number of sessions offered in October with additional events in November and December.

- Undergraduate winter 2021 admission is about 26% higher than last year at the same period.
- Open house for undergraduate students was held on October 24, 2020. Each department had 40-50 students visiting their booth. About 330 students watched a presentation by Martine Fachena, Student Recruitment Officer. Attendees had the opportunity to chat with recruiters, advisors and faculty members in real-time.

Hoi Dick (Eddie) Ng, Associate Dean Academic Affairs

- The TAsip applications for the winter term are ongoing. The deadline for the online applications is Tuesday, November 10, 2020, except for the Computer Science and Software Engineering department, which is Tuesday, November 17, 2020. There will be additional TA support for the winter term. More details will be shared with the chairs shortly.
- For those who were granted the faculty support package for online course delivery, and have provided evidence of implementation, revised workload letters with the 0.5 remission credit per course will be amended. These credits will be carried forward to the next academic year 2021-22. LTAs will also receive the cash equivalent soon.
- The request for additional pen tablets for TAs has been approved. The WebReq will be prepared shortly.

Ali Akgunduz, Associate Dean, Academic Programs

- The discussion on methods of assessment is still ongoing.
- The list of on-campus activities for the winter term has been submitted to the Provost Office. Guy Gosselin was working closely with Health and Safety in the labs to assess the in and out process.
- CAPSTONE students will be able to use the campus facilities during the winter term.
- A significant change to note is that the students will not be able to come on campus randomly. Visits will be by appointment only. Students will be informed accordingly.

Emad Shihab, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies

- The GCS international students are able to come to Canada starting October 20., 2020. The University preparedness plan has been approved. Students are required to quarantine and have sufficient funds for this period. Being unable to provide lodging in the residence for the quarantine period, the university made agreements with local hotels.
- Meet and Greet session with international students took place. ISO, Dean, Associate Deans, Chairs and staff were answering questions.
- It's important to remind students to apply for paperwork earlier.
- Labs continue to reopen.
- VPRGS has sent an email regarding the Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund. Any extra cost for additional equipment maintenance needed during the lab closure may be covered up to 75% given the fact that the cost incurred between March 15 - November 15, 2020.
- November 2 was the deadline for the NSERC Discovery grants. Around 50 applications were submitted.
- Faculty were encouraged to publicize their work.

Additional discussion:

Yousef Shayan, Chair ECE

- Drop-in sessions started two weeks ago, in order to open the channel of communication with students.

8. Curriculum changes

- a) Undergraduate Curriculum Proposal for the 2020-21 Academic Year, Department of Computer Science & Software Engineering: MAST 234, MAST 235, SOEN 357 (ECFC2020-08-01)

Motion 2020-08-03 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (A. Akgunduz / L. Narayanan), it was passed that document ECFC 2020-08-01, be ratified with a minor correction: page 12, last line to remove repetitive “to”.

Vote: Carried unanimously

- b) Undergraduate Curriculum Proposal for the 2020-21 Academic Year, Department of Mechanical, Industrial & Aerospace Engineering: INDU 498 (ECFC 2020-08-02)

Motion 2020-08-04 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (A. Akgunduz / M. Pugh), it was passed that document ECFC 2020-08-02, be ratified with a minor correction: page 16, course description.

Vote: Carried unanimously

- c) Graduate Curriculum Proposal for the 2020-21 Academic Year, Department of Computer Science & Software Engineering: SOEN 691, COMP 691 (ECFC 2020-08-03)

Motion 2020-08-05 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (E. Shihab / L. Narayanan), it was passed that document ECFC 2020-08-03, be ratified as submitted.

Vote: Carried unanimously

- d) Graduate Curriculum Proposal for the 2021-22 Academic Year, Department of Computer Science & Software Engineering: Minor Changes to Program Requirements (ECFC 2020-08-04)

Motion 2020-08-06 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (E. Shihab / L. Narayanan), it was passed that document ECFC 2020-08-04, be ratified as submitted.

Vote: Carried unanimously

- e) Graduate Curriculum Proposal for the 2021-22 Academic Year, All Departments: Updates on Examining Committee (ECFC 2020-08-05)

Motion 2020-08-07 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (E. Shihab / T. Stathopoulos), it was passed that document ECFC 2020-08-05, be ratified with the following corrections:

- *implementation date to be changed to “Immediately, after the Senate’s approval” ;*

- *implementation date is applicable to all students in the program. Vote: Carried unanimously*

9. Ratification of Elections (ECFC 2020-08-06)

Motion 2020-08-08

Upon motion duly moved and seconded (H.D. Ng / A. Ben Hamza), it was passed that the document ECFC 2020-08-06 Ratification of Elections be adopted as submitted.

- *Advisory Search Committee for a Provost and Vice-President, Academic*
 - *Dr. W. Hamou-Lhadj, ECE*
- *Advisory Search Committee for the Selection of an Academic Unit Head: Department of Mechanical, Industrial and Aerospace Engineering*
 - *Dr. Mourad Debbabi (Dean & Chair)*
 - *Dr. Susan Liscouet-Hanke (Available regular member elected by MIAE)*
 - *Dr. Muthukumaran Packirisamy (Available regular member elected by MIAE)*
 - *Dr. Subhash Rakheja (Available regular member elected by MIAE)*
 - *Dr. Danielle Nasrallah (Part-time faculty member)*
 - *Dr. Lata Narayanan, CSSE (Head of another academic unit in the Faculty appointed by the Dean)*
 - *Dr. Hua Ge, BCEE (Available faculty member from outside the academic unit appointed by the Dean)*
 - *Ms. Manon Maistre (Undergraduate student representative)*
 - *Mr. Nirmalkumar Arugadass (Graduate student representative)*

Vote: Carried unanimously

10. Other Business

There was a discussion on a Machine Learning / Deep Learning course initiative.

11. Adjournment at 4:12 p.m.

Zineb Bencheikh
Secretary of Faculty Council
Gina Cody School of Engineering & Computer Science