

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

Friday, February 11, 2022

PRESENT:

Chair: Debbabi, M.

Voting members: Afif, J.; Aghdam, A.; Akgunduz, A.; Athienitis, A.; Bagchi, A.; Ben Hamza, A.; Clarke, J.; Charky, K.; Contreras, I.; Constantinides, C.; De Visscher, A.; El Ayoubi, C.; Fayyaz, F.; Fevens, T. (For Narayanan, L.); Ghafouri, M.; Ge, H.; Gopakumar, G.; Goodarzi, B.; Jahanshahi-Anbuhi, S.; Kuzgunkaya, O.; Nasiri, F.; Ng, H. D.; Paquet, J.; Pugh, M.; Qiu, D.; Shayan, Y.; Shihab, E.; Soliman, A.; Stathopoulos, T.; Thiel, S.; Witte, R.; Yan, J.; Younes, E.; Kazemi Zanjani, M.

Non-Voting members: Bencheikh, Z.; Berger, R.; Binsley, R.; Edwards, J-M.; Kraulis, I.; Ward, M.

Observers: Allaire, V.; Athienitis, I.; Baptiste-Brown, S.; Clarke, A.; Fiorentino, N.; Gosselin, G.; Miatello, M.; Tajmel, T.; Zananiri, C.

Guests: Diamantoudi, E.

REGRETS:

Voting members: Campbell, S.; Carr, G.; Majumdar, S.; Nduwumwe, A.; Ormandjieva, O.; Rais, R.; Shivamallappa, M.; Reddy, K.; Rivaz, H.; Saleh, R.; Whitelaw, A.

Observers: De Melo, D.; Himmo, M.

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 2022-01-01                      Upon motion duly moved and seconded (T. Stathopoulos/A. Bagchi), it was passed that the Agenda be adopted as submitted.*

*Vote: Carried unanimously*

3. Approval of the Minutes of Open Session ECFC 2021-07 – December 3, 2021

*Motion 2022-01-02                      Upon motion duly moved and seconded (M. Pugh/T. Stathopoulos) it was passed that the Minutes be approved as submitted.*

*Vote: Carried unanimously*

#### 4. Chair's Remarks

- Congratulations were offered to Marion Thénault, who is competing in Beijing to represent Canada at the Olympics. She is an undergraduate student in Aerospace engineering and will compete in aerial freestyle skiing at the Olympics for Team Canada. The School sent her a gift package with some Gina Cody School and Concordia-branded clothes.
- Due to the health COVID-19 situation, the Quebec government instructed that universities could return to campus as of January 17, 2022 and they gave a transition period of two weeks. Everyone returned to campus on Thursday, February 3, 2022.
- Emad Shihab is the new Associate Dean, Research and Innovation. This position is motivated by our aspiration to intensify our research productivity, quality, and capacity and articulate a vision, strategy, and operational plan to accelerate innovation at the Gina Cody School.
- There was an announcement that a new position has been created for an Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, at the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science. The intent is to provide additional support to our graduate students, catalyze our efforts in graduate curriculum innovation, and propose and operate programs in emerging areas. Dr. Amir Aghdam, from the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, kindly accepted to serve in this capacity.
- On November 30, 2022, The Quebec government announced an ambitious program, the Quebec Perspective Scholarship Program. This program represents an investment of \$1.7 billion over four years. Its main objective is to encourage graduation from programs leading to professions in an area with a labour shortage and areas deemed a strategic sector for the Quebec economy. The targeted areas are Engineering and Computer Science and health and education. In this regard, a scholarship of \$2,500 will be paid each semester to GCS undergraduate students for a total of \$15,000 for a three-year program and \$20,000 for a four-year program. Students will be eligible for Quebec Perspective scholarships as of the Fall 2022 term. The initiative will hopefully bring an influx of students. Initially, the government excluded some programs from this measure, particularly aerospace and chemical engineering. The council of Quebec engineering deans wrote a letter to the Minister about why these programs should be included. A response letter was received last week indicating that this initiative now covers aerospace.
- We have received an MES allocation of \$3.468M in the “règles budgétaires” under measure 2.1.30. We have developed a detailed plan to use these funds to meet the objectives listed in the governmental budget rules document. We plan to use these funds to create micro-credentials for GCS students in three areas, namely: AI/ML, advanced networking, and cybersecurity. We will also provide better support to students and position them for success through advising, learning activities, and experiential learning.
- Concordia University recently announced that they are heading into a deficit. This is due to the cost of the pandemic and the loss of revenue from many sources. The university will not apply cuts through all faculties instead they will slow down some activities with the intent to head to a balanced budget in 3-5 years. The university has seen a drop in enrollment. The Gina Cody School is doing well in undergraduate enrollment, but the Ph.D. enrollment needs to increase. Last year, the Gina Cody School hired over 170 Ph.D. students. This is a record and, understandably, GCS cannot hire the same level every subsequent year. However, there is room for growth in some areas and work will be done with the departments and GPDs to assess the opportunities.
- The AI Institute official launch will be held in March 2022.
- Cherine Zananiri, Director, Experiential Learning and Co-operative Education, was welcomed to the council.
- Condolences were expressed for Dr. Venkatanarayana Ramachandran from the department of ECE, who passed on Monday, February 7, 2022.

## 5. Associate Dean Remarks

Hoi Dick (Eddie) Ng, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs

- Dr. H. D. Ng announced that additional funds are available for TA support for online course preparation and delivery. The department chairs were kindly asked to inform their departments.
- The government has provided additional funds to improve programs. A GCS student success hub will be created to provide mentorship services for students facing academic difficulties.
- GCS has received the approval for 19 LTA positions, 9 positions are replacement and new hires. Postings will be prepared and the process will begin soon.
- An email was sent this week from the University Chief Information Officer, which indicated that effective on February 28, 2022, the legacy protocol for Microsoft will be disabled. This will mean that employees will only be able to access their [first\\_name.last\\_name@concordia.ca](mailto:first_name.last_name@concordia.ca) email through the Microsoft outlook client. Anyone who has their ENCS email accounts forwarded to their Concordia account should see no changes. In the future, the ENCS accounts will be phased out, but this will not be the case for this first phase. AITS and IITS are currently looking into this to determine how to implement the changes and to minimize the impact.

### Feedback:

- There was a discussion regarding the legacy protocol and that it will not happen this way. Changes will be made to the announcement and more information will be sent shortly.

Ali Akgunduz, Associate Dean, Academic Programs and Undergraduate Activities

- Dr. Akgunduz has recently been monitoring how students have been transitioning from remote to in-person learning. A committee is currently working on developing initiatives, for example, creating study hubs and appointing TAs to help students with peer support.
- An email will be sent to department chairs to identify students that are having academic challenges, especially moving from online to in-person learning. These students will be offered additional support.
- An event titled *How to change the world* will be virtual and held during reading week. Dr. Akgunduz asked departments to bring forth any good candidates both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, to partake in the event. It is important to note that the Dean's Office will provide these students with sponsorship support. This is an international activity that features hands-on challenges to solve problems related to the SDGs.
- Dr. Akgunduz informed the Council that after receiving approval from the department chairs, a GCS teaching and learning committee is being established. The committee will look at ways to improve the teaching and learning environment and meetings will begin the week of reading week.

### Feedback:

Dr. Ali Akgunduz will contact the department chairs and director to appoint two chairs to sit on the Teaching and Learning committee.

Hua Ge, Associate Dean, Student Academic Services

- Dr. Ge announced that there has been a 5.2% increase in new admissions and most programs are doing very well, while other programs have good potential to increase. There are ongoing discussions to come up with ways to strategize to increase these admission numbers.
- To increase the enrollment of female students in GCS, we created the GCS Women in Engineering (WIE) Entrance Award. There are 25 awards in total at \$4,000 each. Disbursement started in winter 2022, GCS gave 18 awards in the area of BCEE and MIAE.
- The Quebec government has given \$1.31M through the Bourses d'excellence program to GCS this year. These awards are for female students and graduating male students with academic excellence in the area of

Computer Science and Software Engineering and Electrical and Computer Engineering. GCS has given 437 awards at a value of \$3,000 each, 300 awards will go to female students. We are working with Financial Awards and Aids Office to finalize the recipient list.

Tanja Tajmel, EDI

- Dr. Tajmel thanked the departments for supporting the GCS EDI working group.
- The calls for EDI grant and award will be distributed during the month of March 2022.
- An EDI report is currently being written. Data has been collected on student retention and drop out rates in order to better understand our student body from an EDI perspective and to initiate evidence based strategies. Dr. Tajmel will share the report once it is finalized.
- STEMSquad outreach activities will begin on Feb. 18, 2022. Lyes Kadem, Carole El Ayoubi, Eddie Ng, Amanda Clarke, and Ann-Louise Davidson will launch the first set of workshops on robotics and coding with their partner organization, Les Scientifines, which provides after school activities for girls from underserved communities in Montreal.
- Women in Engineering will host their annual conference on March 5, 2022. This event is for female high school students and is on the topic of smart cities.
- GirlSet will take place online in July 2022.  
Carole El Ayoubi and Nadia Bhuiyan are launching a summer camp called STEAMPunks in August 2022. They are partnering with a local NGO that aims to provide STEM activities to children from Indigenous communities.

Amir Aghdam, Associate Dean, Graduate Studies

- Dr. Aghdam thanked the Council for the warm welcome. He informed the department chairs that he will reach out to schedule a 30 minute meeting to discuss PhD admissions and various other topics to work on creating stronger graduate programs.

Emad Shihab, Associate Dean, Research and Innovation

- There are 143 PhD admits compared to 175 last year.
- There are 161 Master thesis compared to 148 last year.
- There are 1245 MEng and MASC compared to 972 last year.
- More effort will be made to increase the PhD admits with the new Associate Dean, Graduate Studies.
- GCS received an allocation of more than \$9 million in awards from SGS for graduate students and the awards policy is being finalized with Dr. Aghdam. An announcement will be sent shortly.
- The per credit billing for our course-based Master's students will begin in summer 2022.
- Capacities for the research labs remain the same. EHS has asked that masks be worn in labs and everything stays as is until we receive further notice from the government.
- GCS received 3 NSERC Alliance grants for: Dr. Assi, large-scale integrations of EVs into the smart grid for \$276k. Dr. Ouf on occupant centric control strategies in commercial building for \$60k. And, Dr. Poullis on computer vision for computer assisted surgery for \$180k. Total of approx. \$500k in Alliance grants since the last council, during which we announced \$900k in Alliance grants, which is fantastic news.
- There are several ongoing initiatives to mention: a CFREF hiring in Electrification in Society for a Carbon Neutral and Resilient Communities and a CERC on Smart, Sustainable and Resilient Aerospace. The Applied AI institute co-directors were announced. They are Dr. Glatard from GCS and Dr. McKelvey from FAS. The launch will happen in the next few weeks.

## 6. Graduate Billing Reform - Course based Master Program

Effrosyni Diamantoudi, Interim Dean, SGS

- Dr. Effrosyni Diamantoudi, Interim Dean, School of Graduate Studies, informed the council that currently Masters and PhD students are billed on a fixed per term basis for 45 credits on 4 terms for a total of 11.25 credits per term. A new billing reform will be effective in May 2022. This new procedure will be for course-based master programs only. These students will be billed tuition per credits registered and this will apply to students admitted in summer 2022 onwards. Existing students will be grandfathered in. It is important to note that per credit tuition billing does not increase the price, it just changes when students pay. Other adjustments will be made to large projects and internship components. These courses will be broken down into different credits spread out to accommodate this reform. A change will be made to the definition of the full time and part time status. Currently a full time status is given to all master-course based students, no matter how many credits they are taking, which means that the status will now be determined at admission. However, a student with 0 credits for the Summer term will still be considered full-time. This will allow these students to have access to the campus and the services provided to them. Other exceptions are pregnancy and parents of young children, who will be allowed to take less than 9 credits and still be considered full time.
- A discussion ensued, including why the previous structure is no longer considered after much work was put into it. It was explained that the system was put in place by a previous team and was due to the government reporting structure.
- A clarification was provided that 9 credits are available for GCS students in the fall and winter terms. One credit courses will be offered to GCS students to make them more well rounded and there will be plenty of choices available.
- A communication campaign will be done within the next couple of weeks and an FAQ will also be built to help direct the students.

## 7. Curriculum Changes

- a) Graduate Curriculum Proposal for the 2022-23 Academic Year  
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering:  
COEN 691 (ECFC 2022-01-01)

*Motion 2022-01-03*

*Upon motion duly moved and seconded (E. Shihab/Y. Shayan) it was passed that document ECFC 2022-01-01, be ratified as submitted with the following edits*

- *Remove the indication of online delivery.*

*Vote: Carried unanimously*

## 8. Graduate Attribute Assessment Submission

Ali Akgunduz, Associate Dean, Academic Programs and Undergraduate Activities

- Dr. Akgunduz informed the council that the graduate attribute assessment submissions are not always being received. In order to make the process more formal, beginning in Winter 2022 faculty members assigned graduate attribute assessment mandates whether part or full time first must submit graduate attribute assessment then their grades for approval. This was reviewed and approved at the Executive Committee on January 11, 2022. The MIAE department introduced this process two years ago and it has worked very well and received good compliance.

Feedback:

- There was discussion around formalizing this process and not all faculty members were in favour. The comments were well received but had already been considered and the change will move forward as planned.
- In the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering, Dr. Paquet put together a nice outline on ways to evaluate graduate attributes. Many departments have worked on limiting graduate attributes so that it is manageable and this has proven valuable to get it done quickly and accurately.

9. Approvals and Ratifications of Elections (ECFC 2022-01-02)

*For information only*                      *Dr. H. D. Ng announced that document ECFC 2022-01-02, Revised Membership of the Faculty Research Committee composition was ratified electronically on February 7, 2022.*

*For information only*                      *Dr. H. D. Ng announced that document ECFC 2022-01-02, Revised Membership of the Advisory Search Committee for the Academic Unit Head of the Centre for Engineering in Society was ratified electronically on January 28, 2022.*

*Motion 2022-01-04*                      *Upon motion duly moved and seconded (H. D. Ng/M. Pugh) it was passed that document ECFC 2022-01-02, Representative on the Independent Student Request Committee be approved as submitted.*

*Vote: Carried unanimously*

*Motion 2022-01-05*                      *Upon motion duly moved and seconded (H. D. Ng/M. Pugh) it was passed that document ECFC 2022-01-02, Undergraduate Scholarship and Awards Committee be approved as submitted.*

*Vote: Carried unanimously*

10. Other Business

- None

11. Adjournment at 3:39 p.m.

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