

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION
OF THE MEETING OF SENATE

Held on Friday, May 21, 2021,
immediately following the meeting of the Closed Session
via Zoom Video Conferencing

PRESENT

Voting members: Graham Carr (*Chair*); Md Foysal Ahmed; Adewunmi Ajike; Ali Akgunduz; Shimon Amir; Nicholas Bailey; Leslie Barker; Matthew Barker; Guylaine Beaudry; Elizabeth Bloodgood; Catherine Bolton; Christopher Brett; Sally Cooke; Frank Crooks; Anne-Marie Croteau; Selvadurai Dayanandan; Mourad Debbabi; Alex De Visscher; Effrosyni Diamantoudi; Linda Dyer; Mary Esteve; Mehdi Farashahi; Ariela Freedman; Annie Gérin; James Hanna; Fiona Harrison-Roberts; Hannah Jamet-Lange; Isaiah Joyner; Colin Long; Sarah Mazhero; Christopher Moore; Catherine Mulligan; Helena Osana; Virginia Penhune; Gilles Peslherbe; Duraichelvan Raju; Pascale Sicotte; Reza Soleymani; Robert Soroka; Ron Stern; Alexander Stojda; Kelly Thompson; Guylaine Vaillancourt; Anne Whitelaw; Paula Wood-Adams; Radu Zmeureanu

Non-voting members: Philippe Beaugard; Denis Cossette; Stéphanie de Celles; Michael Di Grappa; Nadia Hardy; Tom Hughes; Frederica Jacobs; Émilie Martel

Also attending: Shelina Houssenaly; Mamoun Medraj

ABSENT

Voting members: Sri Divya Doppalapudi; Elizabeth Fast; Vince Graziano; Safwan Hye; Debra Irabor; Samantha Leger; Praneetha Reddy

Non-voting members: Paul Chesser; Isabel Dunnigan; Candace Jacobs

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m.

1.1 Adoption of the Agenda

R-2021-4-4 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda of the Open Session be approved.*

1.2 Adoption of April 23, 2021 Minutes

R-2021-4-5 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of April 23, 2021.*

2. Business arising from the Minutes not included on the Agenda

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

3. President's remarks

The President's remarks are summarized as follows:

- This being the last Senate meeting before the summer break, he thanked all Senators for their service and wished them well during the intervening period before we pick up again in September.
- He noted today is Ms. Tessier's last Senate meeting as she will be retiring shortly. He offered her his sincere appreciation and best wishes and thanked her for her service, stating that she will be sorely missed.
- Remarking that he was on the Loyola Campus, he conveyed his ambitions to have Senate rotate between campuses, noting that the plan was to do that as of March 2020, but then the pandemic hit causing meetings to be held virtually.
- He was thrilled to announce that Mourad Debbabi was appointed Dean of the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science at Wednesday's Board meeting. Dr. Debbabi, who served as Interim Dean since 2020, joined Concordia in 2003 and is an accomplished researcher and academic leader.
- Several Concordia community members were appointed to the National Order of Quebec, including Suzanne Sauvage, member of the Board of Governors and Andrew Molson, co-chair of the Campaign for Concordia and member of the Concordia University Foundation Board of Directors. Dr. Carr also underlined various prizes and grants received by members of the Concordia community.
- Spring saw the largest graduating class ever. Enrolment for summer courses is the heaviest ever. Registrations for fall are on par with last year.
- Dr. Carr said that a progressive return to campus is planned for some service units this summer (student services, libraries, University Communications Services). This also includes the reopening of student residences which will operate at 50% capacity. He spoke of the planning for fall in light of the government announcement on Tuesday regarding the reopening. He made the point that the University is working on many scenarios driven by two

principles, that we continue to prioritize health and safety and that we ensure that all students have maximum opportunities to come to campus, whether for in-person courses or other activities. That said, the University is waiting to receive written guidance from the government on their directives. This has delayed the release of our course schedule which will now happen in June, since we want to give students clarity about what will be delivered in-person and what will be delivery remotely. He added that the reopening plan for September is predicated on society attaining collective objectives by late August regarding vaccinations. For that reason, we will not have full clarity until that date but are meanwhile the University is urging all members of our community to get vaccinated.

- He briefly touched on draft Bill 96, *An Act respecting French, the official and common language of Québec*. He pointed out that Concordia has a robust language policy which is in conformity with existing legislation. Based on a preliminary reading of the Bill, it would appear that English language universities would be classified as anglophone institutions, and we need to understand what that would entail. Concordia plans to work with Bishop's and McGill on that file.
- The President concluded his remarks by apprising Senate of the gist of the 2021/2022 operating budget approved by the Board of Governors on Wednesday. While a \$17 million deficit is anticipated, virtually all of which is structural and directly attributable to impact of COVID, he shared the positive implications for academic and research. He reiterated his gratitude to the Board for its support and recognition that Concordia is a university on the move with momentum that needs to continue to build capacity and advance strategic priorities.

4. **Academic update** (US-2021-4-D2)

Dr. Whitelaw has no additional information to her written report.

CONSENT

5. **Committee appointments** (US-2021-4-D3)

R-2021-4-6 *That the committee appointments be approved.*

6. **Library Committee report** (US-2021-4-D4)

This report was submitted for information purposes.

7. **Academic Programs Committee: Report and recommendations** (US-2021-4-D5)

7.1 **Undergraduate curriculum proposals - Faculty of Arts and Science**

7.1.1 **Department of Education** (US-2021-4-D6)

7.1.2 Department of Sociology and Anthropology (US-2021-4-D7)

R-2021-4-7 *That the undergraduate curriculum proposals in the Faculty of Arts and Science be approved.*

7.2 Undergraduate curriculum proposals - John Molson School of Business

7.2.1 Course prerequisite (US-2021-4-D8)

7.2.1 Conversion to permanent course (US-2021-4-D9)

R-2021-4-8 *That the undergraduate curriculum proposals in the John Molson School of Business be approved.*

7.3 Undergraduate curriculum proposal - Office of the Registrar - Regulations (US-2021-4-D10)

R-2021-4-9 *That the undergraduate curriculum proposal in the Office of the Registrar be approved.*

7.4 Graduate curriculum proposals - Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science

7.4.1 Requirements and courses (US-2021-4-D11)

7.4.2 Department of Building, Civil and Environmental Engineering (US-2021-4-D12)

7.4.3 Concordia Institute for Information Systems Engineering (US-2021-4-D13)

7.4.4 Department of Chemical and Materials Engineering (US-2021-4-D14)

7.4.5 Department of Mechanical, Industrial and Aerospace Engineering (US-2021-4-D15)

R-2021-4-10 *That the graduate curriculum proposals in the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science be approved.*

REGULAR

8. Update on alternate grading policy

Dr. Whitelaw apprised Senators that this policy will be submitted for Senate approval in September or October, after having been discussed in more detail at the Faculty Councils and other venues. This matter was discussed by APPC throughout the term. She provided an overview of a discussion document which was reviewed at the previous week's APPC meeting. The purpose of the policy would be to allow students to incur less risk to experiment with classes outside of their disciplinary field.

A number of universities across North America have similar policies embedded in their calendars (pass/fail, successful/unsuccessful, or credit/no credit notations). Concordia's option would be the credit/no credit (CR/NC) designation.

Dr. Whitelaw gave examples of how this would apply in lieu of a letter grade which would not impact the GPA. She noted that this option would be available

to undergraduate students only in every year of their program, for general education courses only and could not constitute more than 12 credits of their program. Students availing themselves of this option would be required to do so by the Add/Drop date.

9. Research Committee recommendation: University Recognition of Research Unit - Concordia Materials Characterization Platform (CMCP) (US-2021-4-D16)

Dr. Wood-Adams together with the Director of the Concordia Materials Characterization Platform, Dr. Medraj, presented the highlights of this research unit.

R-2021-4-11 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that, on recommendation of the Research Committee, Senate grant University-recognized status, in the category of Emerging Infrastructure Platform, to the Concordia Materials Characterization Platform (CMCP), in accordance with the Policy on Research Units (VPRGS-8).

10. Academic Planning and Priorities Committee and Research Committee recommendation: Proposal to establish a School of Health (US-2021-4-D17)

Drs. Whitelaw and Wood-Adams conveyed the highlights of the proposal via a PowerPoint presentation.

Dr. Whitelaw kicked off the presentation by noting that this is the first proposal for a new unit of this scale in decades. Emerging out of discussions that began in 2015 as part of the Strategic Directions (*Double our Research*), the proposed School of Health will serve as a showcase for the diversity of health research at Concordia. Extensive consultations with researchers by the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies, led to focused mapping of research and themes, resulting in a consensus on six transdisciplinary clusters under the umbrella of the Health Initiative.

Dr. Whitelaw further outlined the background of the current initiative, which began in the summer of 2020 with a vision statement that built on previous consultations. In fall 2020, the vision was brought to Academic Cabinet, and a strong consensus emerged that Concordia should form a School of Health to be headed by a Dean. A wide and comprehensive consultative process followed to gather feedback from the community, which was incorporated into the proposal now presented to Senate. The proposed structure would consist of three transversal hubs, reflecting existing research strengths across the University: Community Health Hub, Clinical Research and Prevention Hub, and Biomedical Science and Engineering Research Hub. These hubs are designed to facilitate interdisciplinary research within and across them.

The structure of the School anticipates the active involvement of the nine university-recognized research units which are in health or health-related fields to

increase collaborations and funding and benefits from the School's resources. Dr. Whitelaw made the point that new research personal will be hired to support health research and would not take away support from other units or research areas. It is also anticipated that graduate programs will be part of the School of Health.

Dr. Wood-Adams continued the presentation by outlining the unique structure of the School of Health, which would be headed by a Dean who would have dual reporting to the Provost and the Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies. The three research hubs would be headed by Scientific Directors who would coordinate not only the research activities taking place in each hub but would facilitate collaboration between the hubs. It was deemed a good idea that the School have an external advisory board.

The School's comprehensive and integrated research capacity, which runs the gamut from health sciences, to engineering, the social sciences, the arts and the humanities, supports transdisciplinary responses to health across six interdisciplinary themes: Biomedical fundamentals, Preventive health, Health and technology, Health policy and governance, Health and wellbeing, and Health interventions.

Dr. Wood-Adams summarized the goals of the School, which are to elevate Concordia's research activities by: bringing in larger grants; having a positive impact on society and enhancing quality of life; contributing to the innovative design of healthy communities; and becoming a global reference point for next-generation approaches to health.

The School is expected to have a major impact on Concordia's recruitment efforts of highly talented students, faculty and staff, to create new opportunities for meaningful partnerships and strengthen existing ones; it has the potential to become one of the most transformative initiatives Concordia has undertaken in its history. Dr. Wood-Adams concluded by outlining the next steps.

Following the presentation, a discussion ensued, during which Drs. Whitelaw and Wood-Adams responded to questions regarding the structure and operations and outlined the parameters on which the success of the School will be evaluated.

While all of the Deans and several other Senators spoke very positively and expressed their support to establish the School, a few Senators expressed reluctance to support the proposal at this moment. In their view, the proposal seemed incomplete, more clarity was needed around hiring, and they questioned the financial sustainability.

In response to those concerns, the point was made that hiring would remain within existing departments, that there would be no reduction in existing research support services, and that Financial Services performed an analysis and the financial risk is minimal. The potential of the School to expand Concordia's

contributions to research and training in the health fields far outweighs any financial risk.

R-2021-4-12 *Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was resolved that Senate recommend to the Board of Governors that it approve the establishment of the School of Health.*

11. Question period

Dr. Soleymani asked whether in-person exams would be held before the return of in-person classes. Dr. Whitelaw explained that they would not since many students are not in Montreal. That said, a select number of exams will be held in-person for summer courses in the context of a pilot project.

12. Other business

R-2021-4-13 *Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that Senate offer its sincere appreciation and best wishes to Danielle Tessier, our Secretary of Senate who is retiring, and thank Danielle for her dedication, rigor and abiding service.*

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.



Danielle Tessier
Secretary of Senate