

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

Friday, October 8, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.
via Zoom video conferencing

PRESENT

Voting Members: Graham Carr (Chair), Shimon Amir, Leslie Barker, Mathew Barker, Guylaine Beaudry, Elizabeth Bloodgood, Catherine Bolton, Lovina Angela Brown, Queenie Hui Jing Chen, Demetre Christopoulos, Sally Cooke, Anne-Marie Croteau, Alexandra Dawson, Selvadurai Dayanandan, Alex De Visscher, Mourad Debbabi, Larry Deck, Effrosyni Diamantoudi, Riya Dutta, Linda Dyer, Mary Esteve, Ariela Freedman, Annie Gérin, Marina Ghali, Nicolka Gorel, Abdelwahab Hamou-Lhadj, Hannah Jamet-Lange, Eduardo Malorni, Catherine Mulligan, Prady Cassandra Ngouma Wa, Satinder Pal Singh, Gilles Peslherbe, Duraichelvan Raju, Jasmine Ramcharitar-Brown, Lourdu Reddy Allam, Rosemary Reilly, Pascale Sicotte, Reza Soleymani, Robert Soroka, Kelly Thompson, Craig Townsend, Guylaine Vaillancourt, Deeva Wazir, Anne Whitelaw, Shaina Willison, Paula Wood-Adams, Radu Grigore Zmeureanu

Non-voting members: Philippe Beauregard, Stéphanie de Celles, Michael Di Grappa, Isabel Dunnigan, Nadia Hardy, Tom Hughes, Candace Jacobs, Frederica Jacobs, Émilie Martel

Also attending: Sandra Gabriele, Karan Singh

ABSENT

Voting members: Joanna Berzowska, Boutaina Chafi, Mehdi Farashahi, Moshe Lander, Jean-Philippe Warren

Non-voting members: Paul Chesser, Denis Cossette

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m.

1.1 Approval of the Agenda

R-2021-6-1 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Agenda of the Open Session be approved.

1.2 Adoption of September 17, 2021 Minutes

R-2021-6-2 Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously resolved that the Minutes of the Open Session meeting of September 17, 2021, be adopted.

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:

- With profound sadness, President Carr reported the passing of Dr. Nadia Chaudhri earlier in the week. Dr. Carr spoke of the amazing courage and optimism, and legacy created by Dr. Chaudhri, who died after a tenacious battle with ovarian cancer. He expressed his condolences to her husband and their son as well as to the entire family, friends and colleagues.
- President Carr underlined the outpouring of recognition for Dr. Chaudhri in the mainstream and social media. He spoke to how people worldwide were moved and inspired by Dr. Chaudhri's heroic fight against disease and death, and by Dr. Chaudhri's determination to make the academic world and society a better place through the creation of the Nadia Chaudri Wingspan Award, an Award which aims to support women scientists from racialized communities. Spearheaded by Dr. Chaudhri before Dr. Chaudhri passed, Dr. Carr reported that the Award saw contributions from over 8,600 individuals who donated \$615,000.00. Dr. Carr explained that he had multiple exchanges over the last few days with Senators and other colleagues on the best way to remember and appreciate Dr. Chaudhri and their work as well as to express the collective emotion of sadness and loss felt by Dr. Chaudhri's passing. He said that he will be working with Dr. Chaudhri's family and colleagues to find a proper way to honor and celebrate Dr. Chaudhri's life as a scientist, teacher, mentor and a citizen of Concordia, and to celebrate the enormous contribution Dr. Chaudhri made to our community.
- President Carr conveyed to Senate that Dr. Chaudhri's fundraising efforts were part of and aligned with this year's Shuffle, where another \$53,000.00 were raised to support students in the form of scholarships and bursaries. He expressed his gratitude to Senate and the entire Concordia community for shuffling and sponsoring others to raise these funds for a worthy cause.

- Dr. Carr informed Senators that pictures from around campus taken on the evening of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30 were shared with members of the Board and Senate earlier this week, and he mentioned how wonderful it was to see many buildings bathed in striking orange light. Dr. Carr thanked everyone who participated in the activities to mark this very important day and reaffirmed the university's commitment to decolonization and the continued work towards reconciliation.
- In related staffing news, Dr. Carr invited Senators to welcome Adamina Partridge who recently joined the university's Otsenhákta Student Centre (OSC) as its new Interim Coordinator. Originally from Kuujuaq, Nunavik, Partridge previously worked at the Four Directions Indigenous Centre at Queen's University. Dr. Carr acknowledged the important role that Adamina will be taking on.
- President Carr apprised Senators of a major gift in the amount of \$2 million from the Doggone Foundation to the Faculty of Fine Arts to create the Elspeth McConnell Fine Arts awards which will be used from now until the end of the decade to support and enable 40 paid internships in the Fine Arts Faculty annually. He mentioned that these awards are another example of Concordia's ongoing commitment to experiential learning and providing student with opportunities and engagement with arts and cultural organizations.
- President Carr also reported that a record number of Concordia varsity athletes, 52, were named Academic All-Canadians, which mean they sustained an A- average or better in their courses while participating in a national university sports competition. Dr. Carr congratulated the athletes, their coaches and the Student Success Centre for their collective efforts towards this amazing achievement.
- Dr. Carr was pleased to announce that the university has been able to secure two dates at Place des Arts to hold the first of a series on in-person convocation ceremonies to allow for the recognition of a growing cohort of students who have graduated since the beginning of the pandemic. He mentioned that the recent announcement of relaxation of measures for the operations of arts and cultural organizations has made this possible.
- In relation to health and safety measures, President Carr provided an update on COVID-19: in the past week, 4 cases of COVID-19 were reported by members within the Concordia community who had tested positive within 48 hours of being on campus; in the previous week, 6 cases had been reported; since the return-to-campus this fall, none of the cases were due to contact on campus. Dr. Carr reported from recent discussions with the other university rectors that it was observed that no outbreak had been reported at any Quebec university at this point.
- Dr. Carr provided some context. He explained that, on average, more than 15,000 students are registered for in-person courses Monday to Friday on both campuses, in addition to others accessing the libraries and other spaces, faculty members and staff. Dr. Carr informed that a dashboard was being developed and will be ready in the

coming weeks, which will provide the community with an overview of Concordia's situation in relation to the larger public health context in the city.

- President Carr noted that the university is moving to act more vigorously on mask-wearing. He shared that there are circumstances where individuals do not have to wear masks on campus if, for instance, they are respecting the 2 meters social distancing, and, overwhelmingly, people are respectful of this requirement; however, some cases exist where people may misunderstand the requirements in non-classroom spaces. He informed Senators that following discussions with library staff, security presence has been increased in the Library, and there will be additional signage reminding people of sanitary practices.
- Dr. Carr apprised Senators that Environmental Health and Safety continues to work with *Santé publique de Montréal* in terms of contact tracing.
- Dr. Carr noted that there have been discussions to open some spaces to a reduced number of external guests to attend activities, such as year-end student performances in Fine Arts, and an assessment of spaces for student groups to hold limited attendance events later this semester is being done, keeping health considerations paramount.
- Dr. Carr informed Senate that Dr. Whitelaw will preside over the meeting as of 3:15 p.m.

4. **Academic Update** (Document US-2021-6-D1)

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

CONSENT

5. **Committee appointments** (Document US-2021-6-D2)

R-2021-6-3 That the committee appointments be approved.

6. **Registrar's report on spring 2021 graduation statistics** (Document US-2021-6-D3)

This report was submitted for information purposes.

REGULAR

7. **Winter semester update**

Dr. Whitelaw provided an update on the winter semester, and her remarks are summarized as follows:

- Dr. Whitelaw provided the broad guidelines that informed the planning process for the winter semester and informed Senators that as reflections on the first month of the

fall semester continue, the university is comfortable moving forward with the gradual return to in-person activities, with a priority to in-person learning and teaching on campus. She provided the rationale to an increase of in-person courses by explaining that campus is a safe space from a health and safety standpoint and from the university's ability to deliver courses in-person; she acknowledged that there had been a period of adjustment, but health and safety considerations have been maintained. She further explained that the second criteria that encouraged this approach was the clarity surrounding international students; the guidelines issued by the Québec government state that the university can continue to deliver courses remotely until the end of semester, which means that starting in January there is an expectation that international students will be in Montréal and thus will be taking their courses in-person.

- Dr. Whitelaw explained the three modalities that have been decided upon in terms of the course delivery going forward: 1) fully in-person; 2) fully online, such as e-Concordia courses; 3) blended. Dr. Whitelaw apprised members that the blended model includes asynchronous activities, such as recorded material and in-person components. She clarified that the course delivery model would be dependent on the nature of the course. Dr. Whitelaw identified that there is an opportunity to further analyze what kind of materials, activities and deliverables can be made available asynchronously.
- Dr. Whitelaw informed Senators that a detailed memo will be issued in a week, which will include guidelines to assist all faculties and departments in their delivery of courses.
- Dr. Whitelaw outlined that the remote model was an emergency measure. She explained that accommodations are still being made for faculty members to deliver courses remotely when they are unable to come in person; however, remote delivery was to be an exception, and in-person, online and blended are the modalities that will be followed going forward.
- Dr. Whitelaw underlined that exams were an important consideration, and the orientation would be that exams for: 1) in-person courses will be in-person; 2) online courses will be online; 3) blended courses will be either online or in-person, depending on the course.
- Further to questions in relation to the timeline for the blended experience to be operationalized, Dr. Whitelaw explained that all this would be planned before the start of the course so that once the students attend the first lecture, they would be able to know the modality of the course. To another question related to increased technological efficiency of online courses offered through e-Concordia, Dr. Whitelaw confirmed that the Center for Teaching and Learning has already developed seminars and tools, and many have developed asynchronous materials to be able to implement this. To a query on whether online learning resembled a course offered by e-Concordia, Dr. Gabriele clarified that all online courses would have to be designed as e-Concordia courses, and the memo that is expected in the coming days will clarify all

these distinctions. To a question about specific directives being given to departments in relation to the types of courses, Dr. Whitelaw responded that these decisions were made at the faculty and department levels. In response to a query on when all the information will become available, Dr. Gabriele confirmed that the updated schedule for all courses will be available by November 15.

- Concerns were raised about the possibility that students might be confused about the new blended modality and it was highlighted that it would be important to be clear that it is not a hybrid option, especially for students who are trying to find online courses; this is a particular concern for students who are still worried about coming to campus for health and safety reasons. Dr. Whitelaw acknowledged that clarity in the Student Information System will be required, and clear communications to students will allow them to make informed decisions about courses. She mentioned that the number of online courses would probably be the same as they were pre-pandemic, so around 11% of the total course offerings.
- To a question about the continued health and safety of students, particularly in lobby areas and elevators, Dr. Whitelaw confirmed that health and safety remains paramount and will continue to be managed in the same manner as being currently done to be able to welcome more students on campus. Dr. Carr also noted that health and safety will continue to be informed by public health standards; and that the university has invested a lot in renovations over the past 18 months, and that there was a lot of capacity at the university to use classrooms and ensure that health and safety was not compromised.

8. Future Concordia

Dr. Whitelaw and M. Di Grappa presented the highlights of the initiative, which are summarized as follows:

- Dr. Whitelaw shared that the goal of the Future Concordia initiative is to build a university of the future, to think about what Concordia is now and what it wants to be in the future, and to focus on some of the directions and aspirations moving forward.
- Dr. Whitelaw outlined the fundamental question was to think about the Future of Concordia, in the context of how the community has been living over the past 18 months. She conveyed to the members of Senate that the initiative aims at questioning and planning for the near future: what is Concordia going to look like in 3 to 5 years? She mentioned the initiative will help think about the collective aim of the university, which is to fulfil a research and academic mission and deliver the best kind of administration and operation to our students. She explains that the idea is to understand what needs to be done and adjusted in a bigger context.
- Dr. Whitelaw informed that a steering committee was formed in February 2021, as there were questions about what the next few months would look like. She shared that the fundamental purpose of the project was to analyze what was learned in terms of

teaching, learning and working in a pandemic, how the lessons learned could be applied in practice and how they would shape the university's future.

- Dr. Whitelaw shared the guiding principles for the project, which include the following: the health of the community; the alignment with and renewal of the university's Next-Gen strategic directions; decisions that support equity, diversity, accessibility and decolonization; the continued commitment to sustainability, including financial sustainability; creativity, as well as a healthy tolerance for risk-taking, failure and discomfort; agility, flexibility and responsiveness; a student-centered approach; and continued support for the different needs of the faculty members, students and staff.
- M. Di Grappa explained that to fulfill the project's mandates, six working groups with co-leads have been set up: 1) future of work, the workplace, and workforce; 2) research and impact; 3) campus space; 4) student experience; 5) university outreach and 6) future of teaching and learning. M. Di Grappa shared that the project would take place over two semesters and thanked the community members involved with this initiative for their participation, leadership, and support.
- M. Di Grappa concluded by informing Senate that there will be two deliverables: 1) progress presentation with the scope parameters, research findings, design ideas and test plans in January 2022; and 2) a final presentation with recommended future state vision, a detailed analysis and testing results to be presented in April 2022.
- Following the presentation, a comment was made on how important and timely this initiative was. Further to a query, Dr. Whitelaw explained that an advisory committee on teaching and learning was working on developing guidelines specific to teaching and learning and that consultations with Associate Deans, the School of Graduate Studies, the Center for Teaching and Learning, Knowledge One and the students would be rolled out imminently.

9. **Return to campus – student experience** (Document US-2021-6-D4)

In addition to the written report, H. Jamet-Lange and E. Malorni presented the highlights of the return-to-campus student experience, which are summarized as follows:

- The presenters conveyed to Senators that a recent study was conducted by the Concordia Student Union (CSU) on the student experience after having been back on campus more than a month, and that the CSU felt that it was important to share student experiences with Senate.
- H. Jamet-Lange and E. Malorni pointed out the methodology and sources of information and presented the results of the study. The presenters shared the main reasons some students were not feeling safe and presented what they thought could be modified.

- The presenters explained that the CSU would like the university to consider the return of the pass/fail option as 89% of the respondents would like to have this option because the pandemic is still ongoing and there is a lot of pressure on students who are caring for loved ones, working and facing uncertainly and other barriers, including mental and financial strain.
- Some student Senators spoke about similar experiences. One senator suggested that there were various ways to help students, including making recordings from the previous semester available and that some faculty members were already doing so.
- Dr. Whitelaw explained that the decision to return to campus and in-person academic activities was in line with public health directives and that masks were deemed to be safe, and risk of transmission was extremely low. The university is quite concerned about cases where people were not wearing masks and is doing what it can to ensure that people follow public health protocols. Dr. Whitelaw also explained that the reason Senate is not meeting in-person is because rules were not the same for everyone. Dr. Whitelaw mentioned that the *Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail* (CNESST) has other rules that applied to such meetings, and thus Senate is continuing to meet virtually. In response, a senator highlighted that public health directives were the minimum that the university was required to follow and that the university could do more to ensure that students feel safe on campus.
- Dr. Whitelaw thanked the CSU for the ongoing dialogue between the students and the administration and appreciated their continual feedback on these issues. Dr. Whitelaw also asked that the CSU and other student bodies request their membership to help ensure that all public health protocols are complied with on an ongoing basis.

10. Question period

There were no questions asked during the question period.

11. Other business

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

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 p.m.

Shelina Houssenaly

Shelina Houssenaly
Secretary of Senate