

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

Friday, December 3, 2021

PRESENT:

Chair: Debbabi, M.

Voting members: Akgunduz, A.; Athienitis, A.; Bagchi, A.; Ben Hamza, A.; Berger, R.; Campbell, S.; Clarke, J.; Contreras, I.; Constantinides, C.; De Visscher, A.; El Ayoubi, C.; Fayyaz, F.; Ge, H.; Gopakumar, G.; Goodarzi, B.; Jahanshahi-Anbuhi, S.; Kazemi Zanjani, M.; Kuzgunkaya, O.; Majumdar, S.; Narayanan, L.; Nduwumwe, A.; Ng, H. D.; Ormandjieva, O.; Pugh, M.; Qiu, D.; Shayan, Y.; Shihab, E.; Soliman, A.; Stathopoulos, T.; Thiel, S.; Witte, R.; Yan, J.; Younes, E.

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

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

REGRETS:

Voting members: Afif, J.; Carr, G.; Charky, K.; Ghafouri, M.; Nasiri, F.; Paquet, J.; Rais, R.; Rathore, A.; Reddy, K.; Rivaz, H.; Saleh, R.; Shivamallappa, M.; Whitelaw, A.

Observers: De Melo, D.; Edwards, J-M.

1. Closed Session
2. Call to Order of the Open Session

The Chair called the open session of the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion 2021-07-01 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (T. Stathopoulos/A. Bagchi), it was passed that the Agenda be adopted as submitted.

Vote: Carried unanimously

4. Approval of the Minutes of Open Session ECFC 2021-06 – November 5, 2021

Motion 2021-07-02 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (B. Goodarzi/T. Stathopoulos), it was passed that the Minutes be approved as submitted.

Vote: Carried unanimously

5. Chair's Remarks

- The accreditation visit of the aerospace engineering program in MIAE was held on October 24 – 27, 2021. The exit meeting indicated that the visit went extremely well. On November 23, 2021, a report was received, and overall, it was very positive. It mentioned that we met all of the accreditation criteria and they praised the program quality, material submitted, and virtual lab visits. We await the final CEAB decision, which will be received at the beginning of summer 2022. Two comments to note: First, our space allocation is good for now, but for future growth, we need to prepare to expand our space. Secondly, the program is doing well despite the pandemic, but should be aware of covid fatigue. Again, thank you to everyone who contributed to the accreditation visit, specifically Ali Akgunduz, Martin Pugh, Yousef Shayan, and all the faculty and staff who showed a lot of support during this accreditation visit.
- The Gina Cody School Advisory Board meeting was held on November 15, 2021. The theme selected for this meeting was innovation. A special invitation was extended to Mr. Luc Sirois, the Innovator in Chief of the Government of Quebec. He made a presentation on the new policies and initiatives in terms of innovation in Quebec. The Quebec Government created the position of Innovator in Chief of Quebec to promote innovation. Besides, the government supported the creation of Axelys, and the Council of Innovation to support innovation at academic institutions. It is important for GCS to be present in this dossier and to foster a culture of innovation among our students and researchers.
- The School has received strong support in terms of funding from the Ministry of Higher Education. We have received about \$15 million in order to hire more faculty members. The government will give us additional funding which will bring the support from Quebec to a the level of about \$25 million of support in the next 4 to 5 years. This support is coming to reduce the scarcity of talent in the areas of information technology, computer science, software engineering and emerging areas of engineering. The funds are intended for the hiring of faculty members and to provide timely and hands-on training to our students and to enhance the support of experiential learning, advising, technical support, etc. Discussion is ongoing with the departments and senior administration on how to make the most impactful use of these resources within GCS.
- The Quebec government announced last Friday, November 26, 2021 that they will provide funding for the hiring of 500 faculty members over 4 years in all engineering and computer science schools in Quebec. Since we are the largest engineering and computer science faculty, we expect to receive a significant allocation of new hires and other additional resources. This is a good time for engineering and computer science in Quebec.
- Professor Leon Wang from the Department of Building, Civil and Environmental Engineering was congratulated for winning the Research Communicator Award of the Year International during the Concordia University Media Outreach Awards. Professor Wang produced a [web platform for assessing the risk of viral transmission in buildings](#). It allows users to access publicly available data on Montreal buildings and calculate transmission risks based on ventilation, air exchange rates and occupation density. This story was covered by CTV, Global, the Montreal Gazette and Le Devoir and was also featured in the Los Angeles Times and Nature magazine.
- Concordia has announced the return to in-person convocation ceremonies. The GCS convocation dates for the Classes of 2020 and Spring 2021 will be held on January 18, 2022, 3 p.m. — Graduate level, February 17, 2022, 10 a.m. — Undergraduate level, February 17, 2022, 3 p.m. — Graduate level. For the Class of Fall 2021 will be held on February 17, 2022, 10 a.m. — Undergraduate level on February 17, 2022, 3 p.m. — Graduate level.
- Participants were thanked for attending the Law Meets Engineering: From University Innovation to Technology Product, which was held on November 24, 2021. The speaker was Jean-Nicolas Delage who specializes in intellectual property strategy for rapidly growing technological clients.

The next Law Meets Engineering will resume on January 26, 2021. The topic is Data Governance and the speaker will be Me Vanessa Henri. We're looking for this event to be both in-person (in EV 2.260) and livestreamed on Zoom. Everyone was strongly encouraged to attend.

- Professor Ursula Eicker, our Canada Excellence Research Chair in Smart, Sustainable and Resilient Communities and Cities, was highlighted, as she was part of the Concordia delegation at the COP26 in Glasgow last month. She also co-authored an op-ed that was published in the Montreal Gazette.
- Dean Debbabi and Graham Carr met with Gilles Savard, the new Director General of Ecole Polytechnique. Discussion was had regarding the collaboration between the two institutions.

6. Associate Dean Remarks

Ali Akgunduz, Associate Dean, Academic Programs and Undergraduate Activities

- The university hired Deloitte to look at the new working and teaching situation since the pandemic. Deloitte will meet with technical, faculty, support staff. Six faculty members have already been appointed to work with them. Technicians will be involved in this process, but they are not selected by Concordia. The list of technicians has been provided and the external company will contact them. Undergraduate and graduate student societies are also involved. EDI and hands-on experiential learning are also being investigated.
- Dr. Akgunduz is looking at formulating a teaching and learning committee for GCS. Once the details are finalized, Dr. Akgunduz will communicate the details.

Hua Ge, Associate Dean, Student Academic Services

- The admission numbers are very good and the registration is 20% higher compared to this time last year.
- The annual GPA assessment will be done for academic year 2021-2022 at the end of May 2022. In January 2022, there will be an informal assessment on the fall term performance. An email will be sent out to students who have a GPA below 2.0 and these students will be encouraged to reach out to the department and SAS advisors for help.
- Open House will be held during the month of February 2022 and will be virtual, but in person tours are allowed and Martine Fachena will coordinate this. Meetings are currently taking place with UGPD's to discuss specific activities for open house.
- An increase in student requests for waiving pre-requisites have been received recently. These rules need to be reinforced for accreditation purposes and students need to be well-informed to follow these rules.

Emad Shihab, Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies

- A call from VPRGS went out recently for a search for the co-directors for the applied AI institute. Dr. Shihab asked the council members to encourage faculty to apply and encourage anyone who would be good for these positions.
- VPRGS's launch of awards and prizes at Concordia. See more faculty members be recognized for their excellence. <https://www.concordia.ca/research/awards/search.html>
- A call for the CFREF was sent and discussions are happening within VPRGS and Concordia. This is a major initiative of \$80 – 100 million dollars.
- Three CERC LOI's were submitted and two were selected by VPRGS. One was from GCS for the LOI on Smart Resilience Aerospace. Dr. Shihab thanked Drs. Susan Liscouët-Hanke and Christian Moreau for their participation. The preparation for the real application is now taking place.
- Four NSERC alliance grants were funded from GCS for Drs. Hassan Rivaz and Ming Yuan Chen.
- An NSERC Alliance Missions call was made and ten dossiers were submitted from GCS. We expect to

hear about the funding decisions in March 2022.

- Dr. Shihab announced that a story was published in November 2021 on the Concordia website reporting that many of our researchers are involved in creating a tailor-made training for hundreds of Ericsson Canada employees. The goal is for them to enhance their AI and machine learning technology skills. The story was covered by Le Devoir and Radio-Canada. It's a great example of collaboration between GCS, the Faculty of Arts and Science and Concordia's Lifelong Learning team. Dr. Shihab thanked everyone involved in making this a reality.
- An email was sent regarding the NSERC 2030 strategic plan. Dr Shihab encouraged the council members to read the information and send any feedback to him: https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/NSERC2030-CRSNG2030/discussion_papers-documents_de_travail_eng.asp
- Recently, a travel ban has been placed on certain countries. This will impact us specifically for Egypt, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. Dr. Shihab asked to be contacted if anyone experience any issues. Dr. Shihab will discuss with VPRGS to see what can be done.
- Beginning January 15, 2022, all travelers entering Canada will need to be fully vaccinated by a Canada approved vaccine. Please contact Dr. Shihab if there are issues.
- A communication was sent out to students regarding the new travel measures.
- PhD students are 10 percent below last year's registration. There are 27 students less than last year.
- MEng, non-thesis, is 28 percent above this time last year. Very comparable to pre-pandemic.
- November 8, 2021 was the deadline for graduate students to be on campus. Some students were not able to come back into the country. The total was 220 students and the majority were MEng. The university is being flexible as much as possible. The majority of students that are being accommodated are often for returning students, if they are new it's very difficult, if not impossible. If the student is graduating, the university gives them until December 2021 to submit their papers.
- Visas from Iran are taking longer than usual. The international student's office has been in touch and there is nothing special for students from Iran or Concordia. The result is that many changes have been made to the policies.

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

- Dr. Ng reminded council that the deadline to submit for tenure positions to chairs is January 5, 2022.
- This year there are many open faculty positions. Dr. Ng asked the council to please disseminate the information to their colleagues <https://www.concordia.ca/ginacody/about/jobs.html>
- The Dean's office is scheduling DHC department lunches to thank committee members and to discuss the GCS strategic directions.
- Dr. Ng congratulated Dr. Sudhir Mudur from CSSE for receiving the Academic Leadership award and for his leadership of the CSSE department. Dr. Ng also congratulated Drs. Daria Terekhov & Bahareh Goodarzi for receiving the GCS Teaching Excellence Award and Dr. Akshay Rathore for being placed in the Provost Circle of Distinction.

Tanja Tajmel, EDI

- The two Allyship workshops given by Lisa White were a success – one for staff and one for faculty members. Dr. Tajmel thanked everyone who participated. In the future a second set of workshops will be offered.
- \$1.3 million dollars of funding has been received from the Ministry of Higher Education to support initiatives for women in engineering. The funds have been allocated to create entrance scholarships for students from underrepresented groups.
- An EDI working group will be established. The membership will focus on early career researchers who need experience in EDI for their dossiers.

- Collaboration with institutional planning regarding retention and dropout rates is currently being done to collect data. An update will be given soon.

7. Curriculum Changes

- Graduate Curriculum Proposal for the 2022-23 Academic Year
Concordia Institute for Information Systems Engineering:
INSE 6330 & INSE 6350 (ECFC 2021-07-01)

Motion 2021-07-03 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (E. Shihab /A. Ben Hamza) it was passed that document ECFC 2021-07-01, be ratified as submitted.

Vote: Carried unanimously

8. Ratifications of Elections (ECFC 2021-07-02)

Motion 2021-07-04 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (H. D. Ng/A. Ben Hamza), it was passed that document ECFC 2021-07-02, Representative on the Advisory Search Committee for the Academic Unit Head of the Centre for Engineering in Society be ratified as submitted.

Vote: Carried unanimously

Motion 2021-07-05 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (H. D. Ng/ A. Akgunduz) it was passed that document ECFC 2021-07-02, Representative on the Advisory Search Committee for the Academic Unit Head of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering be ratified as submitted.

Vote: Carried unanimously

Motion 2021-07-06 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (H. D. Ng/A. Bagchi) it was passed that document ECFC 2021-07-02, Representative on the Faculty Personnel and Tenure Committee be ratified as submitted.

Vote: Carried unanimously

Motion 2021-07-07 Upon motion duly moved and seconded (H. D. Ng/A. Ben Hamza) it was passed that document ECFC 2021-07-02, Representative on the Advisory Search Committee for the Dean, School of Health be ratified as submitted.

Vote: Carried unanimously

9. Other Business

- Martine Fachena sent an email to the Provost office regarding concerns about exams.
- The Provosts' office will be sending a memo regarding LTA timeline. Dr. Ng will follow-up and once the information is received he will send to the chairs.
- The Dean's staff awards committee are meeting next week and the winners will then be announced. A save the date will be sent soon.
- Amanda Clarke advised council members that if anyone is interested in learning more about the concepts of decolonization, indigenization and reconciliation, there is a workshop on Jan 21, 2022. Source: <https://www.concordia.ca/indigenous/resources/learning-series.html>
- Dr. Debbabi thanked the members of the GCS community for their contributions to the services given this past year. The performance was outstanding regarding the delivery of services during this challenging time. Dr. Debbabi expressed that he was impressed by everyone's enthusiasm and dedication. The members of the council were thanked for their contributions for this year and wished everyone to move towards holiday season wish all a great end of the year and a great restful holiday break for you and your family.

10. Adjournment at 3:12 p.m.

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