

MINUTES OF THE OPEN SESSION
OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Thursday, October 24, 2024 at 4 p.m.
Room GM 410 (Board of Governors meeting room)
SGW Campus

PRESENT

Governors:

Helen Antoniou (C)	Darshan Vishnu Dorugade	Miranda Melfi
Theresa Bianco	(zoom)	Paul John Murdoch (zoom)
Ken Brooks	Kim Fuller	Raymond Paquin
Graham Carr (P and Vice-C)	Shahir Guindi (zoom)	Kareem Rahaman
Jarett Carty (V.C)	Caroline Jamet (zoom)	Robert Soroka
Gary N. Chateram (zoom)	Claude Joli-Coeur (V.C)	Ted Stathopoulos
Roy Cross	Shoshana Kalfon	Roula Zaarour (zoom)
Pat Di Lillo	Catherine Loubier (zoom)	

Alternate: Ali Salman

Also attending:

Philippe Beauregard	Denis Cossette (zoom)	Pascal Lebel
William Cheaib	Michael Di Grappa	Anne Whitelaw
Paul Chesser	Frederica Jacobs	

ABSENT

Governors:

Adriana Embiricos	Rana Ghorayeb
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1. Call to order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

LEGEND:

C: Chair

P and Vice-C: President and Vice Chancellor

V.C: Vice Chair

1.1 Approval of the Agenda

Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously RESOLVED:

R-2024-8-1 *That the Agenda be approved, including the items on the Consent Agenda.*

CONSENT

2. Approval of September 26, 2024 Minutes

R-2024-8-2 *That the Minutes of the meeting of September 26, 2024 be approved.*

3. Audit Committee recommendations:

3.1 **Système d'information financière des universités (SIFU) for the year ended April 30, 2024** (Document BG-2024-8-D1)

R-2024-8-3 *That, on recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Board of Governors approve the Système d'information financière des universités (SIFU) for the year ended April 30, 2024.*

3.2 **Interfund transfer for the year ended April 30, 2024** (Document BG-2024-8-D2)

R-2024-8-4 *That, on recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Board of Governors approve the interfund transfers for the year ended April 30, 2024.*

3.3 **État de traitement (statement of salaries) for the year ended April 30, 2024** (Document BG-2024-8-D3)

R-2024-8-5 *That, following recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Board of Governors approve the état de traitement (statement of salaries) for the year ended April 30, 2024.*

3.4 **Revisions to the Policy on the Reporting of Wrongdoings (BD-16)** (Document BG-2024-8-D4)

R-2024-8-6 *That, on recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Board of Governors approve the modifications to the Policy on Employee Disclosures of Wrongdoings (BD-16) in accordance with the attached documentation and the appointment of the Associate Secretary-General as the Ethics and Integrity Officer.*

4. **Governance and Ethics Committee recommendation: Revisions to the Code of Rights and Responsibilities (BD-3)** (Document BG-2024-8-D5)

R-2024-8-7 *That, subject to the approval by the Governance and Ethics Committee, the Board of Governors approve the revisions to the Code of Rights and Responsibilities (BD-3).*

REGULAR

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

There was no other business to bring before the meeting that was not included on the Agenda.

6. President's report (Document BG-2024-8-D6)

As complementary information to his written report, G. Carr's remarks are summarized as follows:

- Dr. Carr began by sharing that three convocation ceremonies had concluded the previous week at Place des Arts, with 1,200 of the 2,000 fall graduates in attendance from all faculties (except for the Faculty of Fine Arts). He thanked the Registrar and the teams from Hospitality Concordia, the Office of the President, University Communication Services and University Facilities for making the ceremonies and the Honorary Doctorate Dinner a huge success.
- He noted that honorary doctorates were awarded to:
 - Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, founder of India's leading biotechnology enterprise, Biocon, and a global thought leader committed to delivering affordable insulin and biologics.
 - John Sicard, a Concordia grad, outgoing CEO of Kinaxis and global leader in supply chain management; and
 - Douglas Sanderson, professor of Aboriginal law at the University of Toronto, co-author of award-winning book, *Valley of the Birdtail*, and proponent of Indigenous reconciliation.
- The John Molson School of Business convocation ceremony marked the last convocation of outgoing Co-Chancellor Jonathan Wener. Co-Chancellor and incoming Chancellor Gina Cody presided over the afternoon and evening ceremonies and has since taken over as the Chancellor. On behalf of the Board, Dr. Carr thanked J. Wener for his service for close to 10 years as Chancellor for the other important roles that he has played at the University since his days as an undergraduate student in the Department of Commerce.
- The Office of Alumni Relations organized an event in London, England - a reading and conversation - with Sarah Bernstein, 2009 graduate of Creative Writing and the 2023 winner of the Scotiabank Giller Prize for Fiction. S. Bernstein was also shortlisted for the Booker Prize for her second novel, *Study for Obedience*.
- Dr. Carr noted that no fewer than 7 graduates have been named as finalists for 2024 Governor General's Literary Awards.

- This past Sunday, the University also honored Concordia graduate and longtime staff member in Recreation and Athletics, Julie Healy, who was inducted into the Concordia Sports Hall of Fame as a builder for all her years in championing women's hockey, not just at the University, but in Québec and nationally at the Olympic level for Canada. The ceremony took place after the home opener of this year's Concordia Stingers women's hockey season, where the 2023 national championship USports banner was also unveiled. Anna Gainey, the local MP for the Loyola district, was in attendance.
- With these and other such events, it was nice to conclude the University's 50th anniversary celebrations. All of the merchandise for the 50th anniversary has already sold out and new orders have been made. There is also a launch planned for the 50th anniversary book about Concordia on November 20, 2024 at 4th SPACE
- The University welcomed about 1,800 unique guests at the September Homecoming, which was a record, and speaks to success of the University's outreach strategy to connect with more and more alumni.
- Dr. Carr reminded Governors of the top 50 Great Concordians series on the University website, noting that this week, Auditor General of Canada Karen Hogan (B Comm 93, Gr Dip 95) was featured.
- Dr. Carr turned back to the discussion that took place at the Board of Governors retreat earlier in the Summer, noting that recruitment and retention remain the lifeblood of universities. The final registration numbers for 2024-25 have been received and unfortunately, Concordia remains the university in the réseau that has experienced the greatest drop in headcount and full-time equivalents (FTEs) for 2024-25. Overall, the drop in all registrations by FTE (new and returning) is 3.1%; the drop in headcount is 3.5%.
- The drop in new registrations by headcount is nearly 10% (877 fewer new students than a year ago, which results in lost revenue for the years ahead). This number is better than the worst-case scenario that was tracked in September of a 4.4% decline in FTEs for total registrations. Regardless, the decline is the steepest that the University has experienced.
- Further, with other government changes to the funding formula in the university sector, the ration of 1:1 cannot be drawn between head count and financial impact, as a whole other set of variables have to be considered.
- The 2024-25 budget had been prepared by running various scenarios. The worst-case scenario used for budget purposes was a projected decline of ~1250 (1241) FTEs collectively of students assembled into units of 5 courses per term. Based on real numbers now received, the FTEs are down by 955 rather than by 1250, because of perhaps greater success at retention of students already registered. However, the financial impact of this unanticipated outcome remains negative.
- The University did better in recruiting students from Québec than anticipated, and, while enrolment numbers for students from the rest of Canada is down, this decline is less than

the projected worst-case scenario. However, the international student numbers have declined significantly, to the point that gains from Québec recruitment cannot compensate.

- Following the calculation of whether students are undergraduate or graduate and in which program, the net revenue effect of the overall registration profile for fall 2024 is ~\$1.8M less income than what had been budgeted. This \$1.8M is a relatively modest amount on a \$650M budget and the University continues to feel confident that, at the end of the second quarter, even with this additional challenge, the University will still be on track to meet our deficit target.
- Since the Board of Governors retreat in August, and the meeting of the Board in September, the federal government has made further announcements about reducing the number of international student study visas and the Government of Québec introduced the *Projet de loi 74* that will limit international students in Québec (more details on the proposed Québec legislation will be presented in Closed Session).
- Further, the geopolitical rift between Canada and India (the country that has, until recently, been the source of the largest cohort of international students in Canada and at Concordia), has gone from bad to worse and, that day, the federal Minister of Immigration announced that the immigration targets would be cut with further cuts anticipated in 2026 and 2027.
- Dr. Carr reiterated his message to the members of the Board and to the University community that the University's recruitment priority for the year ahead must be to stop the enrolment decline and finalize the strategic recruitment and enrolment strategies that will be needed to reverse this tendency in the future.
- This upcoming Saturday, the University will be hosting an Open House for prospective students. The University continues to adapt its message: highlighting that it continues to offer financial support to qualified rest of Canada students to offset the tuition increases and explaining that any positive francization efforts implemented will not be an impediment to graduate. However, despite all these efforts, the University continues to live under the cloud of governmental policies.
- Rest of Canada student registration for Open House is down 20%; and registration from international students from the United States is down 15%. The bright spot remains registrations from Quebec, which are up 13%.
- McGill University has been effective in recruiting Québec students who would otherwise have come to Concordia to compensate for declines in rest of Canada numbers. McGill can afford to offer more grants and scholarships to students from the rest of Canada, while Concordia's capacity for offering bursaries was more limited. However, McGill is not the only competition. The supply of university-bound students from Québec is extremely limited, many francophone universities have become very adept at modifying their admissions practices for Québec students to convert applications into acceptances as rapidly as possible. With early acceptance being a critical factor in recruitment, the

University needs to be vigilant that our processes do not get in the way. Positioning Concordia more effectively with prospective francophone students in Québec's regions is a very critical element of the strategy we need to pursue

- In the same vein, on the previous Friday, the University also took a major step toward putting flesh on the bones of our project to open a thematic campus in Shawinigan focused on research, development and innovation in battery development, storage and recycling. A significant contingent from the University was on hand, including Karim Zhagib, CEO of VoltAge, together with several faculty colleagues.
- François-Philippe Champagne, the local member of parliament and the federal minister for Innovation, Science and Economic Development was on hand and spoke glowingly about the project, pointing out that it is the first new higher education institution in the city in nearly 60 years. Also present were: Marie-Louise Tardif, local MNA from the Coalition Avenir Québec; Michel Angers, Mayor of Shawinigan; Jean-François Léveillé, Director General of CÉGEP du Shawinigan, Nancy Déziel, who heads the CÉGEP's Center for technology transfer in green energy and environment.
- Faye Diamantoudi, Interim Vice President Research, Innovation and Impact signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Research Council of Canada and its President, Mitch Davies, to explore collaborations in battery development and innovation using critical minerals. The announcement creates other opportunities for us to develop pathway programs with CÉGEPs for the Gina Cody School of Engineering and Computer Science.
- The campus will essentially be francophone, creating an opportunity to work with the Department of Continuing Education to develop francization programs in support of students and faculty who need it.
- Dr. Carr now turned to the news about life on campus. As already reported, the University and several businesses in downtown Montreal became targets of vigilante attacks on the night of September 29th as masked vandals mobbed along de Maisonneuve Boulevard and broke all street-level windows in the Hall Building. The police were caught unawares and intercepted the group on Rue de la Montagne at Saint Catherine, where some arrests were made.
- Regarding the events of October 7th, the University decided, in contrast to some other institutions, to keep the University's campuses fully open. Faculty and staff were given the option to deliver courses or work remotely, and it was ensured that students would not be penalized should they prefer not to come to campus.
- While the day was challenging, there were no disturbances inside the University's buildings. The SPVM were out in force along with *La Sûreté du Québec* monitoring demonstrations taking place on sidewalks and along de Maisonneuve Boulevard in front of the Hall Building. The afternoon remained peaceful but was nonetheless disturbing for some members of our community who were unsettled by the actions of the protesters in the streets and/or the large police presence. At the same time, others felt more secure

because of the police presence, which was not on Concordia property, but in the streets and sidewalks of the city. The presence of the police and their numbers of deployment were not due to any decision of the University. The SPVM determines whether, where, when and how it will be present or intervene, and they chose to make a show of force in the downtown core on October 7th.

- On October 7th, TVA and other media outlets were stationed outside the Hall Building for hours in case something happened in the afternoon. That evening at 21:45, Radio Canada did not cover the demonstration that had begun at Places des Arts and went to Westmount, but instead chose to show footage of a peaceful march with the EV Building on Saint Catherine as a backdrop.
- Dr. Carr repeated that, while disagreement is normal in society and at a university, everyone needs to do their utmost to ensure that the climate is respectful and to keep the focus on the wonderful academic and research accomplishments that happen every day at the University.

A Governor asked whether the admission criteria were being reviewed and revised, given the ongoing challenges around recruitment. The Provost confirmed that program reviews happen at the department level and there was no plan to revise the criteria.

On a question about the payment of bursaries to attract new out-of-province undergraduate students, it was explained that the cost is somewhat offset by government grants per FTE, but that the larger goal of maintaining this recruitment incentive is to hold the position that Concordia is welcoming to students from elsewhere in Canada.

7. Audit Committee recommendation: Consolidated audited financial statements for year ended April 30, 2024 (Document BG-2024-8-D7)

The Chair asked P. Di Lillo, as Chair of the Audit Committee, to present this item. P. Di Lillo congratulated the University team and the external auditors KPMG for a timely and efficient audit.

D. Cossette then presented some highlights of the financial statements for the year and the completion of the audit, which are detailed in the attached documentation to the package that was circulated to the Governors.

Upon motion duly moved and seconded, it was unanimously RESOLVED:

R-2024-8-8 That, on recommendation of the Audit Committee, the Board of Governors approve the financial statements for the fiscal year ended on April 30, 2024, as prepared by Concordia, and audited by the external auditors, KPMG.

8. Other business

There was no other business brought before the Open Session.

9. Adjournment

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

K. Singh
Karan Singh
Secretary of the Board of Governors