

McMaster University

SENATE MINUTES

VOL. LXXVII

Wednesday, April 8, 2020 at 3:30 p.m.

Zoom

PRESENT: Dr. David Farrar, Dr. Aaron Schat, Dr. Alison Holloway, Dr. Ameil Joseph, Dr. Anne Niec, Dr. Bhagwati Gupta, Dr. Carlos Filipe, Dr. Chandrima Chakraborty, Dr. Christina Baade, Dr. Dina Brooks, Dr. Doug Welch, Dr. Erik Sorensen, Dr. Hans Boden, Dr. Ishwar Puri, Dr. Janie Astephen-Wilson, Dr. Jeremiah Hurley, Dr. Joseph Sokalski, Dr. Judy Fudge, Dr. Juliet Daniel, Dr. Karen Mossman, Dr. Katherine Cuff, Dr. Kathryn Mattison, Dr. Kim Dej, Dr. Kim Jones, Dr. Laura Parker, Dr. Leonard Waverman, Dr. Lorraine Carter, , Dr. Martin Horn, Dr. Maureen MacDonald, Dr. Megan Brickley, Dr. Nancy Doubleday, Dr. Nicola Nicolici, Dr. Pamela Baxter, Dr. Pamela Swett, Dr. Patrick Bennett, Dr. Peter Miu, Dr. Phil Zylla, Dr. Sherman Cheung, Dr. Susan Searls Giroux, Dr. Thomas Adams, Mr. Gary Collins, Mr. Jim McCaughey, Mr. Roger Couldrey, Mr. Ryan Whitcher, Ms Manisha Pahwa, Mr. Tevin Heath, Ms Anita Acai, Ms Leah Allen, Ms Cassidy Bereskin, Ms Beth Manganelli Staite, Ms Mary Williams, Ms Moira Taylor, Mr. Muneeb Ahmed, Ms Andrea Thyret-Kidd (University Secretary), Ms Michelle Zheng (Associate University Secretary), Ms Alysha Suckert (Governance Coordinator)

OBSERVERS: Ms. Carolyn Brendon, Ms Esme Davies, Ms. Vivian Lewis, Dr Alison Sills, Ms Melissa Pool, Mr. Sean Van Koughnett, Dr. Arig al Shaibah, Dr. Peter Mascher, Dr. Randall Jackson, Ms. Karen Richmond

REGRETS RECEIVED: Dr. Susan Denburg, Dr. Paul O’Byrne, Dr. Robert O’Brien

A. OPEN SESSION

OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Farrar welcomed members to the meeting.

Dr. Farrar noted that at the last Senate meeting on March 11, 2020, Senators were informed of the University’s contingency planning, just two days before the decision had to be made to end in-person classes and move to a virtual classroom environment for the rest of the term. Dr. Farrar thanked everyone; faculty, students, staff and alumni for their support and willingness to adjust during this difficult period. The University has been closed apart from essential research and essential services. There are still 470 students living in residence who were unable to leave. The Communications team has been doing a great job of keeping the community updated on the developments and everyone is encouraged to keep visiting the COVID-19 website which is being regularly updated and enhanced. Dr. Farrar noted that Senators have been provided with written

reports from different departments explaining the key impacts and responses. One of the saddest decisions that has been made was the cancelling of convocation as it will not be possible to hold in-person convocation ceremonies this Spring. Dr. Farrar acknowledge the work of the Registrar's office in working with the Deans and others to plan a virtual celebration, as well as to provide an opportunity for students to engage in an in-person ceremony in the Fall.

The University's senior leadership and Government Relations team are working closely with COU, Univcan and the U15, as well as with the Ministry directly to ensure that both the federal and provincial governments are aware of the impacts of COVID-19 on students, staff, faculty, our research, and on the institutions as a whole. Dr. Farrar noted that at this stage it is impossible to predict when this will end and when normality will return. The senior leadership is engaged in planning for a range of scenarios and contingencies, but the outcome will depend upon how long physical distancing measures remain in place and when we are able to return to campus.

Dr. Farrar explained that SMA3 has been deferred and SMA2 will continue for the time being.

Dr. Farrar thanked all of the Senators for their support and engagement and noted that we will come out of this strongly as a community.

1 APPROVAL OF AGENDA – OPEN SESSION

Dr. Farrar confirmed that no requests had been received to move any items from the Consent to the Regular agenda of the Open Session.

It was duly moved and seconded,

that Senate approve the Open Session agenda for the meeting of April 8, 2020 and that items 2 and 3 be approved or received by Consent.

The motion was **carried**.

CONSENT

2 MINUTES of the Meeting of March 11, 2020 – Open Session

Motion:

that the minutes of the Open Session portion of the meeting held on March 11, 2020 be approved as circulated.

Approved by Consent.

3 REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

a. Winter Term 2020 Grade Procedure for Undergraduate Students Policy

This item was included for information.

REGULAR**4 BUSINESS ARISING**

There was no business arising.

5 ENQUIRIES

There were no enquiries.

6 COMMUNICATIONS**a. COVID-19 Update from Acting Vice-Provost, Faculty**

Dr. Kim Dej, Acting Vice-Provost, Faculty provided an update.

Dr. Dej summarized the decisions made, the individuals consulted, the communications and thanked everyone involved. Dr. Dej noted that things are happening quickly and that they made the decision to suspend in person classes and asked instructors to move teaching online. Instructors made plans for changing the delivery and evaluation of their courses to the benefit of the students. Instructors were asked to communicate with one another with regard to how decisions would impact other courses and the program leads and associate dean offices reviewed the changes. On March 15, undergraduate students in placements and clinical placements were suspended and research placements were ended promptly. The decision was also made to suspend in person exams. Dr. Dej noted that the MacPherson Institute has been stellar in providing information.

Student evaluations of teaching were suspended, and a major change was made to the grading policy to allow students the option to choose a pass grade which is not calculated into the GPA. If failing, a student could change the grade to \no credit. Instructors are being encouraged to communicate with students, get feedback, and prepare for exams. A decision was made to move all spring/summer courses to online teaching as well.

A member raised concerns with accessibility and internet connections noting that many students go to campus to use the internet. Dr. Dej noted that the library is working with IT to provide some mobile access. A group is looking at access and a survey was distributed which to gather some information on internet use. Mr. van Koughnett noted that if the barrier was financial, then the emergency funding can be accessed. Dr. Farrer noted that the concern is being looked at carefully and that there is a group working on access for students on campus.

A member asked a question regarding tenure clocks, noting that other universities have made announcements about delaying tenure clocks. Dr. Searls Giroux explained

that it has been an ongoing discussion and that there is a plan to delay the tenure clock. Work is being done to refine the policy language.

b. COVID-19 Update from Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

Dr. Doug Welch, Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies provided an update.

Dr. Welch thanked the Associate Deans who have done a huge amount of work. The PhD defences went online instantly and have been a huge success with positive feedback. Dr. Welch thanked SGS staff for being good at preparing guidance on how to best use the online tools.

Communications were sent to graduate instructors elaborating what the process of approving what an on-line course looks like and the curriculum. They are having to re-examine what can and cannot be done. Decisions are being made quickly and efficiently, and the nature of what was changed will be assembled and brought to Graduate Council. The deadline for PhD Comprehensive Exams is being extended to 36 months. Dr. Welch noted that a report from Graduate Council today is being brought forward to approve a credit/no credit policy similar to the Undergraduate Council proposal.

A question was asked regarding booked travel that was to be partially covered by internal funds and how students have been left to cover the expenses on their own. Dr. Welch explained that the emergency fund will deal with such expenses. There are two forms available to students. For cancelled trips where a student was going to be supported by a supervisor, the student should have already been reimbursed. If it is a self funded trip, students can submit receipts, and it will be reimbursed from the emergency fund. The member noted that some supervisors have indicated that they do not think that travel should be reimbursed. Mr. Van Koughnett explained that there is information online and those expenses are covered. They will try to get better information out to supervisors.

A member noted that international students in graduate facilities face different barriers in accessing financial aid and asked what additional things are being done or planned to reach their needs. Dr. Welch explained that they are in meetings with GSA IGSA and discussing various forms of needs. For students arriving from affected countries, they needed to self isolate. Housing provided accommodation and meal plans which can be billed against their student account. Dr. Welch noted that international graduate students qualify for the emergency fund. Dr. MacDonald added that tri-council funds can be used.

A member asked a question regarding graduate school admissions and the option to delay acceptance and other options. Dr. Welch explained that students that have accepted and wish to defer are allowed to defer. Everyone in Ontario and most of the country, are allowing credit and no credit grades for graduate schools. Dr. Welch

noted that they are adopting the concept that such credits should not impede being accepted at an institution.

c. COVID-19 Update from Associate Vice-President (Students and Learning) and Dean of Students

Mr. Sean Van Koughnett, Associate Vice-President (Students and Learning) and Dean of Students, provided an update.

Mr. Van Koughnett informed members that travel abroad for the fall term is still to be determined. A decision will be made over the next month. There are also many unknowns with enrollment planning, such as mode of study, economical situations, and how much the government will help with financial aid.

A member suggested ensuring there is consistent messaging around travel expenses.

A member asked a question regarding library references that are only available in book format and that are required for final papers or exams. Ms Vivian Lewis explained that they are working on this concern. They are going above what is happening in other research libraries and have someone coming in and doing scans of journals that are only available on shelves. Work is also being done with vendors to encourage them to open content and allow access into books. In addition, they are working with Legal Services to help with copyright and to provide digital copies of anything offered on the shelves.

d. COVID-19 Update from Acting Vice-President, Research

Dr. Karen Mossman, Acting Vice-President, Research provided an update.

Dr. Mossman explained that the decision was made to shut down all research except for essential research. Essential research was defined as research in response to the COVID pandemic or clinical trials with patients, research that would be unethical to stop, or any animal studies in progress. Researchers had to fill out a request to continue. Work is also continuing with the nuclear reactor. There are around 20 active research projects happening that have been approved. Dr. Mossman noted that there was an article by the CBC yesterday mentioning the work by Engineering and Health Sciences on masks. McMaster is being known as one of the go to places which is a testament to the phenomenal staff. McMaster is a part of canCOVID which is an expert community of Canadian COVID-19 researchers, clinical collaborators, and healthcare stakeholders from across the country. Dr. Mossman noted that the main COVID website and the McMaster research website will be updated to keep people up to date with opportunities and funding on projects for students.

e. Equity and Inclusion Office Annual Report

Dr. Arig al Shaibah presented the report. Ms Pilar Michaud, Ms Maggie Pooran, Ms Allison Drew-Hassling and Ms Robin Edwards were in attendance to answer questions. Dr. al Shaibah reminded members that the report is based on last years academic cycle. This is the second year that data has been collected using a similar methodology and year over year data has been provided where it is available. Dr. al Shaibah explained that trends will begin to show. There was one error in the report, the table that describes types of sexual violence had a typing error. The stalking section should be a zero. If members have any questions they can contact the Equity and Inclusion Office.

7 REPORT FROM UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL

Dr. Kim Dej, Acting Vice-Provost, Faculty, presented the report from Undergraduate Council.

Dr. Dej explained that there is one item for information. At its March 27, 2020 meeting, the Undergraduate Council approved, for recommendation to the Senate Executive Committee, the *Winter Term 2020 Grade Procedure for Undergraduate Students*. Students will have the option of pass or no credit for their courses.

8 REPORT FROM GRADUATE COUNCIL

Dr. Doug Welch, Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, presented the report from Graduate Council.

Dr. Welch explained that there is one item for approval.

1. Winter Term 2020 Grading

It was duly moved and seconded,

that Senate approve the Winter Term 2020 Grade Procedure for Graduate Students policy effective April 8, 2020.

A member raised concerns of having a pass/fail policy that mimics the Undergraduate Policy. At the Undergraduate level, the term is a wash and the students still have seven terms of data. At the graduate level, the entire term or a third are going to be washed with a pass/fail policy which is detrimental to display skills. The member suggested allowing students another three months to complete their work to allow McMaster to retain the level of rigour at the graduate level and allow students the opportunity to display their skills. Dr. Welch explained that students are advised to speak with their supervisor before adopting the strategy. For some graduate courses there is no issue of a pass/fail grade and for students that want to complete their degree, a pass is sufficient. Students can withdraw without penalty and redo courses. Dr. Welch noted that the pass/fail option has been embraced by all graduate programs across the country, and not allowing this option would disadvantage some students.

The motion was **carried**.
(1 opposed, 3 abstentions)

The remainder of items were for information.

9 REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Dr. Susan Searls Giroux, Chair of the University Planning Committee, presented the report.

At its meeting on March 18, 2020, the University Planning Committee approved the establishment of the Canadian Centre for Electron Microscopy (CCEM) and is now recommending it to Senate for approval.

1. Proposal to Establish the Canadian Centre for Electron Microscopy (CCEM)

It was duly moved and seconded,

that Senate approve the establishment of the Canadian Centre for Electron Microscopy (CCEM).

The motion was **carried**.

10 REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Alison Holloway, Chair of the Committee on Appointments, presented the report from the Committee on Appointments.

Ms Wanda McKenna and Ms Melanie Garaffa joined the meeting.

Dr. Holloway explained that on March 23, 2020, the Committee on Appointments approved three items and now recommends them to Senate for approval.

1. TOR – Assistant Dean, Continuing Health Sciences Education Program (CHSE)

It was duly moved and seconded,

that Senate approve the retitling of the position Director, Continuing Health Sciences Education (CHSE) Program to Assistant Dean, Continuing Health Sciences Education (CHSE) Program, as circulated.

The motion was **carried**.

2. TOR – Associate Dean, Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

It was duly moved and seconded,

that Senate approve the title change of Associate Dean, Continuing Health Sciences Education (CHSE) Program to Associate Dean, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), as circulated.

The motion was **carried**.

3. SPS A1 Revisions

It was duly moved and seconded,

that Senate approve the amendments to the Policy SPS A1 – Recruitment and Selection of Faculty Members, as circulated, effective July 1, 2020.

The motion was **carried**.

11 REPORT FROM THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Dr. Pamela Swett, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, presented the report.

Dr. Swett explained that the Faculty of Humanities is proposing an amendment to the Dean's Advisory Council, the Dean's Advisory Committee on Research, the Academic Planning Committee and Elections.

It was duly moved and seconded,

that Senate approve, in principle, the amendments to the Faculty of Humanities By-Laws and refer the amendments to the By-Laws Committee for review.

The motion was **carried**.

12 OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business for the open session.