

McMaster University

SENATE MINUTES

VOL. LXXXVIII

Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 3:30 p.m.

Zoom

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**PRESENT:** Dr. David Farrar, Dr. Anna Danielova, Dr. Carlos Filipe, Dr. Dina Brooks, Dr. Doug Welch, Dr. Graham Scott, Dr. Jeremiah Hurley, Dr. Judy Fudge, Dr. Juliet Daniel, Dr. Karen Mossman, Dr. Katherine Cuff, Dr. Kathryn Mattison, Dr. Kim Dej, Dr. Kim Jones, Dr. Leonard Waverman, Dr. Lia Bronsard, Dr. Lorraine Carter, Dr. Maikel Rheinstadter, Dr. Martin Horn, Dr. Matthew Miller, Dr. Maureen MacDonald, Dr. Megan Brickley, Dr. Melinda Gough, Dr. Nicola Nicolici, Dr. Pamela Swett, Dr. Patrick Bennett, Dr. Peter Miu, Dr. Peter Graefe, Dr. Sherman Cheung, Dr. Susan Tighe, Dr. Todd Hoare, Mr. Dalue Tang, Mr. Gary Collins, Mr. Jim McCaughey, Mr. Roger Couldrey, Mr. Muneeb Ahmed, Mr. Ryan Whitcher, Ms Alyaa Abdelhalim, Ms Anita Acai, Ms Cassidy Bereskin, Ms Haleigh Wallace, Ms Leah Allan, Ms Nicole Anozie, Ms Beth Manganelli Staite, Ms Mary Williams, Ms Bahar Amani, Ms Andrea Thyret-Kidd (University Secretary), Ms Michelle Zheng (Associate University Secretary), Ms Alysha Sless (Governance Coordinator)

**OBSERVERS:** Dr. Arig al Shaibah, Ms Carolyn Brendon, Ms Esme Davies, Dr. Elkafi Hassini, Mr. Giancarlo Da-Ré, Ms Jean Wilson, Ms Melissa Pool, Dr. Peter Mascher, Mr. Sean Van Koughnett, Dr. Susan Denburg, Ms Vivian Lewis, Ms Linda Coslovi

**REGRETS RECEIVED:** Dr. Paul O’Byrne, Dr. Ishwar Puri, Dr. Jeff Weitz, Dr. Pamela Baxter

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**A. OPEN SESSION**

**OPENING REMARKS**

Dr. Farrar welcomed members to the meeting.

Dr. Farrar informed members that the responses to the Shape the Future social media campaign were recently shared. Dr. Farrar noted his appreciation for the time and effort that so many members of the community gave to the campaign. The results provided a clear picture of the areas and issues that members of our community view as critically important to McMaster, and our local and global communities over the coming years. Dr. Farrar explained that overall, there was a strong desire and commitment from the community to make a difference, to address critically important global issues such as climate change, racism, inequity, healthcare provision, poverty, and the impact of aging, to play a role in solving the big issues facing our world and make use of the transformative power of knowledge to create a fairer, more equitable future. This sense of purpose is local as well as global. There was feedback on the important role for McMaster within Hamilton and the surrounding communities, including partnering with our

local Indigenous communities. This builds on our ongoing community engagement activities, and encompasses expanded entrepreneurial activities within the local community, increased technology and business-focused partnerships, employment opportunities, as well as enhanced pathways for access to education.

Dr. Farrar noted that our students are a critical part of expanding the University's impact. Ensuring that they are able to develop the skills needed to thrive in our rapidly changing world remains a key priority, and ties in well to the ongoing work to develop our Teaching and Learning Strategy. Respondents highlighted the need for students to be flexible, adaptable and resilient, and equipped with the skills needed to analyze and solve complex problems. A focus on equity and inclusivity was also threaded throughout the conversations and responses and corresponds well to our EDI Strategy and Action Plan.

Respondents also had strong support for McMaster's current Positioning Statement: "Advancing Human and Societal Health and Well-Being". The key elements of the University's vision will include a focus on the positive impact of scholarship and research; the importance of inclusion and building a clear sense of community; and ensuring we are well-positioned to tackle the major local and global issues we face. The vision statement will be shared with the McMaster community early in 2021.

Dr. Farrar reminded Senators of the range of initiatives being established in collaboration with the African-Caribbean Faculty Association of McMaster (ACFAM), including a program of strategic, targeted hiring. With the support of the Provost's Office and all the Faculty Deans, the University has been able to announce a cohort hiring initiative that will see the appointment of up to 12 emerging and established academics and scholars who will contribute to the advancement of Black academic excellence across all six Faculties. This represents an important step forward and forms part of the University's Strategic Equity and Excellence Recruitment and Retention (STEERR) program, which is a key priority within McMaster's EDI Strategy and Action Plan. Dr. Farrar explained that alongside this, we remain focused on Indigenous education and research and continue to support the University's Indigenous Education Council as they develop strategies to guide Indigenous learning and scholarship at McMaster.

Dr. Farrar addressed the Athletics and Recreation Review. At the last meeting, Senators were informed that regular updates would be provided to the community as the action plan is implemented. A location for the Black Student Services Office has now been identified and will be announced shortly and Student Affairs is in the final stages of interviewing for the role of Senior Advisor, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism. Once the Senior Advisor is hired, that individual will spearhead many of the other follow up actions in time for the start of the 2021/22 academic year. The Equity and Inclusion Office has engaged members of the Athletics and Recreation staff and coaches in multiple sessions related to EDI education and training and the EIO has also facilitated discussions with Black student-athletes following the release of the report. Dr. Farrar noted that Mr. Sean Van Koughnett and Dr. Arig al Shaibah continue to have conversations with both ACFAM and the PACBIC R3 (race and racism) group about the review to get their feedback.

The Virtual Learning Task Force report recommendations have been made available and it includes 21 recommendations grouped in short, medium and long-term timelines, designed to offer support to both students and instructors, help alleviate stress heading into the virtual winter term, and look ahead to possible solutions for the 2021-22 academic year. Dr. Farrar thanked all the members of the Task Force and particularly the Co-Chairs, Deans Puri and Hurley, as well as all those who completed surveys and contributed to the discussion.

## **1 APPROVAL OF AGENDA – OPEN SESSION**

Dr. Farrar confirmed that no requests had been received to move 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 December 9, 2020 and that item 2 be approved by Consent.**

The motion was **carried**.

## **CONSENT**

### **2 MINUTES of the Meeting of November 11, 2020 – Open Session**

Motion:

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

**Approved** by Consent.

## **REGULAR**

### **3 BUSINESS ARISING**

There was no business arising.

### **4 ENQUIRIES**

There were no enquiries.

### **5 COMMUNICATIONS**

#### **a. Enrolment Figures**

Dr. Farrar explained that each December, Senate receives a report on enrolment as of November 1.

Mr. Sean Van Koughnett, AVP and Dean of Students, presented the undergraduate enrolment figures. Mr. Van Koughnett explained that the increase of 7.5% in enrolment is reflective of intakes over four or five years. The target for enrolment was exceeded by almost 1,000 full time students as it was anticipated that a number of students would drop off due to uncertain financial futures, travel restrictions and online learning. Mr. Van Koughnett noted that other highly ranked universities also overshot their targets and are in the same situation.

Dr. Doug Welch, Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Students, presented the graduate enrolment figures. Dr. Welch explained that enrolment numbers are quite normal with a 5% increase in Ph.D. enrolment and a 6% decrease in Master students. Students likely deferred for a term or year depending on their program so that they can attend in person. The bulk of deferrals were international students due to the Federal Government guidelines not being made available until November. Dr. Welch noted that the overall enrolment for graduate students is down 2%.

**b. Equity and Inclusion Office Annual Report**

Dr. Arig al Shaibah, Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion, presented the report. Ms Pilar Michaud, Director, Human Rights and Dispute Resolution was in attendance to answer questions. Dr. al Shaibah explained that the Equity and Inclusion Office has been busy with an increase in the complexity of issues coming forward. There has been an increase in consultations which is viewed as positive since the office is trying to expand visibility and profile. There has also been an increase in alternative dispute resolutions with individuals electing to resolve issues where appropriate. Dr. al Shaibah noted that the report does not include the great progress on the EDI strategy.

**c. Virtual Learning Task Force**

Dr. Susan Tighe, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) provided an overview of the report. The mandate of the taskforce was to collect feedback from students and faculty and to inform recommendations to improve the experience for winter 2021. The feedback was also incorporated into the fall term where appropriate. Dr. Tighe acknowledged Deans Hurley and Puri for co-chairing the group.

The ad hoc group was struck in August to look at planning. Over 3,000 students and faculty participated in the survey and a report was submitted and approved in November 2020. The survey asked for feedback on experiences to gather information. Survey respondents noted that the connections are the most important aspect. Those connections contribute to positive teaching and learning experiences. There were feelings of being overwhelmed by the number of platforms being offered and concerns and struggles with knowing where to go for support with the platforms.

Students expressed value for the courses that were designed with flexibility and varied options for engagements. Students also expressed frustration and confusion

around the different platforms. There were feelings of burnout, depression and anxiety and an overwhelmed feeling related to the amount of work and number of assignments. Instructors struggled with how to determine which platform was most appropriate for their course. Many were anxious about research productivity and tenure and promotion. Faculty expressed exhaustion and frustrations about the amount of work to develop quality programs. Other feedback received included the need for better coordination between campus support units and accommodation for students in virtual and online courses.

Short term recommendations included reducing work loads for instructors and students, fostering connections, course organizations (assessments, orientation, scheduling and time management), students access to learning, community engaged and experiential learning, and mental health and wellbeing. Medium term recommendations included considerations for fall 2021 and winter 2022 if COVID-19 restrictions continue, lobbying with the U15 regarding the impact of changes this year, resources for remote learning, in-person and blended experiential learning and community engagement. There is a need to invest in ways we can deliver this education and provide supports for instructors, faculty and students. The long term recommendations included strategic planning, exploring new technologies and student experience. There is an opportunity to try a number of new things that would not have been explored in the past.

Recommendations that were implemented include a winter class delay, teaching and learning recommendations for winter and addressing mental health and well-being. Work is being done with a subcommittee group, a task force was created, and new measures have been implemented. Dr. Tighe thanked Dean Hurley and Puri for leading the group and all those that participated.

A member noted that there is a petition circulating and students are requesting a longer reading week. Dr. Tighe explained that within the Faculty of Health Sciences, Science and a few other areas with clinical teaching, a number of commitments had been made and therefore the start of term could not be delayed for those individuals. When looking at adding in a second reading week, it was clear that it would be difficult to schedule. The thought was that it would be a better solution to give the time at the beginning of the term in order to accommodate the recommendations from the survey. Dr. Tighe noted that trying to coordinate another week in the term would have been extremely difficult.

A member expressed their concern with the survey deadline being before midterm exams. The member asked if there is a plan to have another survey now that we are closer to the end of the term. The survey will be a better reflection of the whole experience of the semester. Dr. Tighe noted that this is a good point and that the issue did come up during discussions. The survey was completed to gain an initial feedback and there is a plan to do another survey. Dr. Dej added that in terms of timing, the instructors and students were struggling at that time and the survey was done to gain relevant pandemic feedback. The group wanted to be able to respond and have

sufficient time to put forward the recommendations. Dr. Dej noted that it would be great to have another survey now. Antidotally students are feeling a little better, it took time to get in stride and know where to find the platforms. There is always exam anxiety and they wanted to make sure the survey was capturing learning experience as opposed to testing experience. The survey took a great deal of effort in analysis and there were nine or ten individuals spending all of their time completing the analysis. The faculty specific information is still available to be analyzed. There is the opportunity to gain more from the data collected before gathering more data.

A member asked if this semester's course evaluations will be used when considering how to improve online courses for the winter 2021 semester. Dr. Tighe noted that course evaluations are confidential. In the new year they are planning on having a teaching and learning town hall to solicit some feedback. This presents an opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other. The information shared can be used to think about hybrid learning. Dr. Tighe explained that there is a need to invest in our spaces and make them safe. A lot of that work will need to start to happen in the next two to three months.

A member noted further concern in terms of planning. The member noted that they have not been able to cover all their material and that they are about two to three weeks short. Dr. Tighe explained that they have already started to have some discussions to understand the gap and the supports needed to ensure students have learned the right curriculum. There is a need to ensure that students coming out of high school are ready and prepared for moving into level 1. Intersession can be an opportunity to provide some additional curriculum for students. Dr. Dej added that we have to depend internally on departments to acknowledge what was not covered or add a piece to inform students that they need to know certain material to move successfully into level 2. Some of that will have to be within programs or departments. For first year students moving into second year, there are some skills they will not have picked up on because of the online environment. Grade 12 learning is currently very different and content has been decreased so incoming students will be differently prepared for first year. Dr. Dej noted they are looking into expanding some resources for incoming students in the spring and summer to give credits or microcredentials in order to provide students with the opportunity to prepare themselves for first year.

## **6 REPORT FROM UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL**

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

### **1. Establishment of New Certificate of Completion Program**

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve the establishment of the Certificate of Completion in Advanced Manufacturing, as set out in the attached.**

The motion was **carried**.

2. Establishment of New Certificate and Diploma Programs

Dr. Dej explained that the Certificate of Professional Learning in Intercultural Competency is being withdrawn. They want to review and collaborate with more individuals before bringing the certificate forward.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve the establishment of the Certificate Programs as set out in the attached.**

The motion was **carried**.

3. Closure of Certificate and Diploma Programs

Dr. Dej explained that the closure is a result of enrolment and a change in landscape.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve the closure of the Certificate in Advanced Accounting and Finance and the closure of the Diploma in Advanced Accounting and Finance, effective December 2020, as set out in the attached.**

The motion was **carried**.

4. Curriculum Revisions for Inclusion in the 2021-2022 Undergraduate Calendar

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve the curriculum revisions for inclusion in the 2021-2022 Undergraduate Calendar, as set out in the attached.**

The motion was **carried**.

5. Bachelor of Health Sciences (Honors) BHSc Program – Black Student Admissions Pilot

Dr. Stacey Ritz, Assistant Dean, Education Services, spoke to the item. Dr. Ritz explained that they have been looking at the question of equitable admissions. The Bachelor of Health Sciences program was proposed for the pilot as the admissions process is simpler than others and is conducive to implementing a pilot project

quickly. The process mirrors the existing process for Indigenous applicants. The proposal has no changes to the academic requirements or admission requirements. Applicants who make use of the process will have their application scored by a panel of Black faculty and students. The review will be used as a supplemental package.

A member asked if this is being used for Black applicants applying to medical school. Dr. Ritz explained that the MD program is working on a comparable process however it is a more complicated process for admissions. The current pilot process and experience will be forwarded on and discussed with other programs. The process hinges on a supplementary aspect and does not work for GPA only requirements.

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve the Equitable Admissions for Black Applicants Pilot for the Bachelor of Health Sciences (Honours) program, as set out in the attached.**

The motion was **carried**.

6. Revisions to the University Aid and Awards Policy

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve revisions to the University Aid and Awards Policy, as set out in the attached.**

The motion was **carried**.

7. Revisions to the Policy on Academic Program Review and Development

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve revisions to the Policy on Academic Program Review and Development, as set out in the attached.**

The motion was **carried**.

The remainder of items were for information.

Dr. Dej noted that a great deal of work went into curriculum and thanked everyone.

**7 REPORT FROM GRADUATE COUNCIL**

Dr. Doug Welch, Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Students, presented the report.

It was duly moved and seconded,



**that Senate approve the establishment of the Work Integrated Learning Stream as set out in the attached.**

The motion was **carried**.

The remainder of items were for information.

## **8 REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON STUDENT AFFAIRS**

This report was included for information.

## **9 REPORT FORM THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS**

Dr. Katherine Cuff, Chair of the Committee on Appointments, presented the report from the Committee on Appointments.

At its meeting on November 16, 2020, the Committee on Appointments approved the following recommendation and now recommends it to Senate:

### **1. University Scholar Policy Revisions**

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate approve the revised University Scholar Policy, as circulated.**

A member noted EDI was not stated in the policy and left a lot of confusion. The member suggested that the nominee submit a statement regarding their involvement or contributions to EDI so that it is explicit. The member suggested taking the terminology from the Tri-Council policy.

It was suggested to approve the policy as it and add the suggested language to the policy next year to allow the current policy changes to move forward this year.

The motion was **carried**.

## **10 REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE ON BY-LAWS**

Dr. Peter Miu, Chair of the Committee on By-Laws presented the report.

Senate accepted Notice of Motion for the amendments to the Senate By-Laws at its meeting on November 11, 2020.

### **1. Terms of Reference – Senate Committee on Appointments**

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate, on the recommendation of the Committee on By-Laws, approve the proposed revisions to the Terms of Reference for the Senate Committee on Appointments, as presented.**

The motion was **carried**.

2. University Fees Committee Membership

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate, on the recommendation of the Committee on By-Laws, approve the proposed changes to the University Fees Committee, as presented.**

The motion was **carried**.

3. Proposed By-Law Changes

It was duly moved and seconded,

**that Senate, on the recommendation of the Committee on By-Laws, approve the proposed revisions to the Senate By-Laws, as amended.**

The motion was **carried**.

**11 OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.