

McMaster University

SENATE MINUTES

VOL. LXXVVIV

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

Zoom

PRESENT: Dr. David Farrar, Dr. Anna Danielova, Dr. Carlos Filipe, Dr. Chandrima Chakraborty, Dr. Christina Baade, Dr. Dina Brooks, Dr. Doug Welch, Dr. Graham Scott, Dr. Ishwar Puri, Dr. James Gillet, Dr. Janie Astephen-Wilson, Dr. Jeff Weitz, 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. Lia Bronsard, Dr. Lorraine Carter, Dr. Maikel Rheinstadter, Dr. Martin Horn, Dr. Matthew Miller, Dr. Maureen MacDonald, Dr. Melinda Gough, Dr. Nicola Nicolici, Dr. Nikolai Penner, Dr. Pamela Baxter, Dr. Pamela Swett, Dr. Patrick Bennett, Dr. Sherman Cheung, Dr. Susan Tighe, Dr. Todd Hoare, Mr. Dalue Tang, Mr. Gary Collins, Mr. Jim McCaughey, Mr. Muneeb Ahmed, Mr. Roger Couldrey, Mr. Sahand Sepehrvand, Ms Alyaa Abdelhalim, Ms Anita Acai, Ms Beth Manganelli Staite, Ms Leah Allan, Ms Mary Williams, Ms Cassidy Bereskin, Ms Haleigh Wallace, Ms Manisha Pahwa, Ms Moira Taylor, Ms Andrea Thyret-Kidd (University Secretary), Ms Michelle Zheng (Associate University Secretary), Ms Alysha Sless (Governance Coordinator)

OBSERVERS: Dr. Alison Sills, Ms Andrea Farquhar, Ms. Carolyn Brendon, Ms Esme Davies, Mr. Giancarlo Da-Ré, Dr. Jean Wilson, Dr. Peter Mascher, Dr. Randall Jackson, Mr. Sean Van Koughnett, Dr. Susan Denburg

REGRETS RECEIVED: Dr. Jeremiah Hurley

A. OPEN SESSION

OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Farrar welcomed members to the meeting and advised that there were a number of new Senators, who will be individually introduced in September when the formal meeting cycle starts. Dr. Farrar welcomed the new Provost, Dr. Susan Tighe.

Dr. Farrar explained that at the last meeting he spoke about the prevalence of anti-Black racism in our society and acknowledged the deep pain, grief, and harm that members of our communities, particularly Black communities, are experiencing. Dr. Farrar had noted that words are not enough and that we need to act, both individually and collectively to address these issues and make our community, and our University, more equitable and inclusive places. The University has moved to announce a number of concrete actions and plans, including a commitment to the strategic, accelerated hiring of a complement of Black faculty members with disciplinary and interdisciplinary strengths, who will advance institutional and Faculty research priorities and

contribute to African and African Diaspora Studies; establishing an Employee Resource Group to support community-building, and facilitate the advancement of career and leadership development of racialized staff; and building additional capacity in the Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO), including the hiring of an Anti-Black Racism Education Coordinator to deliver anti-Black, anti-oppression education and training opportunities. Dr. Farrar explained that these initiatives are just the beginning and go alongside all the work already underway as we mobilize and accelerate McMaster's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and 2019-2022 Action Plan and advance our employment equity and hiring practices. In addition, Student Affairs has continued its focus on supporting unrepresented groups through its Access Strategy, dedicated anti-oppression and allyship training for Student Wellness Centre Counsellors and running a weekly support group for racialized students. In response to the serious concerns recently raised about racism within Athletics and Recreation, the University has also commissioned an externally led review of the Black student-athlete experience at McMaster that is examining the culture within Marauder Athletics. Together, these efforts will identify and recommend actions to strengthen a culture of respect, equity and inclusion. Dr. Farrar noted his engagement in discussions with the leadership of PACBIC and the African-Caribbean Faculty Association (ACFAM) to consider other possible initiatives and areas of focus to support Black and racialized members of our community. The Indigenous Education Council is also leading the development of a dedicated Indigenous research and education strategy. Dr. Farrar noted that there is much more work to do across the University and community and that he is committed to advancing this work and enabling meaningful change. This is a priority for Dr. Farrar, the new Provost, Dr. Susan Tighe, and the entire senior team. Dr. Farrar encouraged all Senators and members of the community to review the EDI Strategy and Action Plan and consider the ways that we can challenge our own approaches and actions in eliminating systemic racism.

Dr. Farrar wished everyone a good and productive summer.

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 July 8, 2020 and that item 2 be approved by Consent.

The motion was **carried**.

CONSENT

2 MINUTES of the Meeting of June 3, 2020 – Open Session

Motion:

that the minutes of the Open Session portion of the meeting held on June 3, 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. COVID-19 Update from Acting Vice-Provost, Faculty

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

Dr. Dej explained that a number of individuals are meeting on a weekly basis regarding undergraduate academic planning and thanked everyone involved. Dr. Dej thanked Ms Linda Colsovi for coordinating the signups for spaces and working with facilities to make spaces on campus available. Spaces have been made available over the summer for instructors to record lessons and are private offices and classrooms with 360 Echo. Dr. Dej explained that there is a lot involved in identifying what is required on campus to facilitate an academic return to campus. There are protocols for moving in and out of spaces and ensuring physical distancing for safety.

Dr. Dej noted that valuable feedback has been received from students and faculty regarding online proctoring tools. Various systems are being piloted and reviewed with consideration being given to security, privacy and accessibility. Dr. Dej noted that the McPherson Institute has been working hard. A bi-weekly panel series focused on teaching remotely has been started which has been successful with 150 individuals attending the first panel. Dr. Dej thanked everyone for participating and encouraged members to attend the focus groups.

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 explained that recruitment at the graduate level is still up quite substantially compared to the same time last year, with Masters being up 14% and Ph.D. being up 22%.

Last month discussions occurred with the VPR Office regarding lab training. It was determined that lab training will follow under Phase 2 return to on-campus research.

Dr. Welch noted that travel restrictions remain in place which places a concern on incoming international students. Active discussions are occurring with the Federal government. Students are concerned about their ability to arrive, and should they arrive, whether they will be required to self isolate. Dr. Welch explained that a different approach has been adopted for international students with support in their offer letters, in the form of TA work and scholarships, that are unable to attend the university. A communication was distributed to the supported students this morning outlining the plan.

A member asked why international recruitment is up, but domestic recruitment has not increased. Dr. Welch explained that the zero increase was with Masters and there is good demand every year. The member noted that in their department, there was a three-week delay for when they wanted to make an offer and when they were able to make the offer and that it took longer for students to get offer letters from McMaster compared to other Universities.

A member noted that President Trump is wanting to get all universities to open physically and threatened to withhold federal funding. The member noted it could be a possibility to gain more recruitment. Dr. Welch explained that registration is not closed and that if offices would like to open application portals for September, the School of Graduate Studies can work with that.

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 explained that Student Affairs and Housing are working through processes and will be making some exceptions for students with unsafe home environments, who are more than a time zone away and who are taking classes on campus. They are also motivating landlords to develop lease terms that are more flexible for students and provide exit clauses.

Mr. Van Koughnett noted that enrollment is up 20% over last year for the spring, and course registration is up 43% for the fall term. The Archway program is underway, and mentors have been hired. All incoming students have been filling out a series of questions to assist with assigning cohorts. So far, 5,000 students have participated. Mr. Van Koughnett explained that they are in the process of conducting an external review of black student athletes' experiences.

A member asked if the diversity is known of the 124 students that have been hired as ambassadors. Mr. Van Koughnett explained that he does not have that information but will request a copy. The ambassadors are drawn from the pool of students that

were welcome week leaders. The member noted the importance of ensuring there is diversity. Mr. Van Koughnett noted that residence life is cognitive of diversity.

A member asked if there is enough space for the increase of students. Dr. Dej explained that they did not anticipate this many students and that for winter 2020 they are still looking at blended and online courses. There will be discussions of what the university will look like over the years.

A member asked if as the number of students increases, if there are plans to increase professors. Dr. Farrar explained at this point we are unable to determine who will show up in September.

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

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

Dr. Mossman explained that they are working on the phased increase of on campus research. Phase 2 involves more students coming on board, especially those new to the University and that require training. Dr. Mossman noted her appreciation of everyone involved in Phase 1 which has been going well and was a very smooth process.

Dr. Mossman noted that 163 applications were received for the McMaster COVID-19 Research Fund Competition and there were 35 successful projects awarded. Dr. Mossman thanked the research community and noted there were 39 faculty members who adjudicated the proposals.

Work is being done with the Associate Deans of Research and the hospital partners to meet the demands of the Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund program. They are working through how to allocate the funds through McMaster to meet the needs of individuals. McMaster researchers were successful in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research competition and garnered \$20 million in new funding.

Dr. Puri congratulated Dr. Mossman, her team and facilities for a great job handling the opening of research.

e. COVID-19 Update from Vice-Provost, International Affairs

This report was included for information.

6 REPORT FROM UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL

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

Dr. Dej explained that there were three items for approval.

1. Revisions to the Senate Policy on Diplomas and Certificates

Dr. Dej explained that changes to the policy included changing the name of the policy and that the Dr. Lorraine Carter was available to answer any questions.

It was duly moved and seconded,

that Senate approve revisions to the Senate Policy on Diplomas and Certificates, including changing the name to the Certificates and Diplomas Policy, as set out in the attached.

The motion was **carried**.

2. Revisions to the Undergraduate Course Management Policies

It was duly moved and seconded,

that Senate approve revisions to the Undergraduate Course Management Policies, as set out in the attached.

An observer questioned whether the requirement for students to immediately report technical difficulties included Wi-Fi issues as it may not be possible for them to report this issue immediately. Dr. Dej explained that students are required to report difficulties immediately, within reason. The idea is so that students do not report difficulties weeks later. Difficulties should be reported as soon as possible so that alternatives can be provided.

An observer noted the importance of ensuring that what is written in the policy regarding accommodations is being done in practice. Dr. Dej noted that there has to be a culture change. There is a panel which focusses specifically on accommodation and more conversations are being had around building a culture of understanding and the best ways to accommodate students.

A member asked if it was possible to have a statement on the syllabus to refer to a website to read the information instead of having the same two pages of information on every syllabus. Dr. Dej explained that few students read the information and the addition of a link to a website where they are to read more information, will likely diminish the number of students reading the information. Dr. Dej noted that if the same language is in all of the syllabuses, the next step could be to put a link.

A member noted that on page 8 of the report a statement has been removed regarding accommodation decisions being made by SAS, the student, the professor and the Equity Office and there is nothing about having a collaborative process. Dr. Dej explained that the following section references communicating with the professor. The member noted they feel it is important to have a conversation between SAS, the

student and the professor. Dr. Dej explained that missed work is not part of accessibility and the idea is that there is a conversation with the professors. Dr. Welch explained that SAS has the responsibility of putting together an accommodation plan and are to communicate the plan to the instructor. It is not a collaboration and the instructor is not expected to be an expert in accommodation. Dr. Van Koughnett added that with human rights, they cannot require a student to collaborate.

The motion was **carried**.
(1 abstention)

3. Revisions to the Undergraduate Examinations Policy

It was duly moved and seconded,

that Senate approve revisions to the Undergraduate Examinations Policy, as set out in the attached.

An observer asked how students can acquire equipment for online exams if they do not have access to what is reasonably expected. Dr. Dej explained that the reason it is in the policy is so students are aware from the beginning and they can make arrangements to acquire the required items. Dr. Dej noted that there is an emergency fund that students can apply for. Many courses do have requirements for software so it could be an option to incorporate the cost into tuition. Dr. Dej explained that in the pilot phase students are not being asked to pay for software.

A member asked if professors should mention software in the syllabus if it does not cost any money. Dr. Dej advised that it is always useful to provide that information as it is part of the course tools. The member asked specific questions regarding what should be included in the course syllabus. Dr. Dej advised that she would follow up with the member.

The motion was **carried**.

7 REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY PLANNING COMMITTEE

This item was for information.

8 OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.